

## Legally Speaking



### Art Appreciation

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Some people look at the sunset and see a magnificent display of colors. Other people look at the same sunset and all they see is that it is getting dark.

People who dislike guns would have them all go to the crusher. From their narrow view, all guns are made to kill people. Therefore, all guns should be destroyed. Like the person who cannot appreciate the colors in the sunset, they refuse to consider that there are people whose lives have been saved by having a gun. They refuse to consider that, of the large number of guns privately owned in the United States, the vast majority have never been fired in anger. Any impartial statistical source, such as the World Almanac or the raw figures from government agen-

cies, will show that the percentage of gun abuse in the United States is very small. On the basis of the number of people hurt matched against the total population, guns are safer than cars, most other means of transportation, seeking medical care, and a great number of other things that people give

would say it is blue. But water, unless it is tinted by pollution, mud or pine needles, is clear. It reflects the colors around it. Sometimes it reflects the sky, sometimes the trees. Trees are not flat green but are many different shades of color.

People who destroy art have no soul. In the Middle East, narrow



**A woodland scene by author's father, the artist Glenn MacNutt.**

little thought to doing.

It is not the purpose of this article, however, to talk about statistics. This article is about art appreciation.

My father was an artist, a landscape painter. He could see beauty in a half dead tree or just about anything else. He would talk about shapes, textures, colors, lighting, tones, and such. Most people do not really see the world around them. If you asked them to describe the color of water, they

mindful people destroy art of great antiquity for political purposes. Some in the United States, such as those who would send a Kentucky rifle to the smelter because it is a gun or punish a child for drawing a picture of a gun, are no different.

Guns are made for different purposes. Some are for protection. Some are for target shooting. Some are for hunting. Some are made just to look at.

To the engraver, a gun is like the

piece of canvas used by a painter. A good engraver can do remarkable things to a gun. There are many guns on the market that have “etched” designs. Etching is an acid or laser process that eats into the metal. There are guns that are machine stamped, or sometimes hand stamped, to look like engraving. There are guns that are “engraved” by a combination of those processes. A true engraving, however, is a carving of the metal. To the trained eye, or under a magnifying glass, it is quite distinct.

For many years I envied the cowboy stars from the 1950’s with their nickel plated, engraved Colt Peacemakers, SSA revolvers. Hopalong Cassidy, the Lone Ranger, Rex Trailer and others, all had these magnificent guns.

After 40 years of practicing law, I was determined to reward myself with a gun just like the cowboy stars had. The gun would have to be a Colt single action revolver, nickel finish, preferably in .45 cal. When my search began, Colt had what they called their “Custom” shop where you could have a Colt factory engraved. The waiting time for a gun from the custom shop was several years. The cost would depend upon how much of the gun you wanted engraved. Being of Scottish descent, the thought of buying a gun that would cost more than my first automobile, was a little intimidating.

My big problem was that Massachusetts does not allow Colt to sell new Single Action revolvers in Massachusetts. During some past moment of anti-gun hysteria, the

legislature was told that it had to outlaw “Saturday Night Specials.” The anti-gun forces said no self-respecting person would have a “Saturday Night Special.” Those guns, they said, were small, easily concealable, inexpensive guns, poorly made, of small caliber and the “gun of choice” of criminals. Although there was a grandfather clause for guns already lawfully owned, no new guns that fit the specifications set out by the law could be sold in Massachusetts. The venerable Colt Single Action revolver, even with a 7 ½ inch bar-

rel in .45 cal., a model that had been popular since 1873, did not meet the Attorney General’s standards. It was classed as a “Saturday Night Special” not to be sold in Massachusetts if manufactured after the date of the law. That was a major impediment to buying the gun I wanted to have.

not the long dead President from Quincy, but a very much alive modern engraver. John and his son John Adams, Jr. are the principals of the family business of Adams & Adams Custom Engravers. It was love at first sight, not with John whose wife was standing at his side, but with a SAA 7 1/2” barrel, .45 cal., fully engraved, nickel, Colt Peacemaker that John, Jr. had engraved. I looked at it. I fingered it. I probably even drooled a little. There were two draw backs to the gun. 1. I have always been tight with a dime and that gun would



**Engraved Colt Commander by Leonard Francolini.**

rel in .45 cal., a model that had been popular since 1873, did not meet the Attorney General’s standards. It was classed as a “Saturday Night Special” not to be sold in Massachusetts if manufactured after the date of the law. That was a major impediment to buying the gun I wanted to have.

One day I met John Adams at a gun show in Massachusetts. No,

take a lot of dimes to buy. 2. As magnificent as the engraving was, I did not care for the very ordinary grips on the gun.

As I walked around the show, I was conflicted. On one hand there was thrift. On the other hand there was art. Thrift verses art... As I passed by one table, I saw a Colt Commander, also fully engraved, in brushed nickel. It was

a beautiful work by the engraver Leonard Francolini. It looked so lonely. A work of art was sitting among military surplus guns. Art or finance?—my heart and pocketbook argued. Then my pocketbook said, “But it’s a good investment.” My heart agreed. There was consensus.

Out came my license. Off to the computer. Massachusetts requires all transfers of guns to be recorded. It did not require a dealer, just two licensed persons who report the sale to the state electronically.



**Engraved Colt Peacemaker by John Adams Sr and detail of cylinder.**

In a few minutes, the transaction was cleared by the state data base which is open to all. Buyer’s and seller’s license were noted. Everything was in order. The Colt Commander was mine.

With my new purchase safely secured under my arm, I went back to speak with Mr. Adams about the grips on his SAA. No problem, he said. If I picked out some grips I liked better and shipped the gun back to him in Vermont, he would fit the grips of my choice to the gun.

How, I asked, could I hand over something so nice as his Colt Peacemaker to a common carrier? No problem, Mr. Adams said, bring it to the house and he would fit the grips while I waited.

Back to the computer terminal. The Colt SAA had been manufactured prior to the change in the state law and could be sold in Massachusetts through a dealer.

I walked out of that show with two one-of-a-kind, guns in my arms. I knew that buying two handguns in one day would trig-

I spent a very pleasant morning drinking tea and swapping tales with Mr. and Mrs. Adams.

I found out that John, Sr. has been engraving most of his adult life. For a while, he worked for the Colt Custom shop. John, Sr. is a true artist. In him I could see that passion, that love for creativity that burned in my father’s heart. John could see beauty in the metal and in the shapes the metal took. He must have given that gift to his son because the son is also a master engraver. Each of them can find beauty within design of a machinist’s creation, a gun. Each can bring that beauty alive with their engraving.

As for the gun haters, they need to understand that not all guns are used for evil. There are reasons why someone might want to buy more than one gun in a month. Owning more than one gun does not lead to a life of crime.

In the Bible, Jesus was asked about eating certain foods that some people considered sinful. He admonished his listeners saying, it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man but what comes out. The things you say come from your heart. It is out of your heart that evil thoughts for murders, adulteries, thefts, false witnessing and other sins come. Matthew 15, 11, 17-20.

I would add to that. A physical object does not cause evil. Evil deeds come from evil thoughts spawned by greed, lust, hate, envy and resentments of all sorts. If a heart is possessed by evil thoughts, it will find the means to do evil deeds. It has been that way since the beginning of humanity.

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