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ON TARGET
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The history of gun control, part 1

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Philosopher George Santayana said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. It's true. One of the reasons to study history is to avoid repeating past mistakes. When it comes to freedom, we cannot afford to forget the lessons of the past. So you and I need to know the history of gun control, because history teaches us there is a terrible price to pay when we lose our right to keep and bear arms.

Over 200 years ago, when the Founding Fathers drafted the Second Amendment, no one questioned the need for private gun ownership. The Framers considered private firearms to be essential to protecting personal liberty, both as a means of opposing foreign threats and also as a check against excessive government power. The Framers were passionately devoted to the idea that a self-sufficient armed citizenry is the best means of preserving liberty.

But many on the left do not want you to know this. They keep the truth from being taught in public schools, and they even write books laden with falsehoods in a dishonest attempt to rewrite history.

Seven years ago, Emory University historian Michael Bellesiles published a book purportedly proving there were few guns and gun owners in early America. The book

garnered Columbia University's coveted Bancroft Prize. Two years later, primarily due to the efforts of a brilliant young research historian, Clayton Cramer, who had studied that period in history extensively, the book was revealed to be a total fraud, full of lies and fabrications. Bellesiles was forced to resign from Emory University and, for the first time in history, Columbia University rescinded the Bancroft Prize.

(Column continues below)

Every American who values his or her constitutional rights should know something about these frauds that gun control advocates perpetrate so we can be watchful and teach the truth to our young ones.

Early Americans were gun owners. Private firearm ownership was widespread from the coasts to the frontier, in both the North and the South.

Our ancestors not only knew the value of gun rights, they actually practiced those rights. Many early Americans provided for their family through their skill with a firearm, and many more Americans had a gun hanging over the hearth or in the bedroom to protect the house and the children against wild animals or criminals. These firearms were also seen as an insurance policy against American Indians, the British or French, and even against our own central government.

This honored tradition went completely unchallenged until the 1900s. Then New York passed the Sullivan Act in 1911, one of the first gun control laws. This law required that firearms small enough to be concealed on a person be registered. This state law became a test measure for future gun control laws.

Opponents of the Second Amendment started to mobilize at the federal level in the 1930s. It came during the New Deal, when the federal government was growing rapidly. Two laws enacted during this period, the National Firearms Act of 1934 and the Federal Firearms Act of 1938, established the first federal gun controls. While most of these regulations were uncontroversial by current standards (such as licensing gun dealers and regulating possession of machine guns), they introduced the concept of national regulation of firearms.

It was also during this time President Franklin Roosevelt appointed a number of liberals to the United States Supreme Court. Starting in 1937, the high court began moving in a liberal direction, and by the 1960s had become a court favoring full judicial activism, a judicial philosophy that has threatened our Second Amendment rights ever since.

During this period, anti-Second Amendment politicians began testing the waters on gun control. The highest-ranking official to do this was FDR's anti-gun attorney general, Homer Cummings. Attorney General Cummings started planning for federal gun control measures such as a national registry in the hands of the central government for guns and gun owners.

But then World War II broke out, and Germany and Japan invaded their neighbors. The American people were reminded how important it is to have a firearm handy when you need one. Cummings' early attempts to regulate guns and gun owners suddenly became unpopular. Gun control advocates lowered their voices until a more opportune time.

Most American leaders in both political parties were pro-gun. In fact, Democratic presidents Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy were NRA members. Gun control advocates were always present in policy debates, but did not have much political clout.

In the 1960s, gun control came back with a vengeance. Modern liberalism became the dominant political philosophy in this country. And after the deaths of JFK, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., an all-out national push for gun control was launched.

This period in the late 1960s was the beginning of significant gun control in America. Liberal activist judges, led by the Warren Court, enacted a widespread liberal agenda. American society was being secularized. President Johnson was forcing a hard-left agenda through the Great Society. And the Vietnam War was becoming increasingly unpopular. It was against that backdrop the left finally launched an open, concerted effort to implement national gun control.

And that's what we'll talk about next week, remembering that if we ignore the lessons that history offers us, our children will pay the price with their freedom.

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Gun control may be portrayed as a measure to reduce crime,¹ but even in its earliest forms firearms regulation has been used as a means to control specific societal groups by keeping them from possessing weapons. The first selectively restrictive gun control legislation was enacted in the pre-Revolution South and primarily aimed at keeping free blacks from owning firearms and maintaining a white monopoly on power.² Over 70 slaves and free blacks took part in an uprising that killed at least 57 white people. Gary Kleck and Don B. Kates, *Armed* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2001), 20. The history of Southern gun is completely intertwined with that of racial discrimination. The first piece of national gun control legislation was passed on June 26, 1934. The National Firearms Act (NFA) part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal for Crime" was meant to curtail "gangland crimes of that era such as the St. Valentine's Day Massacre." The NFA imposed a tax on the manufacturing, selling, and transporting of firearms listed in the law, among them short-barrel shotguns and rifles, machine guns, firearm mufflers and silencers. Due to constitutional flaws, the NFA was modified several times. The bill also codified some gun control measures, including expanding the GCA to prohibit civilian ownership or transfer of machine guns made after May 19, 1934, and redefining "silencer" to include parts intended to make silencers. 1993. The passage of the Gun Control Act of 1968 was a watershed event. The NRA became the nucleus of the resistance to the new elite. It was reformed into the leader of a national resistance movement. In the 10 years from 1994 to 2004, permitless or "Constitutional" carry states, where most adults could carry concealed without a permit, doubled from one state to two. Shall issue states went from 20 to 36, may issue decreased from 17 to 9, and states with no permit system decreased from 12 to four. In 2004, the elites were unable to prevent the "assault weapon" gun ban from sunseting. We all have our take on history in Canada having grown up in Trudeau's Canada I was raised on a Canadian history that was banal and the Government was always right and good. Looking at from a perspective of Gun Cont. Looking at from a perspective of Gun Control it paints an entirely different picture. One of the "Establishment" and a very racist one at that. The summer of 1990 saw the First Nations stand up to the Government that wanted to extend a golf course onto "disputed land" or treaty land. This was a first of many such disputes to come. However the Mohawk Warrior Society came armed. Most of the arms they held became prohibited or restricted.