

# Opinion

## The real losers

The House's vote Thursday to weaken the gun control law proves that with enough money, anything — even legislation — can be bought.

The debate was intense, with the National Rifle Association lobbying for dismantling the Gun Control Act of 1968 and police organizations rallying against it. But the NRA had \$1.6 million to spend on lobbying; the police groups had only \$15,000.

The House bill has pluses and minuses from both groups' perspectives, but if passed by the Senate, the bill will make it easier for criminals — or anyone else — to purchase firearms and harder for police to trace their registration.

Under the bill, rifles, shotguns and handguns could be transported across state lines as long as they were unloaded and inaccessible. It also would legalize the face-to-face purchase of rifles and shotguns outside of the buyer's home state. The bill does prohibit the sale or transfer of machine guns.

The most disturbing provision, however, is that a gun dealer could place a weapon from his inventory in a "private collection," and a year and a day later sell or trade the gun without registering the sale.

This means the gun dealer can declare part of his firearms inventory private and then a year later sell a gun from his private stock to anyone regardless of age or criminal record.

The private collection clause covers up the "paper trail" used by police to trace gun ownership through registration and frees the dealer of responsibility for illegal sales.

Gun registration requirements should be strengthened, not weakened. Before a gun purchase is finalized, a thorough background check of the prospective buyer should be completed. This would help to uphold current gun laws that prohibit the sale of firearms to minors, drug addicts, felons and people with certain mental disorders.

Instead, the private collection clause makes it easier for these individuals to obtain guns and harder for police to trace the weapon.

The NRA is proclaiming itself the winner because of the weakening effect on the law. Police organizations are claiming victory because of the restrictions of machine guns and the refusal to lift the ban on interstate sales.

The only real losers are average citizens, who didn't have the money to fight the NRA and may find themselves at the mercy of a "collector's item."

The Battalion Editorial Board



## Robertson didn't mean 'kill,' he meant 'bump off' Khadafy

Pat Robertson is a nifty guy. Who else has a hotline to God in one hand and a finger on the world's pulse with the other? For those who have spent the past few years at the bottom of an elevator shaft, Robertson is the head of the Christian Broadcasting Network and anchor for *The 700 Club*.



Loren Steffy

In recent months, suggestions that Robertson try for the Republican nomination in 1988 have been met with hearty "amens" from his loyal followers. The idea of a clergyman in the White House seemed interesting, so I talked to Ernest Aymmenz, a camera lens repairman for CBN to find out just what makes "Righteous Robbie" tick.

"Don't you feel it might present a conflict of church and state to have your boss as president?" I asked.

"Not to worry, my son," Aymmenz replied. "If elected, the reverend-president Robertson will deal with state matters in one wing of the White House and broadcast *The 700 Club* from the other. You can't get more separate than that."

"But his experience is in soul management, not in money management. What can he do about the deficit?"

"In this time of national debt we need a president who's not afraid to stand up in front of large groups and ask for money," Aymmenz pointed out.

"What about foreign policy? Didn't Robertson recently advocate killing Libyan leader Moammar Khadafy as a means of ending terrorism?"

"Well, yes, but that was an unusual circumstance. Generally Mr. Robertson believes in living in peace with all men, but God told him in this case it would be all right to bump off Khadafy."

"God told him?"

"Yes. He frequently advises Mr. Robertson on foreign policy. That's why we know that if the Soviets invade the Middle East, God will strike them down. When it comes to foreign policy, Mr. Robertson has one of the best advisers around."

"Isn't permission to wipe out a head of state, no matter how maniacal, a little stern for a benevolent God?" I asked.

"Mr. Robertson has said in the past that pacifism is not biblical. We have to help fight wars of liberation. Communism is based in atheism. We must fight the enemies of the United States, the Lord and freedom. Khadafy is no exception. The man's a lunatic and a danger to God-fearing people everywhere. So naturally God and Mr. Robertson recognize the need to bend the rules."

"I thought there was a commandment that said 'Thou shalt not kill!'"

Aymmenz didn't disturb. "Well... Mr. Robertson looked mean 'kill' like you're thinking of — not in a death-like sense."

"But you said God told him to 'bump off Khadafy,'" I pointed out.

"Yes... well... God *did* tell Mr. Rob-

ertson that Khadafy should be bumped off — his John Deere tractor rides around the desert. That's why he hit his head and go into a coma. He never recover from. There's a commandment that says 'Thou shalt not murder world-threatening, commencing madmen into comas.'"

"But," I protested, "Robertson on *The 700 Club* that Americanization against Libya would lead to terrorism unless Khadafy is killed. He said 'You don't strike the king, you kill him.' That sounds pretty nice to me."

"Mr. Robertson misspoke a meant to say, 'You don't strike unless you bump him off.' Me, you don't hit him hard enough, bump him off the tractor, why bother?"

"Some people say that if you're out of the picture, others will take over. Then he will rise to power," I said.

"Then we will keep 'bumping off' until the people can do themselves the basic fundaments of Christianity. Sooner or later, the people see our light. That's why Mr. Robertson's campaign slogan (shouldn't be run) is 'Morality My Way.'"

"I see. What if not all Middle Eastern, paranoid megalomaniac dictators ride tractors?"

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## Senators just follow the PAC

The political action committees are starting to dispense money for the election primaries. Not only are the committees a source of funds, but without PACs few legislators would know which way to vote.



Art Buchwald

I came to this conclusion while walking past the National Association for True-Blue Government, the PAC for the Dynamite Users Industry.

The line of legislators wound around the block.

In front of the building was a wooden paymaster's table and behind the table was Shifty Diamond, chief paymaster for the PAC. A large pile of \$20 and \$50 bills was stacked in front of him.

Shifty was yelling, "Have your voting records available so we can look at them. Only incumbents in this line."

Congressman Damper presented his record to Shifty and waited nervously.

Shifty said, "It says *against* dynamite being transported through school and hospital zones."

"What could I do? The mail from my constituents was heavily in favor of regulating dynamite trucks."

"Do you know how much it costs you to deliver dynamite under present regula-

tions? I think we ought to make something perfectly clear. We don't care how you vote on other issues. When it comes to dynamite, you're either for your constituents or you're for us."

"But they elected me," Damper protested.

"They may have elected you, but they can't finance your campaign. Now, the big vote on more liberalized dynamite sales comes up on Thursday. Which side are you on?"

"I'm not sure. Dynamite kills people." Shifty got red in the face. "No, it doesn't. People kill people."

"Then in that case I'm for the dealers selling dynamite over the counter without asking anyone for identification."

"Spoken like a good friend of our industry," Shifty said and counted out a bagful of money.

Following Damper was Sen. Tobacco Stain's campaign manager.

"Where's the senator?" Shifty wanted to know.

"He's up on Capitol Hill dispensing funds from his own political action committee."

"Why should we give him money if he has his own PAC?"

"Because you need his vote to permit dynamite to be sent by parcel post across state lines."

"That's true. But why does Sen. Stain need money?"

"Because he's greedy."

Shifty shook his head. "That's the only honest answer I've gotten today. How would the senator feel about a \$2,500 contribution?"

"He'd feel better about a \$5,000 one."

Shifty said, "The man talks our language. Here it is in fresh fifties."

"I must warn you. The senator will never say thank you."

"Why not?"

"Because we're doing you a big favor by accepting the money. Your PAC needs every vote it can get, particularly after the police chiefs came out against people making bombs in their own homes."

"The police are panicking. Dynamite is safe as long as it is kept out of the hands of children and criminals."

"Forget the party line. You still need the senator to keep the anti-dynamite wimps from bulldozing your bill."

A third person came up to the desk. "I'd like some PAC money. I'm challenging the incumbent congressman."

"How can we give you money when you don't even have a voting record?"

"I don't need one. I decided the only way to run for public office is to sell out."

Shifty handed the young man a stack of bills. "Welcome to the club."

**Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.**

## Mail Call

### Bludgeoning of the people

EDITOR:

Regarding Cynthia Gay's column on April 7 ("Skepticism, selfishness hallmarks of democracy?"):

She hit it on the nail. But because what she says is true, statements like hers will be ignored as well. It brings to mind a quote from Oscar Wilde: "Democracy is simply the bludgeoning of the people, by the people, for the people."

**Marco A. Roberts**

### Normal activity

EDITOR:

I am writing to express my disgust at Paul Brinkley and his merry crew for their comments on Corps members eating at Sbsia Dining Hall in *The Battalion*. What "antics" may I ask, did these people engage in, aside from going to the ice cream dispenser together? Oh yes, I forgot. These people actually had the gall to whistle in Sbsia! Horrors! It must be some kind of communist plot!

Surely they must have done something else. Perhaps they talked and laughed while they ate. That would surely make me angry. Such a display of normal activity! Shameful! But seriously folks, as a non-reg myself, I find constant nitpicking over every little thing any member of the Corps does downright sickening. Funny haircuts and all, they're people, too. Let's let them be like they are. Attitudes like those of Brinkley and his friends will get them nowhere.

**Jimmy A. Miller '89**

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Letters must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.