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March 31, 2000

Guns, hypocrisy and common sense

By Jackie Mason and Raoul Felder

To be absolutely honest, like most Jews, we don't like to be around anything that could be used to harm anybody. The only reason Jews even have a butter knives around the house is so they can use them as screwdrivers, which is why the points on all our butter knives are bent. In fact, things are so bad for our butter knives, that in our house the only way you can spread some butter on a piece of bread is if you hold it on a slant. But if other people feel they need to have guns around the house, they should be allowed to have them. Just because you have a gun at home doesn't mean you are going to go around shooting people, just as the fact that you have a window in your house doesn't mean your wife and brother-in-law are going to take turns jumping out of it.

The Army has guns all over the place and the soldiers don't spend their time shooting each other. Liberace had the same equipment as Bill Clinton, but girls were perfectly safe around him. Edward G. Robinson always had a cigar with him, but he didn't use 19-year old girls as ashtrays. Total gun-control might be great if you could also get the crooks and murderers to agree to it. The perjurer-in-chief used the shooting-death of Kayla Rolland as an excuse to plead for gun control. Being a draft-dodger it is understandable that he doesn't know much about guns, but the fact is that the little monster who killed Kayla obtained it from his criminal uncle, who presumably would not rush to the station

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house to register his gun, no matter what the law was.

In virtually every instance of lunatic gun violence we read about, the shooters were in violation of many laws before they showed up to do their dirty work. It makes more sense to enforce the laws that we already have, than to pass more laws that will probably be equally unenforced. If the hundreds of laws around the country involving gun purchases, shipment, sales and licensing are still not strongly enforced, why in the world would we believe additional laws would be?

A gun in the hands of a law-abiding citizen represents a substantial deterrent to a would-be attacker. Orlando, Florida had a long-standing rape problem. Then the police offered a highly publicized gun training program for women. The result was a 76 percent decrease in rapes. In 1982, Kennesaw, Georgia passed an ordinance requiring every homeowner to keep a gun. The number of residential burglaries in the town immediately took a plunge. Kansas City's grocers were the victims of an epidemic of robberies. The grocers were reluctant to beat back the robbers with boxes of corn flakes because if any of them died, the grocers would be called "cereal killers." So the police began a gun training program for grocers which caused an immediate drop in this kind of crime. Interestingly, there was during this period an increase in similar kinds of crimes in the areas around Kansas City. It is a well-established fact that car hijackers in the Miami area target vehicles with license plates indicating out-of-town drivers, since these people would not be allowed gun ownership as it is limited to people with Florida drivers' licenses.

Just because a person is a criminal, doesn't mean he is stupid. You don't have to look past Pennsylvania Avenue to verify this. Why would a crook want to take a chance to start-up with somebody who had a gun? He became a crook in the first place because he wanted to go into a business where, if he had a gun, the odds were in his favor.

Having said our piece, we really don't have much dispute with some of the gun-control being sought. Mr. Clinton wants a three-day waiting period for background checks on guns purchased

at gun shows. The NRA wants a one-day check period. We suspect, that with all of the modern super-technology at their disposal, if the administration was serious, it could figure out a way to do the gun checks in one day. We, however, have some misgivings about trigger locks. We can visualize an intruder pointing a gun at a victim who asks for a time-out while he looks around the house for the key to the trigger.

The statistical truth is that in America, deaths by shootings are falling at a rapid rate. In 1993 there were in excess of 17,000 gunshot deaths. In 1998, there were 11,000 deaths, and it is expected that the 1999 rate will be even lower. But nobody wants to be confused by the facts, especially the politicians.

Jackie Mason is a comedian and Raoul Felder is a famed attorney.



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