

Another Modest Proposal

It is another melancholy day in America, when we find the populace casting about for new solutions to the problem of defending ourselves from those who would turn our delightful modern weaponry against us.

It seems every week we are confronted with another mad dog that has bent our second amendment rights to serve their dark mission.



I think it is agreed by all parties that the prodigious number of children who fall in places like [Sandy Hook](#) are a great additional grievance. Whosoever could find a fair, cheap, and easy method of preventing this loss would, no doubt, serve the public so well that we should consider setting up his or her statue as a preserver of our great republic.

But my intention is very far from being confined to only those children who may fall. For we should also take into account all the marginalized and other fleeting targets of hatred and resentment. All those who are unable to run or dodge fast enough will demand some level of protection.

As for my part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and weighed the many complex schemes of others, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, any one community has a fairly manageable store of weapons, and few that may cause great harm. Yet, over three million of the more than 300 million arms in our nation's midst need some greater form of control. So, it is in exactly one year that I propose we provide a fair exchange for their continued possession and support -- all three million of them.

There is likewise another advantage in my scheme, in that it will **prevent** any sort of involuntary confiscation, and **curtail** that horrid practice of using our limited tax dollars to buy them back and melt them down for plowshares, or some other such luxury. The bulk of those bought from the street are exchanged more in shame than for the reward. The money has, after all, been spent and may not be fully recovered.

The number of souls who keep arms in their homes in this country, is, by most reckoning, about a third, or 100 million. There are, by the best estimates, about 300 million arms in circulation -- far too many to account for in any organized manner. The good news is that we are today mostly concerned with only those three million that will dispatch the most with the least effort (reflecting some value that we place on efficiency, no doubt). These shall make for a good test of some new ideas, and should not provide too great an amount of raw metal for us to contend with as some sort of saleable commodity.

Some may be donated for legitimate purpose: donated to national guards, armed services or others with training and budget for their maintenance. But most may remain in place, providing a certain condition is met. I am speaking, of course, of instituting a permit system whereby those who may wish to retain ownership of a semi-automatic or automatic firearm shall be allowed to do so **only** under the single condition that they willingly surrender their *cojones* in exchange for the privilege.

Yes, the *family jewels* or the *firing pin*; no one shall have *both* under this scheme.

I have been assured by a very knowing friend in Great Britain that an entire generation or two of gun enthusiasts may sacrifice their reproductive options without harming the genetic pool in any meaningful way. The dental prospects of an entire generation may, in fact, see some measure of improvement. No different than culling the less robust of any species from the main herd.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration that of the three million assault weapon owners already computed, that a healthy ration will accept the terms of the permit, and present a sort of role model that many could learn from. Indeed, if they were allowed to openly carry such weapons following a permit procedure, all would know of their stoic willingness to sacrifice so much for their second amendment rights.

Given the long and sordid history of misuse of these weapons over the last forty years, we can safely agree on a simple fact: [all but three](#) of the tragedies we are concerned with were perpetrated by those with functioning male gonads. Of the female, I think we may be willing to live with the far less significant risk associated with a functioning ovary. If it becomes a problem, or simply to serve the cause of justice, we may extend the terms of the permit to allow for removal of the eggs as a condition for the female enthusiast.

Lacking much background in the biochemical arts, I cannot offer an explanation for the inescapable association between the male seed and the trigger finger. I will leave it to others to make the connection obvious. I am, at this point, more than willing to bet that any man that goes without a steady source of testosterone will not find cause to kill more than his fair share -- he will become domesticated much like the young, aggressive bulls who undergo a similar transformation.

We are not savages: the medical arts may render meeting the conditions of the permit painless, sterile and *swift*. Whether chemical means are used, or the more traditional banding tools, the result may be verified quickly. Renewal of such a permit would not be required, and the registration process could be managed by the insurance providers. Manufacturers of the arms would, no doubt, offer to subsidize the procedure to maintain some share of the market and continue to escape any form of liability.

Those who are more thrifty (as we must confess the times require) may collect the new *prairie oysters* (as our Canadian friends may refer to them) and find adequate recipe for their consumption. It is an acquired taste, to be sure, but one that more than a few may indulge, if offered. The casing, of course, does offer up some unique properties that may be of use to burn victims or those who have lost skin to rifle wounds. Others may discover a way to address the loss of hair with grafts from those endowed with sandy hair. The possibilities are endless in our advanced age.

While several million of anything offers a significant logistical challenge, we do have many ways to harvest and distribute those perishable variety meats. I will no longer belabor those possibilities. To borrow a complicated phrase, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to unjustly censure such a practice as bordering upon cruelty, no matter how well intended. Even if the result does extend the pub menu in a new and interesting direction.

I have digressed, and therefore shall return to the subject. As others may note, the advantages of the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, the permit requirement would greatly lessen the number of those capable of indiscriminate mauling, assuming they decide to exchange their weapons for the right to bear the more important sort of arm, and would likely reduce the inclination to do harm among those who choose to meet the conditions of the permit.

Secondly, it would make the possession of such a firearm a clear signal that the owner has abandoned the traditional measures of potency in favor of a mechanical substitute. With the addition of a certain round sticker in the back window, we could more easily draw certain inferences about those who insist on such measures of protection. Among them, I think we shall discover that our daughters will find no intrigue at such displays of false bravado, and may offer them neither cheek nor lip.

Thirdly, it will force the general public to confront the expense associated with the unnecessary holding of military goods. The true costs are socialized whenever the victims fall, with great effort made to bring each event to an end and then reconstruct it for a study that produces no reward. The overtime for law enforcement staff alone should convince those among us who hold themselves out as fiscally conservative that the permit program offers the more responsible path in the long run.

Fourthly, we may meet the growing cry for more protein in the diets of the average member of the populace. If we are to give up carbohydrate and sugar, and lessen the cholesterol count, those prairie oysters could well become the newest diet fad. This would relieve some of the pressure on the factory farm and give the culinary arts a new form of stock.

Fifthly, the personal stake in obtaining such a permit would make those who seek them out far more likely to keep and protect their preferred asset. The secondary market would quickly dry up, and the demand for ammunition may lessen. The care taken to keep it in proper working order would rise, as with similar devices (i.e., the antique carriage), and the risk of accidental discharge would correspondingly fall.

Sixthly, upon successful proof of concept, the arrangement could be extended to all such arms that serve no functional purpose in legitimate goals of hunting or reasonable self-defense. We must, of course, first admit that no man has the right to slaughter more than a hundred to protect their own worthless carcass, not on this mortal coil. Then, we may roll out new permit programs for the larger handguns and common military accessories. Perhaps introduce a grain limit for shells, or limit the caliber of those arms we choose to leave on the street.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, if enough permits are issued, we may find a basis for establishing an inverse relationship between the scale of the weapon and the size of the jewel it was exchanged for. I think we could make an educated guess how that one may play out, but something more than soft evidence could advance science. But this and many others I will omit, in the interest of brevity.

I can think of no single objection that may be raised against this proposal, unless it is urged that the number of people will be much lessened in our republic. This I freely own, and 'twas indeed the principal design in offering it to the world. These states are in no danger of abandon, and while the bullets may take an [impressive toll](#), we may limit the offspring of some to create room for those who would bring more to the table than prejudice and grandiose delusion.

I desire the reader will observe that I calculate my remedy for this one individual republic, and for no other nation that ever was, is, or, I think, ever could be.

Therefore, let no man talk to me of other expedients: Of increasing the tax for ownership of such arms in mere terms of cash; Of making the waiting period longer or more uniform; Of attempting to predict future acts based on background checks; Of waiting for some invisible hand of the market to direct noble action or raise the price of such arms much above a week's salary for the dishwasher; or, Of the barriers to compliance. This last one begs special consideration, and a simple prison term of not less than seven years for such possession without permit should move the bulk of the three million to comply.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and like expedients, until we have at least some glimpse of hope that there will be some hearty and sincere attempt to put far stronger measures into practice. A weak promise to consider some small action will not move the stone in any measure, and the body politic has shown itself far too slow to act in legislative manner on this, or many other issues.

As for myself, wearied out after many years of wrestling with vain, idle, visionary thoughts in the public realm, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal. As it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real. As for the special variety meat this measure would create, it will not bear exportation, even if salted. Perhaps I could name a country which would be glad to eat up our whole supply, without pause, but we should not become known as the new Lord of the Prairie Oyster. The branding issues alone would take up all of our spare time and quick wits.

In the end, I am not so bent upon my own opinion as to reject any other offer proposed by wise men, which may be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. Before we advance another plan in contradiction to my scheme, however, I would invite the authors to maturely consider two points:

First, as things now stand, how shall we find the will to forego such enticements that the gun merchants and their lobbies hold out? Power may be purchased, and we have a pretty good idea how much it now costs. Few may offer a competitive bid, and this has stymied progress even in the face of great shame and loss.

Second, the liability presented by the number and nature of the weapons may not be dodged forever. Those who have lost all they care about will find no true recompense, but may hold all of us, who must accept some share of the responsibility, accountable for a tab that would bankrupt us all in moral, ethical and economic terms.

Post-Script: I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavoring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of my country by advancing trade, providing for the next generation, relieving the slow and anxious, and giving some pleasure to the rapidly diminishing number of the rich (who may themselves become targets). I have no weapons for which I may seek permit, nor any desire to procreate further.

The End

-- *Steven Peterson, 2016*

