

Rethinking the Second Amendment. “Those Lost to Gun Violence”: Dr. Naomi Wolf

Can We Indeed Have Peace and Freedom Without Guns?

By [Dr. Naomi Wolf](#)

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I wrote this essay some weeks ago, but I kept waiting to publish it til tragic mass shootings were no longer in the news. But that day looks as if it will never come, so I am publishing it anyway, with grief and mourning for those lost to gun violence, as we must nonetheless have this difficult conversation.

The last thing keeping us free in America, as the lights go off all over Europe- and Australia, and Canada – is, yes, we must face this fact, the Second Amendment.

I can’t believe I am writing those words. But here we are and I stand by them.

I am a child of the peace movement. A daughter of the Left, of a dashingy-bearded proto-Beatnik poet, my late dad, and of a Summer of Love activist/cultural anthropologist, my lovely mom. We are a lineage of anti-war, longhaired folks who believe in talking things out.

By the time I was growing up in California in the 1960s and 1970s, weapons were supposed to have become passe. When I played at friends’ houses in our neighborhood in San Francisco, there were posters on the walls: “War is Not Healthy for Children and Other Living Things.” Protesters had iconically placed daisies in the rifle barrels of unhip-looking National

Guardsmen.

We were obviously supposed to side with the daisies.

Weapons were archaic, benighted — *tacky*. A general peace was surely to prevail, in the dawning Age of Aquarius.

My young adulthood too unfolded in a context that reviled all guns all the time. The media was seared with images of gun mayhem. Drive-by shootings devastated inner cities. Gun violence was glorified in hip-hop videos, which in turn was rightly denounced by leaders of victimized communities.

As I grew older, the catastrophes related to lawless gun violence in this country did not abate: Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook — the horrors were endless. After every burst of violence, the same questions were asked: how can we allow anyone access to any weapons as these cause such devastation?

Because there were mass shootings and criminal gun violence in America, and because Americans, unlike citizens of other nations, owned and had access to firearms, guns themselves were identified, uncritically, in my progressive circles — (or perhaps I should say, in my former progressive circles) as being the scourge. My liberal community generally reacted to gun violence with a simple, literal arithmetic. Surely the sensible reaction to these catastrophic scenes was simply to *remove the guns*. End of problem.

The catastrophic scenes of gun violence were connected, in my former circles, directly to all gun owners, but without much equivocation or nuance. And since none of us actually knew people who *owned* firearms, or had ever asked them why they did so, it was easy to believe in broad generalizations and crude, even racist stereotypes: all gun owners or NRA members, for instance, we were sure, were unexploded emotional landmines — any one of them could become a mass murderer in a heartbeat. All gun owners or NRA members were surely, we believed, one cheap beer or one fentanyl hit away from spraying a church or workplace or parade with bullets.

It was hard for us to conceive that anyone might own guns and actually be law-abiding, responsible and peaceful.

My former progressive circles even saw hunting not as a sign of conservatorship of the land nor a symbol of sustainable food sourcing, and a relatively humane one compared with the harvesting of animals in factory farms, but rather they saw hunting as a symbol of the bloodlust of backwoods yokels straight out of Deliverance.

We assumed all gun owners were driven by fear or by rage.

It certainly did not occur to us that anyone might enjoy marksmanship, or like being a collector, and that thus there might be good reasons to own more than one firearm.

We always interpreted the ownership of multiple weapons as a sign of mental instability. Obviously! Who would *need* more than one gun, we asked one another, even if one conceded that anyone needed a gun at all?

Living in safe (wealthy) neighborhoods, assuming that a stable democracy would last forever, and relying with our costly educations on talking above all, we could not fathom the

“need” for guns or for gun rights.

We used to roll our eyes at the claims made by supporters of the Second Amendment. In my former circles, “2A” was often interpreted, even by Constitutional scholars, and certainly by the news outlets which we read, as applying only to government-run militias such as the US Army or the National Guard. I was told more times than I could count that the Second Amendment was never meant to apply to individuals’ ownership of guns; and I believed that.

Grammar too was used to make the case against individual gun ownership. Often, commentators in our circles described the phrasing of the Second Amendment as being so twisted and archaic that no one today could never truly confirm the Founders’ intentions regarding gun ownership by individuals.

Indeed, I heard these truisms so often, that when I actually sat down and read the Second Amendment carefully — as I was writing my 2008 book about the decline of democracies, *The End of America* — I was startled: because the Second Amendment wasn’t unclear *at all*.

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” [See [this](#)]

Critics on the Left of individual gun rights often described this sentence as being opaque because it has two clauses, and two commas prior to the final clause; so they read the first two sections as relating unclearly to the last assertion.

But if you are familiar with late 18th century rhetoric and sentence construction, the meaning of this sentence is transparent.

The construction of this sentence is typical of late 18th into early 19th century English grammar, in which there can be quite a few dependent clauses, gerunds and commas that come before the verb, and the object of, the sentence.

Thus, the correct way to read the Second Amendment, if you understand 18th century English grammar, is:

“A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.”

Or, translated into modern English construction: “*Because* a well-regulated militia is necessary to the security of a free State, *therefore* the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.”

Here is another example of many dependent clauses, commas and gerunds prior to the verb and object of the sentence: from the second paragraph of Thomas Paine’s pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776):

“As a long and violent abuse of power is generally the means of calling the right of it in question, (and in matters too which might never have been thought of, had not the sufferers been aggravated into the inquiry,) and as the King of England hath undertaken in his *own right*, to support the Parliament in what he calls *Theirs*, and as the good People of this Country are grievously oppressed by the Combination, they have an undoubted privilege to enquire into the Pretensions of both, and equally to reject the

Usurpation of *either*.” [See [this](#)].

This would translate into modern English: “The good people of this Country are grievously oppressed by the combination of a long and violent abuse of power and of the King of England’s support of Parliament in what he calls his rights and theirs. Thus, the [good people of this country] have an undoubted privilege to enquire into [ask about] the Pretension [claims] of both [King and Parliament], and by the same token to reject the Usurpation [of rights] of either.” The logic of the sentence, with its multiple clauses, gerunds and commas before the final verb and object of the sentence, is perfectly clear to anyone who is familiar with 18th century rhetoric.

Here is the famous first sentence of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, with the similar construction — common still in 1813, though uncommon today — of two commas and two clauses prior to the verb and object of the sentence: “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.”

So: there is no ambiguity whatsoever about the Second Amendment to readers of Paine and Austen. The Second Amendment says with *zero ambiguity*, in the English grammar of 1787, that Americans have an absolute right (“shall not be infringed”) to keep (own) and bear (carry) arms because they as individuals may be summoned to become a ‘well-regulated militia’. In the grammar of the 18th century, it’s the militia that is ‘well-regulated’ – orderly, in a clear chain of command, not a chaotic mob — and not the guns.

Why do I raise this all of this?

In part because — I have evolved my view about firearms, and I understand that doing so is in fact in alignment with the Constitution. And the thing about really supporting the Constitution is that you do not get to pick and choose. I can’t choose my favorite Amendment, the easy one, the First Amendment, and then shy away from the glass-clear directive of the Second Amendment, simply as a result of my own cultural discomfort. You have to stand up for it all, if you are to call yourself a supporter of the Constitution.

In part I am addressing this difficult, tender topic because I now *know* people who “keep and bear arms.” And they do not match the stereotypes I had long taken for granted.

Indeed I met my husband, as many know, because I was receiving death threats and I needed protection. He was highly trained in the use of firearms, via eleven years in active duty service with the U.S Army — in military intelligence, seven of which he spent assigned to two Special Forces Groups — and another ten years working in various Defense and Intelligence roles as a contractor. The fact is, I was relieved to have someone who could physically protect me during a time that felt dangerous to me. I’d be a hypocrite if I pretended that that was not the case.

Reader, I married him.

Indeed I have recently become a firearm owner myself.

Nonetheless my old resistances died hard.

For years, I remained jumpy knowing he had weapons in our home. People from my cultural background are taught to think of firearms as being innately incredibly dangerous; as being

always loaded, always half an inch away from causing a fatal accident indoors. I had no idea, until Brian showed me, of how safely one can store a weapon responsibly; or of the many layers of prevention, from storing ammunition separately, to the safety on the firearm itself, that should keep accidents from happening in conscientious homes. I also did not know, until I met responsible gun owners, that most of them do not in fact want mentally ill or unstable people to have access to arsenals at will; most support reasonable restrictions such as safety classes and background checks.

Nonetheless, for years, I had intense anxiety when Brian would keep his Glock in the glove compartment of his vehicle, or when he had his weapon on his person. When we arrived at our country home late at night after being away, if something seemed “off” – a light on, or a screen door open, for example — he would check the perimeter of the property to make sure all was safe, armed with a flashlight, and with his gun ready to be drawn. I would lock myself in the car and look away, heart racing. But I was...glad that it would be safe.

And then...there was the day a relative took us shooting, and I was carefully taught to fire a pistol against a deserted hillside in the Pacific Northwest. It terrified me, and I vowed never to do it again.

And then...there was the day, a bit later, that the same relative took me back to the hillside, and carefully taught me to fire a Galil ACE assault rifle. I leaned into it as instructed, and I shot the target, and hit it; and I felt that the weapon was not a chaotic animal that could turn on me or another, creating havoc, but rather that it was an instrument of power that I could control, and use with direction and will.

And then...there was the night Brian had to be away from home, and he showed me how to shoot his 12 gauge Mossberg shotgun that he keep in a safe. I was scared – but then I was not scared. I prepared to go to sleep with it within arm’s reach, in a safe place in the bedroom.

I thought of the many nights when I had been a single mother in that house, when any sound outside, especially sounds of footsteps — animal footsteps often sounded human – would turn me rigid from fear in my bed, wondering what to do. Back then I’d have been nearly helpless if an intruder, armed or unarmed, had, God forbid, tried to come in and harm us.

But now, after I’d gotten used to the shotgun being in my bedroom, I fell asleep; and then I slept the sweetest sleep I’d ever slept out of all of the nights I’d spent alone, or with small children to protect, in that house.

When I awoke, I thought: could it have been this easy the whole time? And then I thought: I was irresponsible, as a single mother, not to have been trained and not to have been armed.

And then...there was the day this week when I went to a gun shop with Brian, because we were about possibly to lose our national sovereignty; and he wanted to make sure I can protect myself, God forbid, if needed. In the gun shop, a smart, pleasant 27 year old woman named Nadine showed me what she recommended for me — a handgun that would fit nicely in a woman’s hand, and that would not have too much of a kick. She showed to me the size of the bullets that would stop an intruder. And she showed me a holster, designed by a woman, with soft edges, that fit around one’s hips and tucked into the waistband of one’s jeans. If your blouse is a bit loose, no one knows you are carrying a weapon.

She demonstrated, hitching the holster around her own hips and tucking the handgun under the waistband of her jeans. Her light cotton summer blouse indeed concealed it.

She looked like any slight young woman who was ready to go out to a concert, or a club. But she was secretly armed, and no one could harm her.

I thought of all the young women I knew who were harmed — badly — at concerts, at clubs, in alleyways. I thought about what would happen to rapists and abusers if young women — if women in general — were armed, or were even if many were reputed to be armed. And I thought of my decades of struggling with the issue of female victimization: the existential vulnerability of women who are always in danger from anyone bigger and stronger who wished to injure or exploit them.

And I thought: could it always have been this easy?

Could women resist and deter victimization — by simply owning, and knowing how to use, firearms?

Obviously.

How had this issue escaped me so long, as a rape survivor myself, and as a feminist? The rape survivor in me longed, on an animal level, for a weapon. Longed, on an animal level, to deter any future attacker. The rape survivor in me wanted a weapon the way an injured creature wants teeth and claws.

I did not buy the handgun, as I need a class and a permit and four references. That is as it should be. But I did buy a .22 Rossi Rimfire Rifle.

Brian assembled it. When I came downstairs in the morning, he had attached a “bipod” and had positioned it above my computer on my writing desk (with a safety lock and no ammunition nearby, of course). My assortment of dried flowers in a vase, and the stacks of books from my research, surrounded it.

I started laughing at the contrast: the elegant diagonal line of the sleek black weapon, stabilized and ready to be placed into defensive use (of course with the safety on) — standing guard over my computer.

It was nonetheless a powerful symbol — as powerful as had been the image of the holster tucked low around the hips of the now-not-vulnerable young woman.

I thought not only of rape survivors. I thought too when I saw the rifle on my desk, of writers, of journalists, of critics of the State, of dissidents. I thought of reporters hauled off to prison around the world by the minions of tyrants. I thought of our own recently created Ministry of Truth, and of the armed men who might make note of what was emerging from the computers of American writers.

What would happen to tyrants....what would happen to threats of violence and arrests for free speech — if writers too were defensively trained and armed? What if words themselves had a defense against violent tyranny, one that was always mounted?

The writers of our nation’s birth — they were armed. The writers who forged our country’s founding documents were armed *because* they were writers, and because they knew

perfectly well that in Britain, King George III simply hanged defenseless writers for sedition.

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I am also re-examining my reflexes about the Second Amendment because I believe that we are at a moment that our Founders, in their nearly-Prophetic wisdom, knew might come to pass. We are at the kind of moment for which the Second Amendment may have been written in just the clear, unequivocal way that it was.

You know that I see tyranny descending all around the formerly free nations of the world. I say these days that the coup in America has already taken place — a stealthy, sneaky coup, mounted without a shot being fired.

President Biden extended Emergency Powers in February 2022 due to COVID. [See [this](#)]. A few days ago, he extended emergency powers again — I didn't see this massive news covered anywhere — but this time, bizarrely, with COVID in retreat, he extended emergency powers due to the challenges posed by the stabilization of *Iraq*. [See [this](#)]

At which we must ask: who writes his material? But under emergency law we remain.

States around the country, such as New York State, where I write, are still under continually-renewed emergency laws. New York's Governor Kathy Hochul extends emergency law month after month [See [this](#)].

But there is no medical emergency here in NYS.

These orders strip us of our usual protections provided by legislative actions and they leave us vulnerable to future depredations: the return of "lockdowns", of forcible quarantines such as in Shanghai, of confiscations of our property, of mandated masks and injections, and of indeed far worse. That is the nature of emergency laws in history. They are never given up willingly. They always lead to the imprisonment or terrorization of the now-subject people.

The democratic protections of the formerly free nations of the world — Canada, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand — have been shut down with the ease of someone switching off a light, and with almost no resistance from citizens. Yes, there have been protests, and there have been petitions, and innumerable complaints online; and a few brave legislators have spoken up, if only to echoing chambers.

But the fact remains that when the unidentifiable police or mercenary forces, as in Canada, are violent, and the protesters have nothing but the moral high ground with which to deter their violence, then even the bravest of resistances is fleeting.

In Australia, citizens are now arrested when they seek to escape forcible quarantine. This happened so easily. Australians yielded 650,000 privately owned guns in 1996-7 [See [this](#)]. Australians can now offer little deterrence to this kidnapping by the state.

The unarmed people of Shanghai have nothing which which to deter their mass incarceration. Neither can the unarmed citizens of China as a whole deter the transportation of ethnic minorities into detention camps, or organ harvesting or forced abortions.

You can hate guns. I have hated guns most of my life. I hate violence. I hate gun violence. I hate the slaughter of innocents. I am a peaceful person.

But it is becoming obvious even to us pacifists, vegans, and tree huggers, that formerly free people who are unarmed are defenseless against the criminal tyrannies exerting massive violence and control upon them.

And it is becoming obvious that similar tyrannical moves against the people of the United States have been thwarted in advance or deterred – and only state by state — pretty much only because the people of the United States have the right to own and carry weapons, and because many do so.

This question of who has access to firearms has become all the more serious as the war against the US and the free world is ramping up. The mostly-Bill Gates- and CCP-funded WHO planned at the end of May to try to drain sovereignty from sovereign nations, in the name of “Global Health” and the prospect of “future Pandemics”; in the interest of “Global Health Security”.

This power grab was delayed. It is not off the table.

Who then will be the armed men at your door? They can easily be global private mercenaries, sent by Tedros Ghebreyesus; mercenaries sent to lock you in your home, or take you to a quarantine camp against your will, under the guise of a “public health emergency.”

What will stop this, if not states’ refusal to comply, and if not the weapons of citizens?

Bill Gates has been making the case for just this structure of transnational power for a long time.

A mock field hospital for Ebola was set up as at the 2015 TED conference in Vancouver by Bill Gates — a non-physician — who explained, seven years ago, the need for global “Germ Games” to address the next pandemic:

“Playing the part of an Ebola-fighting doctor involved wriggling into oversized rubber boots and yellow bodysuits. Rubber gloves were layered over hands, sealing tightly at sleeve cuffs.

Heads and faces were covered with hoods, goggles and breathing masks.

Under it all went a new cooling vest developed by the Gates Foundation. The vest was lined with ice packs to offset stifling heat inside suits.

Luanne Freer, a doctor who worked with Ebola patients in Sierra Leone with nonprofit Partners in Health, recalled sweating so much into her face mask that “it was like waterboarding.” [See [this](#)]

Bill Gates is still trying to have his fetish-y, psychotic adolescent fantasies come true, worldwide; but this time not at a TED conference in make-believe Ebola camps, but for real, with real quarantine camps and with his own private One Health army. He won’t give up, nor will the WEF and the WHO. We don’t know who the unnamed, dark-clad — police? Mercenaries? — were, who violently beat the Canadian truckers, and we don’t know who the unnamed dark-clad — police? Mercenaries? — were, who violently beat the protesters against ‘lockdowns’ in France. There are mercenary armies available to private individuals or nonprofit entities around the world, with a phone call. The Second Amendment, along

with our sovereignty, alone protects us from them.

This is hard to accept. But risks of criminal gun violence, while always tragic, are risks that sadly can't be done away with altogether, if we are to secure a more fundamental safety for more people and more lives; the right as a nation of 330 million people, to deter massive planned violence, criminal detentions, "lockdowns", theft of assets, and violent crimes at the state, and now at meta-state, levels, against our lives and freedoms and yes, against our children.

Without the brilliantly-conceived and clearly-worded Second Amendment, without the deterrent to state and transnational violence of responsible, lawful, careful and defensive firearms ownership in the United States of America, it is clear that nothing at all will save our citizens from the current fates of the people of China, Australia and Canada; including the children; who are facing — unarmed, defenseless as their parents sadly are — even worse fates, perhaps, still ahead.

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Featured image: The foundation of the United States is embedded in gun violence. (Photo: Joe Loong)

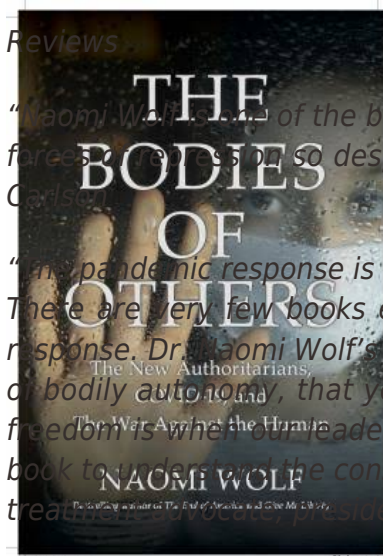
The Bodies of Others: The New Authoritarians, Covid-19 and the War Against the Human

By Naomi Wolf

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Reviews

“Naomi Wolf is one of the bravest, clearest-thinking people I know. The reason you hear the far-right press so desperately trying to dismiss her is because she is right.” - Tucker Carlson

“This pandemic response is the biggest crisis of our time. It is going to make wars look small. There are very few books exploring the pandemic, its origins and the ramifications of the response. Dr. Naomi Wolf’s ‘The Bodies of Others’ focuses on the extremely important issue of bodily autonomy, that you decide what happens to your body. The greatest loss to our freedom is when our leaders makes decisions on the bodies of others. Buy this important book to understand the consequences.” - Dr. Peter McCullough, cardiologist, COVID-19 early treatment protocol consultant, Cardio Renal Society of America

“Dr. Naomi Wolf’s book stands apart in a world of groupthink. It is an impeccable, thought-provoking compilation of the troubling and distressing consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, including censorship and the suppression of alternatives to the mainstream narrative.” - Dr. Paul Alexander, former WHO COVID pandemic evidence-synthesis advisor

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