

# 10 HANGING TOGETHER

By Peter Caroline

*"We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."*

Benjamin Franklin, July 4, 1776

By the time this is published, you will have undoubtedly heard all sorts of stories about a long-time hunting writer who described military-style semiautomatic rifles as "Terrorist Weapons," and how his various sponsors have dropped him like a hot rock. There's been a tidal wave of postings on the Internet about this, particularly in view of how our anti-gun enemies have capitalized on this unfortunate situation. For what it's worth, here's my opinion:

Right now, we gun owners are facing our most serious threat since the Clinton Administration. All the gains we have made in the past few years may be wiped out by a Democratic Party Congress and Senate and – God forbid – President in the near future. The old Clinton Assault Weapon Ban may become law again, a far more inclusive version with a lot more "unacceptable" guns thrown under the bus. Too bad...all those people who wanted to register a protest vote against the Iraq War and high gasoline prices voted these anti-gun characters in. Where were the one-issue, pro-gun votes back in November of 2006?

In any case, we have to ask...why are so-called dedicated hunters making noises like Sarah Brady, Michael Bloomberg or Charles Schumer. Perhaps it's because a significant number of wealthy "sportsmen" or well-subsidized outdoor writers are in fact elitists. And that attitude does not help in maintaining or expanding our area of interest. I'll readily admit, I'd love to hunt with a five-figure David Miller or Dakota Arms rifle or Perazzi shotgun. But that ain't gonna happen. The majority of us make do quite happily with our Model 94s or 870s. Many of us go out in the field with something that might be unsympathetically and ignorantly described as an "assault rifle."

Okay, time for a reality check. The AK-47 fires a cartridge ballistically identical to the hallowed .30/30, the cartridge that's taken more deer than virtually all other calibers combined. AR-15s and their clones have now reached a state of the art where 1/2 and even 1/4 MOA performance is not unusual. Take yours truly as an example. When I was first invited to go prairie dog hunting in western Colorado, some 30+ years ago, I brought out an Armalite AR-180...simply because at that time it was the only long gun I had in a varmint caliber. Even equipped with a Leupold 3-9X scope, it didn't have the trigger pull or overall accuracy that was needed. After the first day out, I traded it for a Remington 700 BDL in .22-250. The point is, if my host had refused to take me out hunting when I

took my AR-180 out of its case, I would have been turned off by the whole experience. I had the chance to take my Black Rifle out to the field, and I learned its limitations. Today, there are AR-15s that are perfectly appropriate for varmint hunting, within the limitations of their cartridges. Incidentally, I took my last buffalo in New Mexico with a .50 Beowulf, built on an AR-15 lower end. Ooh, an Evil Black Rifle...and a damn good one, at that!

The main thing that divides us and works to our detriment in the firearms field is this whole business of "My gun is okay, but yours isn't." I've heard all too many shotgunners make disparaging remarks about handgun owners. Some benchrest guys think that black rifles are strictly for paranoid survivalist types. And many military rifle enthusiasts compare traditional hunters to Elmer Fudd. This is hurting us, people; we're not protecting our Second Amendment rights by pissing on each other's shoes.

We cannot reiterate too often, the Second Amendment has nothing to do with hunting, target shooting, collecting or any other sport, hobby or non-defensive pursuit. We gun owners are all in the same

sleigh, and throwing one of us off is not going to slow down the wolves for long. We gun owners – all of us, regardless of our area of special interest – have mortal enemies who are now in control of both houses of Congress. Charles Schumer, Ted Kennedy, Hillary Clinton *et al* don't care if you have an AK-47 or a Perazzi. In their eyes, it's simply a gun, and only they or their bodyguards are entitled to have the means of self-defense. As long as we commoners can remain armed, we have the wherewithal to remain relatively free. But it won't last long if we get into internal wrangles *vis-a-vis* Good Guns vs. Bad Guns.

I've owned guns since I was seven years old. I've been writing for the firearms industry and about guns since 1981, and have written for *The Blue Press* since 1991. According to the BATF's description of why I was issued an FFL, I am a "Firearms Expert/Consultant," which is in my opinion a pretty optimistic statement. I would classify myself as a firearms enthusiast who's been damn lucky. While I have owned individual guns that I'd categorize as junk, I'd never condemn any category of guns as such. I've shot with, hunted with and spent hours discussing with gun owners of all areas of interests. What we all have in common is a debt to our Founding Fathers. They realized that our inalienable rights would be protected only if we individually had the means to protect ourselves. That's what the Second Amendment is all about, and any gun owner who doesn't understand that needs a serious attitude adjustment.

