

PUNCH – COUNTERPUNCH

Occasionally an anti-gun person, a member of the main stream media, takes a "Punch" at gun rights and gun owners. Occasionally it is right to Counter-Punch the attack. This is one of those times. Read on.

Bob Culver, MCSM

The PUNCH

Al Martinez: Fear drives push for right to own guns

By Al Martinez, [Los Angeles] Daily News Columnist

<http://www.dailynews.com/columnists/ci_19229699%C2%A0%C2%A0%20O>

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She was a woman in her 90s, so small and fragile that a strong wind might have blown her over, but there she stood in the living room of her tidy Pacoima home holding a 12-gauge, double-barreled shotgun vowing to shoot anyone who tried to break into her house.

She could barely lift the weapon and didn't seem all that sure about how to break it open and load it but it was enough for her to simply possess the thing, as though it contained a life of its own which, at critical moments, would protect her from harm.

It was during the 1980s era of the so-called Night Stalker who was terrorizing the Valley with multiple rapes and murders. Many were rightly afraid of the demonic presence whose crimes were casebook studies of brutality. The woman in Pacoima was the most fearful of all but she was going to do something about it. Woe to the Night Stalker should he come to her door.

It was inconceivable that she would be agile enough or even familiar enough with her weapon to ward off anyone intending to do her harm. But fear had driven her to arm herself and she remains today as a symbol of the average citizen willing but incapable of doing battle with the forces of evil.

I mention her to clarify my own position on gun ownership and to relate the responses I received to an anti-gun column written a week ago. Clearly there is fear involved in the support of gun ownership. I heard many say that "if guns were outlawed only outlaws would have guns," repeating like automatons the NRA mantra meant to justify its existence.

Similarly repeated was the rote pronouncement of the "God-given right" to own guns, reaching for a higher power to boost the notion that it is OK to shoot anyone committing any kind of crime, from a kid trying to steal your car to a tagger painting graffiti on your garden wall.

Others cited the Second Amendment to justify their right to bear arms. One wrote, "If guns are outlawed only the government would have guns. Is that what you want?" Well, yes. Like the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Air Force, government agencies of a sort created to do what the militias were doing when the Second Amendment was adopted.

A former Washington lobbyist said it all when he emailed that the NRA didn't give a damn about the Second Amendment. "It's all about power and money," he wrote, expressing impatience with the "gun crowd's willingness to drink the Kool-Aid and eat the pabulum" that the

NRA feeds them.

There is much to be said about the fear of crime and the need to protect one's self from the bad guys. But any way you look at it, the rationale of mass gun ownership boils down to that little old lady with the shotgun ready to shoot anyone knocking on her door.

Al Martinez writes a column on Mondays and Fridays. He can be reached at almtz13@aol.com.

The COUNTER-PUNCH

On Monday October 31, Al Martinez wrote of his fear.

He expressed fear through the eyes of an unidentified woman in her 90's, taking precautions against an outbreak of local criminality back in the 1980's, known as the "Night Stalker" incidents, in the Pacoima area.

Al describes the incident, correctly or not, in many selected phrases which he hopes will advance his position. That position appears to be, "don't try to defend yourself, it's hopeless!"

Al describes the woman's self defense tool as a 12-gauge double barreled shotgun. Al describes the woman's ability as being barely able to, "...lift the weapon..." or "...how to break it open and load it". He then concludes that he thought that, "...it was enough for her to simply possess the thing, as though it contained a life of its own which, at critical moments, would protect her from harm."

Then, in one blazing sentence, Al hits on the real message of the story. He says, "But fear had driven her to arm herself and she remains today as a symbol of the average citizen willing but incapable of doing battle with the forces of evil."

That's right Al, the little lady was WILLING to take steps to defend herself. Do you presume that she could not defend herself, and therefore should not take the effort? She may have been an accomplished trap shooter in her college days. She may have had training at the hand of a devoted but long passed husband. She obviously understood the danger that the community was in and took the individual initiative and strong steps to respond to the "Night Stalker" threat. She intended to be prepared to repulse any criminal attack.

Al makes his own position on guns, and their owners, quite clear - he is fearful of them. He thinks fear drives citizens to take up arms to defend themselves. A healthy apprehension of danger, fear if you will, drives the rational person to study the situation and take suitable preparations to meet that danger. You drive a car, you fear a collision, so you take precautions like seat belts, and other options. You have a nice home and family but you fear a house fire so you have smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, escape ladders, a family evacuation plan and much more. Right Al?

Al seems to have a problem with God given rights, so lets call them by other names he might be more comfortable with - like Natural rights, or Human Rights, or even Civil rights. What could be more natural, more in tune with human nature, than the drive to provide food, shelter and defense of life for yourself, and your family and community too? The firearms Al fears are perhaps the best way of providing at least two of these three primary human needs.

Al lets his fear slip in again by saying that resorting to the, ..."God-given right" to own guns... that one must be ..."reaching for a higher power to boost the notion that it is OK to shoot anyone committing any kind of crime, from a kid trying to steal your car to a tagger painting graffiti on your garden wall." Al is so far from the morality of self defense, as opposed to the defense of the garden wall, that he must be realizing his own fear of what he might do in a fit of anger from such transgressions. Psychologists call this Projection, a common defense mechanism. Is he thinking that he, if he were a gun owner, might do irrational things, then no one else should be allowed to be in a position to do them, no one else should be armed?

Then he does an about face and tells about a comment about the Second Amendment, "...If guns are outlawed only the government would have guns. Is that what you want? Well, yes. Like the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Air Force, government agencies of a sort created to do what the militias were doing when the Second Amendment was adopted." I will leave it up to Al to go back and study just why the Second Amendment was adopted. Perhaps a few readers will educate him. Take this hint, It's not about duck hunting.

But I really must close now. It is clear that those who would attempt to ban firearms, and prohibit individual self defense and our independent nature along with it, are acting on emotional terms. They are acting on feeling. I would rather they think their way to independence, than feel their way to dependence.

Bob Culver

Member; NRA, GOA, JPFO, CCRKBA, SAF, MCSM and more