

May/June 2008

The Second Amendment, First

“Today, I want to talk to you about guns:

Why we have them, why the Bill of Rights guarantees that we can have them, and why my right to have a gun is more important than your right to rail against it in the press.”

“...It is time that our youth found out that the politically correct doctrine of today has mislead them. And that when they reach legal age, if they do not break our laws, they have a right to choose to own a gun to defend themselves and their loved ones or to engage in any lawful purpose they desire without apology or explanation to anyone, ever.”

“This is their first freedom. If you say it's outdated, then you haven't read your own headlines. If you say guns create only carnage, I would answer that you know better. Declining morals, disintegrating families, vacillation of political leadership, an eroding criminal justice system and social morals that blur right from wrong are more to blame—certainly more than any legally owned firearm.”

“...Our constitution provides the doorway for your news and commentary to pass through free and unfettered. But that doorway to freedom is framed by the muskets that stood between a vision of liberty and absolute anarchy at a place called Concord Bridge. Our revolution began when the British sent Redcoats door to door to confiscate the people's guns. They didn't succeed: The muskets went out the back door with the owners.”

— Charlton Heston, excerpts of speech delivered to National Press Club, 2-11-97



The Ellis family reflects the vast majority of Wisconsin and American gun owners: respectful of human life, law abiding, and safe.

They may not wear red coats, but there is and always will be a very dangerous faction in America, the freedom killers, who would come into our homes... if they could... confiscate our guns and snuff out our right to keep and bear arms. I had a fleeting thought that it was Divine Intervention that took Charlton Heston from us after a long illness, at a very time when the United States Supreme Court is contemplating the 32-year old handgun ban in the nation's capital; debating the very question of whether “the right of the people to keep and bear arms” belongs to individuals or whether it was instead intended to protect the power of the states to raise militias.

Since the Supreme Court last

heard a gun case this important seven decades ago, the court's decision on the D.C. challenge, either way, will reverberate across the country in “new” precedence. That will likely be very good or very bad news for the American gun owner. I think that it is uncanny that Charlton Heston's passing comes when his death brings more attention to the fact that our very freedoms are in grave danger than even his magnificent oratory might have generated in life; a time of death almost willed by the deceased, a last shot in defense of freedom, and extraordinarily coincidental like the passing of both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on July 4, 1826.

From those who anointed Heston a hero to those who vilified him even

continued



in death, the airways, the Internet, and the print media are now filled and focused on firearms, the second amendment and the challenges faced to keep both. The truth will set us free. Because we can never be afraid to debate if we really believe we are right, that attention from the otherwise complacent masses is very good news indeed

If I could, I would give up this space in a heartbeat so that you might read Heston's entire speech to the National Press Club. Because the length of that great writing does not permit it, the speech in its entirety is posted on our website at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com. A second Heston speech delivered to the Harvard Law School on February 16, 1999 is also posted. If you consider yourself a lover of your freedoms, I

promise it will be well worth your time. If you haven't really thought about your freedoms, you need to go there faster.

But for now...did you know that Charlton Heston marched for Civil Rights with Dr. Martin Luther King in 1963? But when he told an audience that white pride is just as valid as black pride or red pride or anyone else's pride, they called him racist. He served in WWII against the axis powers. But during a speech, when he drew an analogy between singling out innocent Jews and singling out innocent gun owners, he was called anti-Semite. And when he asked an audience to oppose such cultural persecution, he was compared to Timothy McVeigh.

"But I am not afraid," he responded. "If Americans believed in political correctness, we'd still be King George's boys...subjects bound to the British Crown."

Because he can no longer carry the torch, we will. The freedom killers dressed in big media attire or Hollywood glitter or riding the Fat Cat's chair and an obnoxious pension of our own government officials will be back again in search of our guns regardless of any Supreme Court ruling. The war on freedom is already here. The means to fight it, especially if our gun ownership someday translates into "felon" with the stroke of our lawmaker's pen, is already here too.

"The answer's been here all along," Heston wrote. "You simply...

disobey. Peaceably, yes. Respectfully, of course. Nonviolently, absolutely. But when told how to think or what to say or how to behave, we don't. We disobey social protocol that stifles and stigmatizes personal freedom. I learned the awesome power of disobedience from Dr. King...who learned it from Gandhi, and Thoreau and Jesus, and every other great man who led those in the right against those with might."

As Heston said, when the Redcoats came door to door to confiscate the guns, they didn't succeed. The muskets went out the back door with their owners. In our peaceful resistance, know that we won't go out the back door. The right to stand in our own front doors unafraid, even with our guns locked away in the cabinet, is uniquely American and earned by better people before us. But earned too by our own law-abiding use of firearms and respect for the sanctity of human life.

We understand, freedom killers, that under the wrong governing climate you can probably legislate us, the American gun owner...We the People... into wearing the label of criminal. But you understand, that even if that ever happens, you still can't have our guns. Ever. ^{OW}

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