

Special Edition:

The Radicalization of Police in America

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America is, was, and will always be a racist country. That's nothing new. This nation's initial wealth and enduring financial endowments were founded and built upon slave labor from the 1500's through the mid-1800's, mostly by African Americans who lived, worked and died without ever earning a penny. And what was once physical bondage has now, for a majority of African Americans, simply been transformed into financial slavery. Even the Civil Rights Act of 1965, which looked promising until the advent of tactical reverse discrimination, has been able to do little to change that.

Most whites, to some degree, fear blacks and for good reason. After all, you should be afraid of a community that you've shat upon for centuries, because after a while, people start giving you that shit back. So it's not surprising that the more things seem to improve superficially - what, with our over abundance of ebony-ivory celebrities and athletes - the more they fundamentally spiral downward for the average person on the street. And no one sees that downward spiral more than the people who we hire to work on those streets: the police.

Now, the police have always had a tough job which is best reflected in the fact that they're the only civilians who routinely put on a gun as part of their daily work attire. It used to be, when I was a kid, that meant they would holster a six-shooter revolver on their belts, and up until 9:17 a.m. on February 28th, 1997, that was good enough. But on that day, at that specific time, everything changed, for that was the day of the North Hollywood Shootout, otherwise known as the Battle of North Hollywood.

On February 28, 1997, at 9:17 a.m., Larry Phillips, Jr. and Emil Matasareanu - neither of whom were black - entered and robbed the North Hollywood Bank of America branch office. Phillips and Matasareanu were confronted by LAPD officers when they exited the bank and a shootout ensued. As the two robbers attempted to flee, Phillips on foot and Matasareanu in their vehicle, they carried with them illegally-modified, fully-automatic Norinco Type 56 S-1's (an AK-47 variant), a Bushmaster XM15 Dissipator, and a HK-91 rifle with high capacity drum magazines, as well as a Beretta 92FS pistol. The bank robbers wore heavy plate, mostly homemade, body armor which successfully protected them from handgun and shotgun rounds fired by the officers. During the shootout which lasted well over a half hour, both perpetrators were killed, twelve police officers and eight civilians were injured, and numerous vehicles and other property were damaged or destroyed by the nearly 2,000 rounds of ammunition fired by the robbers and police. Due to the large number of injuries, rounds fired, weapons used, and overall length of the shootout, it is regarded as one of the longest and bloodiest events in American police history.

The ante had been upped. After that day, it was no longer sufficient to think that off-the-shelf handguns or even shotguns would ever again be sufficient for the street-level police officer. The police would have to power up and start each and every new day with sufficient weapons to repel a small rebel army. But the police don't police an army. They police us. So, how did the average civilian get up-sold to army grade weaponry which, in turn, led to the militarization of the police? You can thank the NRA for that.

Now it would be foolish to ignore the 2nd Amendment in this discussion, but it would also be foolish to assume that this country's founding, white fathers had any clue about semi-automatic or fully-automatic weapons. And yes, hunting and protecting your home are still valid reasons for owning a gun. But if you need a semi-automatic weapon to hunt, then you're a shitty hunter and you need to find another hobby. And if you need a semi-automatic weapon to protect your home, then you need to move, and if you can afford that kind of a gun, then you can afford to move.

In addition, the 2nd Amendment talks about owning guns for the purpose of forming a militia, not so that some paranoid whack-job can stockpile enough guns in their basement to take over a small city. Yet, since 1871, the NRA has purposefully misinterpreted and misrepresented the 2nd Amendment, solely for the purpose of keeping highly lethal fire power in the hands of its members, most of whom are white (I'm sure that's just a coincidence, but I couldn't help but note the fact).

For me, the final straw came with the massacre at Sandy Hook (CT). Back in the 1970's, as a teenager, I used to work in Sandy Hook. I don't know much about what it was like there in December of 2012, but back when I was in Sandy Hook, it was considered to be a mostly hard luck, wrong-side-of-the-track kind of town. The people I met there in my daily job were not well off, and they were the last people who should have had to bear such an atrocity. Yet, after Sandy Hook, the NRA, rather than admitting we have a serious gun problem in America, advocated that we place even more guns into the hands of the public and, in particular, that the best way to protect ourselves from such events in the future is by putting guns in our schools. It is, of course, noteworthy that since this was the NRA speaking, its' probably okay to read the phrase "protect ourselves" as protect our-white-selves.

So, thanks to the NRA, we have such broad, street-level access to all types of guns, and so lax regulations on these guns, that anyone, commoner or criminal, can arm themselves to the teeth with firepower that will put Phillips and Matasareanu to shame. You want a semi-automatic weapon that can be easily converted to fully-automatic by making a few online purchases and then watching some YouTube videos, done. You want enough bullets to shoot down the Empire State building, the internet will deliver them to you in just two days. And this unwarranted ease of access is the final ingredient to the tragic recipe we've slowly brewed for ourselves today in America.

Take one part racism, one militarization of the police, and one part NRA gun-mania, and what do you get? The radicalization of police in America. Granted, the average police officer is probably a lot less racist than their counterparts 100 years ago, but that's not the same as not being racist. Additionally, given that a higher percentage of blacks live in poverty (27.4%) than

the percentage of whites (9.9%), there is a greater incidence of violent gun crime in black communities as compared to those of whites (among whites, 77 percent of gun deaths are suicides, but among blacks, 82 percent of gun deaths are homicides). And the police see this violence each and every working day.

Now that the NRA has weaponized America, and now that the police are dealing with an increasingly violent poverty class whose majority population and victims are black, is there any question as to the radicalization of those in the working gun class? Given that ever-present, still simmering seed of discrimination found in most whites today, fertilize it with an ever-escalating degree of gun violence that affects blacks far more than whites, then start matching that violence with an ever-escalating militarization of our police, and what do you get: radicalization. Of course this is not the same as being trigger happy. If that were the case, then Terence Crutcher wouldn't have even made it to his car. No, this is more about being ever-more trigger nervous: a mental state in which initial finger-to-trigger contact is made faster and faster with each passing day.

So what do we do about our centuries-long, chain-reaction tragedy that continues to spiral out of control? What can we do to stop the needless and senseless killings that horrify all of us? What should we do to turn the tide against this socially-suicidal wave that's drowning America? First, we can start by fucking the NRA. What we need in America aren't more guns: we need less guns. What we need in America aren't useless laws that give commoners and, therefore by addition, criminals easy access to deadly force: we need stronger laws. And what we need in America isn't the continued reign of terror conceived, germinated and foster by an inherently racist institution: no, we need to fuck the NRA. But how?

If you're fed up with guns on the streets of America, then go to www.FuckTheNRA.org and join in the call for sensible gun control laws in the United States.

Robert offers anonymous and confidential substance abuse recovery telephone coaching to help those who wish to stabilize and maintain their recovery from substance abuse. Recovery coaching with Robert is available worldwide to anyone fluent in English who can reach him at **786-262-5750** (USA). For more information, please visit **<http://trafn.com/coach.html>**