

Finding Freedom Again

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Freedom! What a wonderful word. It brings forth visions of flags, eagles, and other inspiring symbols, and it is something that we have heard, all of our lives. However, can we tie it down? Can we fully comprehend that which made so many, over nearly two and a half centuries, willing to lay down their lives to defend?

We have all watched as a newborn baby went through the first stages of life. We watch him grow, every day of his life. We look, again, at the child, after a few years, and realize that he has changed. He no longer wears diapers, he walks quite well, speaks very good English, writes, sings, and so many other things. During the course of the years, we have not noticed the subtle changes, daily occurring, that have moved this once helpless infant into, of all things, a grown man.

There is another side of life, as well. We have watched our parents, since our infancy, and only occasionally do we take a moment to notice how they have grown old and feeble, their bodies slowly wasting away from the youth that we remember, and achieving the stature of the aged.

Only when we take the time to sit and contemplate, do we realize that, with the passage of time, things do change. Those changes are gradual, and, nearly imperceptible, on a day-to-day basis. However, they do occur, and, they do accumulate -- eventually, to the point that they would be almost unrecognizable, except for minor characteristics that are simply vestiges of the past.

As it is with aging, it is also the case with the erosion of our freedoms. It is quite probable that our founding fathers would examine the circumstance of our freedoms today and conclude that we have, indeed, given them up, and that we are immersed too far in the trees to see the forest.

The remainder of this discussion offers numerous examples of ways in which our freedoms have been eroded with the passage of time. Since we cannot regain what we fail to see as lost, it is my sincerest hope that this discussion provides the reader a sense of what has been lost so that we can commit ourselves to finding freedom again.

The Meaning of Freedom

Perhaps a dozen years ago, I asked my son, then a teenager at the time, what 'freedom' was. He responded that it was the 'freedom' to go down to the convenience store, at any time, to hang out with his friends.

This is the same son who, many years ago, I promised to myself that I would seek a life for him that was as full of freedom as my juvenile years were. However, somewhere, during the course of making a family, moving myself upward to my career, acquiring management skills, and, finally, operating my own business, I had lost sight of that promise that I had made to us both, for my son and to myself.

Since that rude awakening, I have endeavored to deliver on that promise. In fact, in the course of study of what happened to those freedoms that were so common in my youth, but have since become nearly as extinct as the dinosaurs, I learned not only that they had been lost, but also that there were many that were lost long before I was even born.

The foundation required for understanding freedom must first be put into the perspective of the proper role of government.

Government's purpose is to provide such services that we could provide to ourselves, though, as a community, makes more sense to be provided by our government. These services, for example, would include roadways. There is no doubt that our own driveway is our responsibility -- to be built and maintained at our own expense or effort. But, what of the roadway that connects our driveway to the other driveways of the community? It, obviously, should not be the responsibility of one, but rather, of those who benefit by its existence. So, the community builds and maintains the roadways that connect the driveways.

Now, each community would be isolated from other communities if there were not even more roadways connecting this community to the other communities. Beyond that, there are others areas and regions which need be connected, until there is national network of roadways whereby one from any community is able to travel on roadways to any other home in any other community. Each higher level of government only necessary for the construction and maintenance of those roadways that are necessary to connect the roads of the next lower entity.

Though roads are used in this example, there are many other aspects which fall into such necessity. Commerce, for example, must be provided for, and controlled, only to the extent necessary to assure that goods which are not locally available can be made available to members of any of the communities within the nation. It is the availability, not the prohibition of, that the Founding Fathers addressed when they granted to authority to the national government to "regulate commerce". This provision was never intended to restrict or prohibit the availability of goods from one part of the country to another, for, to do so would surely be a restriction of the rights of those who were denied access, where they were, to goods that were produced elsewhere.

Common Defense and Foreign Relations, too, are the responsibility of higher government, though they should not be a restriction on our freedoms, except to protect us, and our freedoms, from assault by foreign powers.

Fundamentally, when "We the People" created the national (and state's) government, we granted to them what authority we had, individually and collectively, to perform duties, in that collective capacity, that we had every right to perform on our own. We could not give to government that

which we did not possess ourselves, for we had not that to grant. Since we have no ability to create rights for others, they government, likewise, cannot create rights which would impinge upon those rights that we do possess. Once a "right" (or freedom) is given to one, such that it has the effect of a detriment to another, it cannot be classified as a right (or freedom) that could be granted by us, or by the government that we brought into being.

To understand Freedom, we must first understand what Freedom means, and which, if more than one definition is appropriate, is the one that those, so long ago, were first willing to give their lives for.

From Webster's 1828 Dictionary, we find:

Freedom: The state of the exemption from the power or control of another; liberty; exemption from slavery, servitude or confinement. Freedom is personal, civil, political, and religious.

Since "liberty" is included in the definition, here is what the same source provides for that term:

Liberty: freedom from restraint, in a general sense, and applicable to the body, or to the will or mind. The body is at liberty, when not confined; the will or mind is at liberty, when not checked or controlled. A man enjoys his liberty, when no physical force operates to restrain his actions or volitions.

Natural liberty, consists in the power of acting as one thinks fit, without any restraint or control, except from the laws of nature. It is a state of exemption from the control of others, and from positive laws and the institutions of social life. This liberty is abridged by the establishment of government.

Civil liberty, is the liberty of man in a state of society, or natural liberty, so far only abridged and restrained, as is necessary and expedient for the safety and interest of the society, state or nation. A restraint of natural liberty, not necessary or expedient for the public, is tyranny or oppression. Civil liberty is an exemption from the arbitrary will of others, which exemption is secured by established laws, which restrain every man from injuring or controlling another. Hence the restraints of law are essential to civil liberty.

One other source worthy of inclusion is from Black's Law Dictionary, 5th Edition:

Freedom: The state of being free; liberty; self-determination; absence of restraint; the opposite of slavery.

The power of acting, in the character of a moral personality, according to the dictates of the will, without other check, hindrance, or probation than such as may be imposed by a just and necessary law and the duties of social life.

The prevalence, in the government and constitution of a country, of such a system of laws and institutions as secure civil liberty to the individual citizen.

Here, again, "liberty" is made a part of the definition:

Liberty: freedoms; exemption from extraneous control. Freedom from all restraints except such as are justly imposed by law. Freedom from restraint, under conditions essential to the equal enjoyment of the same rights by others; freedom regulated by law. The absence of arbitrary restraint, not immunity from reasonable regulations and prohibitions imposed in the interest of the community.

"The power of the will to follow the dictates of its unrestricted choice, and to direct the external facts of the individual without restraint, coercion, or control from other persons."
See Booth v. Illinois, 184 US 425 (1902)

From these definitions, we can get an idea of what, in the past, was considered to be the inalienable right (freedom or liberty) that is protected by the Constitution. In fact, it would appear that Freedom and Liberty are nearly synonymous, and will be used in that context throughout this discussion.

Now, the entire quotation from Booth v. Illinois:

"[T]hat ... liberty ... 'means, not only the right of the citizen to be free from the mere physical restraint of his person, as by incarceration, but the term is deemed to embrace the right of the citizen to be free in the enjoyment of all his faculties; to be free to use them in all lawful ways; to live and work where he will; to earn his livelihood by any lawful calling; to pursue any livelihood or avocation, and for that purpose to enter into all contracts which may be proper, necessary, and essential to his carrying out to a successful conclusion the purposes above mentioned.' "

The effect of the decision was to overturn a law that had been passed, in the State of Illinois, which forbade options in the grain market.

Was a state law overturned in favor of the individual right to offer to buy, at a future date, grain, at a certain price? Absolutely. State law cannot deny rights, or liberties, of its citizens, even if enacted by the Legislature (this, too, would apply to federal legislation).

This decision clearly sets the distinction between what is "legal" and what is "lawful" The Court determined that though "legal" under Illinois's laws, was "unlawful" in that it was a constraint upon the liberties of the people.

This leads us to another definition:

From Black's Law Dictionary, 5th Edition

Lawful. Legal; warranted or authorized by the law; having the qualifications prescribed by law; not contrary to or forbidden by the law.

The principal distinction between the terms "lawful" and "legal" is that the former contemplates the substance of law, the latter the form of law. To say of an act that it is "lawful" implies that it is authorized, sanctioned, or at any rate not forbidden, by law. To say that it is "legal" implies that it is done or performed in accordance with the forms and usages of law, or in a technical manner. In this sense "illegal" approaches the meaning of "invalid." For example, a contract or will, executed without the required formalities, might be said to be invalid or illegal, but could not be described as unlawful. Further, the word "lawful" more clearly implies an ethical content than does "legal." The latter goes no further than to denote compliance, with positive, technical, or formal rules; while the former usually imports a moral substance or ethical permissibility. A further distinction is that the word "legal" is used as the synonym of "constructive," which "lawful" is not. Thus "legal fraud" is fraud implied or inferred by law, or made out by construction. "Lawful fraud" would be a contradiction in terms. Again, "legal" is used as the antithesis of "equitable." Thus, we speak of "legal assets," "legal estate," etc., but not of "lawful assets," or "lawful estate." But there are some connections in which the two words are used as exact equivalents. Thus, a "lawful" writ, warrant, or process is the same as a "legal" writ, warrant, or process.

As you proceed through the rest of this discussion, keep in mind that there is a subtle difference between "lawful", being *the substance of law; moral or ethical permissibility*, and, "legal", being *the form of law; compliance, with positive, technical, or formal rules*. Consider whether laws (rules) have not been used to undermine the intentions of the Constitution (moral and ethical).

What it boils down to is "no harm, no foul", or, probably more properly put, that there is no crime unless another party is injured.

How Checks and Balances Protect Freedom

The Constitution was written very carefully, with checks and balances to prevent our freedoms from being eroded. First, we will consider a freedom that was lost by a legal amendment to the Constitution and later was restored in two steps, first by the jury system and later by repeal of the amendment. Second, we will consider an unlawful arrest and how the appeals process restored one man's freedom. Finally, we will review how our protections to unlawful arrest have eroded.

Suppose the government wanted to pass a law making a crime out of an activity that caused no direct harm to others. Well, first, since that activity would be considered lawful, absent a law to the contrary, and, since the Constitution prohibits denial of those rights, or liberties, it would require a change in the Constitution.

This very situation has indeed occurred. In 1919, an Amendment to the Constitution (18th Amendment - Prohibition), which provided that "*the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.*"

This was the only means of imposing such a law on the people; however, if you will note, it does not apply to individual possession, which would be an extension of federal authority that acted on the people, themselves. That would be beyond the accepted scope of federal authority.

States, however, bound by the Constitution, were obliged to allow the federal government to run, roughshod, over the states, and their citizens, in the federal effort to achieve a degree of social engineering (telling us what was acceptable, and, what was not acceptable), which contradicted the concepts of liberty before this time.

Until Prohibition, each county was able to determine what the will of its citizens was, and to pass moral laws that those citizens were desirous of having so that the community supported their collective morality.

So, what happened to Prohibition? Well, fortunately, our system of government has many safeguards against abuse by the government. Probably the most significant is the fact that juries are the final arbiters of the will of the people. Their inherent right to judge both fact (what happened, based upon the evidence) and law (is this law one which we, the people, believe to be consistent with our will?) came in to play. Many juries refused to convict those charged with violating laws enacted under the authority of the 18th Amendment. As time went on, more and more juries followed this approach. Finally, in 1933, the 18th Amendment was repealed by the ratification of the 21st Amendment to the Constitution.

One more noteworthy case warrants our consideration, if we are to understand what Liberty truly is. That case evolved from an incident that occurred in 1899 [John Bad Elk v. US, 177 U.S. 529 (1900)], but, let us let the Court tell us what happened (emphasis, mine):

That John Bad Elk, "while out of doors, fired a couple of shots from his gun at or near the place where he resided. Soon after the firing, one Captain Gleason, ...asked him if he had done that shooting, and he said that he had; that 'he had shot into the air for fun;' to which Gleason responded by saying to him, 'Come around to the office in a little while, and we will talk the matter over.' Thereupon they separated. As he [John Bad Elk] did not come to the office, Gleason, after waiting several days, gave verbal orders to three ... policemen to go and arrest [John Bad Elk] ... No reason for making the arrest was given, nor any charge made against him. The policemen, one of whom was the deceased, went to the house where the [John Bad Elk] was stopping, and came back and reported to Gleason that he was not there, and they were then ordered to return and wait for him and to arrest him. They returned to the house, but came back again and reported that the [John Bad Elk] said that he would go with them ... in the morning; that it was too late to go with them that night. Gleason then told them to watch him and see that he did not go away, and in the morning to [arrest him].

The policemen then again went back to the house where [John Bad Elk] was staying ... He [John Bad Elk] went into the house, and one of their number followed him; found him smoking, and told him that they had come to take him to [arrest him]. [John Bad Elk] refused to go, and the policeman went outside. Another of them then went into the house, and in a few minutes both he and [John Bad Elk] came out, and the latter saddled his horse and went over to the house of a friend, and they followed him. It was getting dark when he

came back to his mother's house, still followed by them, and while following [John Bad Elk] to his house on this last occasion they were joined by others, so that when he went into the house there were four or five men standing about it. In a short time [John Bad Elk] came out, and asked of those outside, 'What are you here bothering me for?' The deceased said: 'Cousin, you are a policeman, and know what the rules and orders are.' To [John Bad Elk] replied: 'Yes; I know what the rules and orders are, but I told you I would go with you ... in the morning.' Then, according to the evidence for the prosecution, [John Bad Elk], without further provocation, shot the deceased, who died within a few minutes.

There is an entire absence of any evidence of a complaint having been made before any magistrate or officer charging an offense against [John Bad Elk], and there is no proof that he had been guilty of any criminal offense, or that he had even violated any rule or ... or that any warrant had been issued for his arrest. On the contrary, Gleason swears that his orders to arrest [John Bad Elk] were not in writing, but given orally. Indeed, it does not appear that Gleason had any authority even to entertain a complaint or to issue a warrant in any event.

At common law, if a party resisted arrest by an officer without warrant and who had no right to arrest him, and if in the course of that resistance the officer was killed, the offense of the party resisting arrest would be reduced from what would have been murder if the officer had had the right to arrest, to manslaughter. What would be murder if the officer had the right to arrest might be reduced to manslaughter by the very fact that he had no such right. So an officer, at common law, was not authorized to make an arrest without a warrant, for a mere misdemeanor not committed in his presence.

The Court further ruled that the error of the charge to the jury was material and prejudicial, saying:

... And yet the charge presented [John Bad Elk] to the jury as one having no right to make any resistance to an arrest by these officers, although he had been guilty of no offense, and it gave the jury to understand that the officers, in making the attempt, had the right to use all necessary force to overcome any and all opposition that might be made to the arrest, even to the extent of killing the individual whom they desired to take into their custody. Instead of saying that plaintiff in error had the right to use such force as was absolutely necessary to resist an attempted illegal arrest, the jury were informed that the policemen had the right to use all necessary force to arrest him, and that he had no right to resist. He, of course, had no right to unnecessarily injure, much less to kill, his assailant; but where the officer is killed in the course of the disorder which naturally accompanies an attempted arrest that is resisted, the law looks with very different eyes upon the transaction, when the officer had the right to make the arrest, from what it does if the officer had no such right. What might be murder in the first case might be nothing more than manslaughter in the other, or the facts might show that no offense had been committed.

Before I comment on the ramifications of this case, I would like to point to a Texas State Law (Texas Penal Code) which clearly supports this conclusion. Texas, understanding what the rights to liberty were, enacted a law, which reads:

§9.3.1(C) The use of force to resist an arrest or search is justified:

(1) if, before the actor offers any resistance, the peace officer (or person acting at his direction) uses or attempts to use greater force than necessary to make the arrest or search; and

(2) when and to the degree the actor reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect himself against the peace officer's (or other person's) use or attempted use of greater force than necessary.

So, clearly, both the Court, in the John Bad Elk case, and, the Texas Legislature, in the enactment of Section 9.3.1(C), realized that government could err -- and, that we had an absolute RIGHT to protect both our property and our Liberty.

Perhaps this is demonstrative of Article V, Bill of Rights: "No person shall be held [arrested] to answer [go to court on the matter] for any capital [death penalty], or infamous [where sentence would be one year, or more, year in jail] crime, unless on presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury [made up of fellow citizens]..."

This also demonstrates that, as in the case of John Bad Elf, whether written (into law) or oral (judge's instructions to the jury), if apparently "legal" still must also be "lawful" And, is clearly set out in Texas Penal Code, which insists on the lawfulness of an arrest.

As shown above, in the past, we were not subject to immediate arrest, at the will of an officer. Rather, only other citizens, performing their constitutional responsibility to sit as a Grand Jury, could authorize that arrest.

How does this comport with what we have been led to believe, today? By various means, including, but not limited to, unlawful enactments, abuse of even presumed authority by law enforcement, arming of National Park Service, other agencies which have no reason to be armed, and, perhaps, with a high degree of participation of Hollywood, we have been led to believe that the police have an ultimate power, contrary to the supreme Court, to do whatever is necessary, even using force, or threat of force, to compel us to submit to what would appear to be unlawful (though, perhaps, legal) arrests -- even to the point of killing unarmed people.

If we are to fully understand that our freedoms are not only in jeopardy, but we have been reduced to fright for even participating in a life that is alleged to be free. This is best explained with a simple example: Suppose you are driving down the street, and you know that you are not violating any laws. Then, you notice that a police car has pulled in behind you, and is following you down the road. What do you feel? If you are like most of the people I have asked, their reaction is one of concern. They will first look at their speedometer, then, start thinking, is there a light out on my car, or has my license plate fallen off? Regardless, the significant emotion is one of impending consequences, unless and until the police car discontinues his course, following YOU down the street.

This is perhaps best described as a police state mentality. It is not much different, though to a much lesser degree, than what was felt by those who lived in East Berlin, prior to the fall of the

Berlin Wall. It is, without a doubt, a feeling that should never even be experienced in a free country.

Incremental Erosion of Freedom

The ways in which our freedoms have been eroded over time are so numerous that there is no way to count them all. For most of the remainder of this narrative, observations of eroded freedoms are grouped by the type of freedom being impinged – private activities, business activities, childhood activities, licensing of our rights, loss of the meaning of public, and corporate seizure of our rights. At the end of this section, we will consider a true life example of the incrementalism that slowly bleeds our freedoms.

PRIVATE ACTIVITIES

It seems that the government has become the arbiter of how we buy and sell land, how we socialize, and how we raise our children. How did this happen?

Private Contracts. We will start with the right to dispose of our private property, in any way that we choose. Historically, Covenants and Restrictions were, and continue to be, a part of the purchase of land. In the past, they were the will of the seller, and were made, as he saw most suitable, to create an environment that was conducive to the property. The buyer, then, acknowledged, by purchasing the property, an agreement with the provisions of that contract (Covenants and Restrictions). These might include no animals to be raised on the property; no abandoned vehicles to be stored on the property; only homes of over a defined square-footage may be constructed on the property; no property shall be resold to anyone other than the Caucasian race, etc. These were binding, and they were enforceable, until around 1950. Why? Let's look at Article I, Section 10, clause 1: "No State shall... pass any... Law impairing the Obligations of Contract". Our right to contract is, in fact, one of those freedoms.

Now, Covenants and Restrictions are, most often, required to contain certain provisions mandated by the government, rather than what the seller decides is most conducive to the property. And, the race-related provision that was common to the older Covenants and Restrictions was deemed 'unconstitutional'. So, what stood for centuries is removed. A right that you had, which would also be considered a right of association, was reduced to history, without a Constitutional Amendment to remove it.

Private Associations. This encroachment of freedom has been expanded to affect your very right of association (with whom you please and without whom you don't please) through private organizations and associations. The PGA Masters is a private association with private membership and engages in "invitation only" golf tournaments. The government has seen fit to enact laws and then intimidate the Masters to force them into opening their membership, effectively denying the members the right of association (a very basic freedom).

Whether you agree the right of association (race restrictions), you have to accept that it is a fundamental right. Though you may not think that those who wished to preserve those rights have the freedom to do so, any acceptance of the government's authority to diminish, or remove,

those freedoms is the authority, also, to begin removing your freedoms, when they can model them as unfair to someone else. In order to put this in perspective, you need to understand that the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), after all of these years, has still denied membership to Caucasian applicants. What other freedoms do *you* cherish that may be unpopular with others?

Parenting. Discipline was a matter for parents to deal dispense. Spanking was a known detriment to many activities that we partook practiced, knowing that they were, not necessarily against the law, but against the rules laid down by those same parents. Nobody was surprised when this corporal punishment was administered. It was expected, if we were caught. Society chose not to involve itself in the business of family and child rearing. After all, the parents are, in God's eyes, responsible for progeny. And, I am sure that, as I reflect back, those who were subject to such discipline faired far better in life than those who were not, though there are many admirable exceptions. The duty and the consequences were upon the parent, not the "village".

Through legislation at both state and federal levels, the child is now free from discipline by the parents, though the parents are still held responsible for the actions of the child. If the child manages to secure credit, the parent is responsible for the debt. If the parent disciplines the child, the parent can be held legally accountable for such action. If the child wants certain 'medical' procedures, then the child can secure such procedure, and the law does not even allow that the parent can be notified. The parent's rights have been abridged to "responsibility, without commensurate authority". And, in the long term, many parents will have to suffer over the product of their procreation, in some cases with anguish, and will have do so knowing that they had so little to do restrictions on the upbringing of their own child.

Another loss of freedom, regarding your children, is the concept the child belongs to the parents. Regardless of whether you agree with how another person raises their child, or not, God left that part of procreation to the parents of the child. The early history of this country demonstrates a respect for that relationship. The "age of majority" was the point in life when a child was able to leave the care of his parents and move out into the world, on his own. He was able to contract and was considered as much a part of society as any other person. However, prior to that point in life, the parents were totally responsible for the actions of their child.

The Crime of Fraud. Let us look at what used to be a crime and what is now an accepted and approved practice. However, first, some definitions:

From Webster's 1828 Dictionary:

Fraud *n.* : Deceit; deception; trick; artifice by which the right or interest of another is injured; a stratagem intended to obtain some undue advantage; and attempt to gain or the obtaining of an advantage over another by imposition or immoral means; particularly deception in contracts. Or bargain and sale, either by stating falsehoods, or suppressing truth.

From Black's Law Dictionary (5th Edition):

Fraud. An intentional perversion of the truth for the purpose of inducing another in reliance upon it to part with some valuable thing belonging to him or to surrender a legal right. A

representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading allegations, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives and is intended to deceive another so that he shall act upon it to his legal injury.

What this means is that if I sell you something, and if I know that I cannot deliver, if you have created reliance upon that sale, and if you have even tendered payment for it, and if I fail to deliver, then I have committed a fraud. This may be mitigated if I return your money, but it is still a crime.

So, if I sell you an airline ticket for a flight, at a specific time (or flight number), and to a specific destination, and take your money (credit card charge), then you should fully expect that I will deliver (especially, since the government has a degree of regulation through the FAA), as promised. You, then, make plans based upon that reliance, though when you arrive to board, you find that all of the seats are taken, and you will not be able to achieve your goal of arriving at the destination in even close proximity to the time that you had planned.

That constitutes what has always been regarded as a crime, though now, the airlines simply offer you another flight, or return your money. They make no effort to offset any costs that you might incur because of their failure to provide what they had sold. You have been deprived of your property, since your time is your property, and whether it is exchanged for money or set aside for pleasure, it is no less your property than your other physical possessions. However, they have not committed a crime, and you have been the victim of a crime that was not committed. This leaves you no legal remedy, which is a denial of justice as well as a loss of freedom.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Now that we have considered an example of fraud by a business that is somehow legal, it probably will not surprise you to learn business owners have been on the receiving end as well.

Who To Serve. If many years ago you owned a business, you had every right to determine with whom you would, and, whom you would not, do business. A very common sign of that same period read, "We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to Anyone." That was the prerogative of the owner of the business, and had nothing to do with any authority granted to the federal or state government. However, about the same time, the government decided that this, too, was unconstitutional on several fronts. Who you do business with is now up to the state, not up to the owner who acquired the capital, provided the idea and the sweat, and made a functioning business, based upon the model that he had established, for himself.

Now, it might be understandable if the business was operated by a corporation, which is created by a grant from the state, and it would definitely be understandable in any government owned building, but, surely, it was never intended by the Constitution to allow that you, as the owner of the business, did not have the right to conduct the business, as you saw fit. This "restriction" on the rights of an individual business owner, which they should have the right (freedom) to operate, as they see fit, has, after years of acceptance, been expanded even further.

Americans With Disabilities Act. It was not enough restriction for the government to dictate clientele of the business, so they had to go one step further. They had to find some way of you having to actually spend thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars, because they said you had to so that people who have developed handicaps can have all for the rights that you have. On top of that, they are, creatively, though not very practicably, 'inventing' new requirements for handicap access, every year. The types of handicaps keep growing and the accommodations that are expected in the workplace are growing too. The latest example of a "handicap" was an employee in Detroit who had a scent-sensitivity. She asked her employer for an accommodation in her workspace, and after suing successfully, she was awarded \$100,000.

Smoking Laws. Not only has the government taken the freedom away from the business owner, with regard to refusing service, it has, also, gone to a greater extent to decide what activity, which for years was associated with that business, or, at least allowed by it. For instance, government has mandated that smoking cannot be allowed in a restaurant, or a bar, or any other business that is open to the public, and even those businesses that are not open to the public. They have decided that only they can determine, for the owner, the employees, and, the customer, that, whether they smoke, or not, or want to smoke, they can no longer do so in those locales where, for over two centuries, the Constitution recognized the freedom of that choice, by each of the parties involved.

They have taken this freedom in a rather deceptive manner. It is easier to dispose of one's freedom (rights) by a slight infringement, getting them used to, accepting the government's authority, by less unreasonable imposition, e.g. separate designations for smoking areas and non-smoking areas. After people have acquiesced, as a courtesy, they let their guards down. Then, the government came in and said that there could be no smoking, period. And, that freedom, to smoke where I choose, so long as the owner of the property has no objection, to one where the smokers is made into a criminal, while violating nobody's rights in the process.

Second Chances. Another aspect of the losses that have been incurred, with regard to our freedoms, is that of mobility and recovery, and, this also applies to children who have left the hearth and ventured out on their own. In days past, as this country was growing from infancy to the greatest nation on earth, the mobility that was necessary to provide for that growth was accommodated by "room and board" facilities, and even people who would provide "room and board" in their own homes, for charge, or as just plain charity. There were no laws restricting who could live under one's own roof, and there were no health laws that required certified personnel and certified kitchens and equipment in order to feed those tenants. This approach allowed someone new in town, someone who had gone through hard times and wished to get back on his feet, families, and those who had left their homes, to get a foothold and begin to build a life. They did so by paying very reasonable rates for room and board, and paid daily, weekly, or even with additional work, or credit. This would provide a means by which they could save for the future, eventually able to secure their own home, or, would provide a permanent and comfortable home for those who had no need for their own home.

Government, in their effort to care for us from cradle to coffin, decided that food could not be served in such facilities, and, in many places, even prohibited someone not of the family from living under the same roof. Thus, someone living under the circumstances explained above is

now placed in a position where he has must live somewhere else (or nowhere?) until he has secured first and last month's rent, deposits for utilities, etc., usually amounting to thousands of dollars before he can have a place to live. This government intrusion was created, under the guise of protecting us (though we know not from whom?).

CHILDHOOD ACTIVITIES

Let's look at what it was like to be a child, or a teenager, just fifty years ago, when parents were our protectors, not the government. Today, the government takes our freedom under the guise of keeping us safe from ourselves... how ridiculous.

I suppose that my fondest recollection is of water. If there was water, we could play in it. If it was deep enough, we could swim in it. Often, if a neighbor was on vacation, that deep water was a swimming pool, usually enclosed by a privacy fence, though not secure, by any means. If someone drowned, the rest of us were reminded of the dangers, a lesson was heeded, though this did nothing to discourage future escapades. It was a different time with a different value system regarding who was responsible for our actions – WE WERE, not the government – even though we were children.

Safer Cement. We also put together plastic model airplanes, boats, cars, and, whatever else might find its way to the hobby store shelf. The 'glue' of choice was "Plastic Model Cement", which contained "toluene". It worked quite well, and it welded the parts together in such a way that the bond was probably stronger than the parts from which it was created. In the meantime, some young people, who were not satisfied with getting into their parent's liquor cabinet, or getting someone else to buy beer for them, found that putting the cement in a paper bag would, well, 'weld' their brains. As a result (of the actions of a few -- who probably deserved what they had wrought), the Plastic Model Cement makers were required to include additives in the cement. The result was slower drying, far less bonding, and, consequently, the near destruction of a very useful, educational, and constructive hobby. I know that I stopped making models, when the recipe for the cement changed to be barely functional.

Safer Bike Riding. Bicycles are a boy's best friend, well, at certain ages, anyway. We knew our bicycles, inside and out. We could change the tires, adjust the Bendix brakes, attach playing cards to make it sound like a motorcycle, when pedaled, and go anywhere, including roads, yards, fields, and even steep hills. We had a hill that was fairly steep, behind our house. On our side was the baseball field, which was a leveled area perhaps ten feet higher than the bottom of the gully. We would tear down the hill, hit the gully, climb the short distance to the leveled ground, and fly into the air. No insurance, no helmets or safety gear, no soft landing -- and, occasionally, someone would fly over the handlebars and land in a heap, cut, bruised and dirty, or, worse yet, slide off of the seat and be jammed down on the bar between seat and handlebar post. Even if any medical attention were warranted, it would be a mother's sympathy, a washcloth and, perhaps, some Merthiolate and bandages. Nobody ever considered that the blame lay elsewhere, nor was there any consideration of imposing laws, rules, or safety measures to assure that we would be protected against all of the evils of such an enterprise.

Safer Without Knives. We also had knives. Almost every boy had a pocketknife, either Cub Scout, Boy Scout or simply a pocketknife, most with blades at least three inches long. Many of us also had sheath knives with blades six inches, or more, in length. We could take them to school, though the sheath knives were frowned upon, and pull them out to show, or to use to cut something. We were, after all, proud to be grown up enough to enjoy the sense of responsibility that came with such "adult activity", and properly applied learning with regard to safety. Who would have thought that our own children would be removed from school (suspended, or expelled) simply for possessing such on school property?

Safer Without Guns. We also had guns. It started with cap guns ("Bang, you're dead!"), then evolved to BB guns and pellet guns. Whether lever action (spring loaded air compression), multiple pump (which could build rather substantial pressure), or, gas powered (CO₂ cartridges), they were quite capable of causing injury, and of killing rodents and birds. We learned to be both hunter (provider) and protector, by these exercises.

The next step was to a 22-caliber rifle. These, of course, could have deadly consequences; however, we had, in the earlier stages, learned safety, and care in the use of guns. To acquire the earlier choices, no requirements existed, except having the money to pay for the BB gun, or buy the BB's and pellets. The 22, however, required that you be eighteen years old to purchase, though most of us had one long before that age, for if our parents felt that we were old enough and mature enough, their blessing was the only requirement to possession of such an instrument of destruction. Moreover, for the life of me, I cannot recall one instance, among the hundreds of those who enjoyed such luxuries, of any dangerous use, serious injury, or death, as a consequence thereof.

Safer Without Explosives. Speaking of guns, both powder and dynamite were available, to those who needed them, prior to World War II, and, to some degree, afterwards. Dynamite was commonly used to uproot trees, blast rocks and dig ponds in hard soil. It was one of the most useful, and inexpensive, tools for those who worked the land. Seldom were these tools misused by those of the time. And, if they did misuse them, say, to rob a bank or open a safe, then they were guilty of robbery or theft, regardless of whether they used dynamite, or not. Nor, did the restrictions of the use of dynamite curtail such activity. The only suffering was by those who now had to resort to very expensive machinery to do what could have been done relatively inexpensively, before the restrictions. However, as so many other useful objects, the majority must suffer because of the abuse of a few.

Safer Without Matches. We used to go to the General Store and buy a package of book matches. We would take a CO₂ tube (cartridge for seltzer bottles and pellet guns) and drill the plug out of the small end. The match heads would be torn off and packed into the entire tube. Once filled, a pipe with the inside diameter of the outside of the tube would be secured as the "bazooka". One would hold the pipe and aim while the other would touch a lit match to the expose matched protruding from the tube.

One day, we heard of a neighbor that had been killed when the tube exploded and tore a gushing wound into the side of his neck. Nobody was blamed, no new laws were passed, and many of us

went to his funeral. Life, after all, must end, but the pleasures of life will go on. So, we fired a few "rocket" tubes, in memory of Danny Reagan.

Safer Without Hitchhiking. Hitchhiking was a means of transportation for those under sixteen, and, for those who did not have a car. Of course, the bus went to the same school that my thumb took me, but the thumb was far more fun, and, generally, much quicker in traversing the nine miles and numerous different roads that had to be followed to get to the High School. During the summer, people and surfboards could travel great distances to find the best waves. Never, however, was there any concern for safety, or a fear of someone wishing to harm us, as we travelled our merry way. You see, those who might pose a threat to us were probably already in prison, for a very long time. And, if not, were not willing to take the risk of joining their comrades in the "cross bar hotel".

SEAT BELTS: A LESSON IN INCREMENTALISM

In the sixties, the law required that seat belts be installed on the front seats of every passenger car. This made little sense to us, so this required safety provision served, as far as we were concerned, only to add a few bucks to the cost of the car. Life, after all, was as much about enjoying it as anything else.

So, let us use seatbelts as a means of understanding what effect the government intervention (social engineering) has had on us, and how it has resulted in much harm, along the way.

Seat belts were required to be installed, simply so that they would be available, if the occupants wanted to wear them. Once the availability became more than a novelty, and were simply sat upon, the government decided to devise a means to force the use of them. Simple gimmicks, such as contacts requiring that the seatbelt be latched before starting the car (cut-off systems) resulted in injury or death to some, while to others, they were merely an inconvenience, bypassed by leaving the seatbelt coupled, and sitting on it. The injuries and deaths resulted when, in an emergency, the driver ran to the car, attempting to escape from a predator (rape or robbery), jumped in the car, inserted the key in the ignition, turned the key and found that the car would not start, because the seatbelts were not connected. Having exerted the energy in attempting to escape by driving away, the doors were not yet locked, and the predator was able to gain access to the compromised victim.

Then came automatic restraint system. Once you sat in the car and closed the door, a "runner" would drag the shoulder belt across a track in the door, gently wrapping you in the warm and comfortable arms of "auto-restraint". These, too, had drawbacks. Apparently, some people were actually entangled in the restraints, or even choked to death by such systems. So, we move on to the next endeavor to protect us from ourselves (and, to stand up against the ridicule that many of these efforts to force compliance had brought on).

Systems that were more passive were developed which flashed lights and sent irritating sounds into all ears on board, should a wary passenger fail to "buckle up". However, it was usually a rather simple task to reach under the seats and disconnect the wiring that sensed an occupant and initiated the cacophony. After a multitude of attempts to outsmart the witty citizens of this

country, who chose to do what they wanted, those same citizens finally succumbed, after many years, nay, generations, of indoctrination, to the acceptance of laws that will punish you financially, if you are caught failing to heed that which has been imposed for your own "protection". Though you must, if you consider the circumstance, wonder why the government is so concerned over your safety, when you are suppose to have the right to your own life, liberty and property.

LICENSING OF OUR RIGHTS

While we are delving into transportation, we might also look at the aviation industry. Pilots, by the way, are not licensed, though you are licensed as a driver. Why would that be? If this is truly a free country, don't I have a right to get around by the common mode of transportation, as have all who have come before me? In this section, we will discuss how the government uses licensing to restrict our freedoms, and, to raise revenue for itself.

Here, we might want to revisit some definitions:

From Webster's 1828 Dictionary, we find:

License *n.*: Leave; permission; authority or liberty given to do or forebear any act. a license may be verbal or written; when written. The paper containing the authority is called a license.

License *v. t.*:

1. To permit by authority; to remove legal restraint by grant of permission.
2. To authorize to act in a particular character.

Certificate *n.*: In a general sense, a written testimony not sworn to; a declaration in writing, signed by the party, and intended to verify a fact.

From Black's Law Dictionary, 5th Edition, we find:

License. The permission by competent authority to do an act which, without such permission, would be illegal, a trespass, or a tort.

Certificate. A written assurance, or official representation, that some act has been or has not been done, or some event occurred, or some legal formality has been complied with.

Now, forgive me for beginning with a question, but, why would a driver need a license when an airline pilot need only have a certificate?

Licensing Pilots. If a pilot, (public or private) need only have a certificate to demonstrate that he has had the proper training and experience to "drive" airplanes, and then only have to retain "currency": by flying so many hours, each year, to demonstrate maintained proficiency (no annual license required), then, why would someone who is only exercising his right to travel on

the public roadways have his "right" subordinated to a "license" (permission to do what, without the license, would be illegal)?

I will leave you to ponder just why a "right" would be illegal if the government did not issue a "license".

Licensing Cars. When I was in high school, I had an accident. I ran into the car in front of me, which had stopped for a stop sign. I was at fault, without a doubt. A cop was called and came to fill out an accident report. The report recorded the fact that I was at fault (under the old form of mandatory auto insurance, not no-fault) for the accident, and so that the responsibility could be assigned to the proper party. I did not receive a citation, fine, order for court appearance, or anything, except a copy of the accident report. That was then ...

Many years later, I had another accident. I was in a strange city (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), and was trying to find an address. I, inadvertently, turned the wrong way on a one-way street. Coming the right way (in accordance with the Traffic Control Devices), was a garbage truck. He didn't hesitate to run into me, causing substantial damage to the car I was driving, but not to his massive truck. Though he saw me, he chose not to attempt to avert the accident, through his own admission, however, that was inconsequential, since I had violated the rules of the road. I received no citation for "driving the wrong way on a one way street", for this instance, which would have made a minor offense, but interestingly the driver of the garbage truck received no citation for intentionally hitting my car. This shows that the government objective is not always about protecting the citizens, as we might prefer to think.

Since then, it has occurred to me, many times, that, perhaps, it is not illegal to drive the wrong way on a one-way street, however, it is illegal (only to the extent of determination of fault) to have an accident while driving on a one-way street. However, government has learned that there are substantial revenue resources in looking out for our safety (traffic fines) for violating those rules of the road. Today, I would have received a citation, so the government could receive revenue.

Licensing Drugs. Moving right along, let us look at medications and drugs. Many years ago, when the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution (Prohibition) was ratified (1919), you could go to the local pharmacist, without a prescription from the doctor, and tell him what your ailments were. He would then determine both what medication and what dosage you required, and provide them to you. Pharmacists, then, and now, require the same amount of education and internship as do doctors. They have, however, concentrated their study on medicine, its effects, etc., while the doctor prescribes new medications based upon information flyers, and, perhaps, gifts received from the manufacture of the drugs. He is not, by a long shot, and expert on the medication, and, as time goes by, he is probably far less "current" on the drugs, side effects, dosages, etc., than the pharmacists -- but he does have a bigger lobby in Congress. Meanwhile, the pharmacist is denied information that might save your life, unless you give him the information you received from the doctor. He is nothing more than a technician capable of reading a doctor's handwriting and counting pills into a bottle.

Also, in the meantime, many of the drugs, herbs, and other medical remedies have been removed from the pharmacists' shelves and reclassified as dangerous, denying us access, unless we pay our way into a prescription from a doctor, if that otherwise useful drug has not been completely outlawed. In addition, the doctor is on a short string -- not to provide too many painkillers, under penalty of having the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) remove his right to prescribe medicine (effectively barring him from practicing medicine under his state issued license).

This has pushed the people into resorting to other means to obtain both prescription and non-prescription drugs, by venturing to Canada or Mexico, the internet, or even the streets, to obtain what free people in a free country should be able to obtain without question.

What we must consider is that, in 1919, our right (freedom) to obtain drugs to treat ailments, and, yes, even for recreational purposes, was an unquestioned freedom. Can there be any doubt that, if a Constitutional Amendment were required, not to give the authority to the government to outlaw a drug (alcohol), specifically, then the Constitution did not ever intend, nor did the Constitution allow, the extension of that authority to prohibit beyond one drug to cover impact any other drugs?

So, what happened to that freedom of choice -- to address our own means of dealing with our own medical problems -- which existed prior to and Amendment that was repealed just 14 years later (1933)? As mentioned earlier, the repeal was a consequence of the jurors, in cases involving the laws passed in accordance with the Eighteenth Amendment, were asserting their rights (and responsibilities) as the final arbiter of any laws, by not convicting those charged with such crimes. Eventually, the states caught up with the people and repealed that perversion of our freedoms known as Prohibition.

Have you noticed a pattern, yet?

There are some things that are banned, now, from our use. They tend to be rather inexpensive, though cost is not, of necessity, a factor on their significance in our lives. Those items that have a value for the producer (medicine, health, transportation, etc.) tend not to be outlawed, rather, they tend to be controlled by the government, so as to yield a higher return for the manufacturers, or a revenue for government, or both. Those "freedoms" we are allowed to keep, though they have an unreasonable costs associated with them. Here is another example of licensing to produce revenue.

Licensing of Housing. Many of the earliest homes were void of conveniences such as running water, inside plumbing and toilet facilities, and even glass windows. In fact, if we look back to the days in which the western regions of the country first being peopled by Europeans, who had to contend with many obstacles to settle the land, they began by building homes of readily available materials. As the western expansion began, they became even more creative in the use of readily available materials. Probably the crudest, though in many ways, the most practical home in the western plains was the "Soddy", a house built of dirt, rock and sod from the prairie grasses, and, perhaps, a bit of wood. These were exceptionally well insulated, with built in heating and cooling, by virtue of the soil maintaining more stable temperatures, and moderating of extreme. They were not required to obtain building permits and inspections.

Years ago, I rented a house that had been condemned. The plumbing was not functional, most of the windows were broken out, and plaster was falling from some of the walls. I replaced windows, plaster with sheetrock, repaired the plumbing, installed a new pump, and called the electric company to turn the power on. A man from the power company came out and asked where the building permit and inspection records were. I told him that I had none, and he explained that the power company, under their license, could not turn on the electricity absent approval by the County.

So, I called the County and explained that I needed an inspection so that I could get the power turned on. A Building Inspector arrived at the property and asked if I had a building permit. I told him that I did not, and then explained all that I had done, and showed him the electric box. He walked through the entire house, inspected the box, and said, "Well, since this is not for commercial use, and will not be open to the public, I'll sign off on it." He did, and I got my power turned on.

That was about forty years ago. However, even then, it was possible to build (or rebuild) your house and get the blessings of the County so that you could live as you chose to. That time has passed, however, and, in today's world you can be required to tear down improvements, be fined, or even spend time in jail, if all is not done according to the dictates of the County (and the payment of certain fees).

Right of Restitution. Another freedom that has been lost is the right to restitution, if a crime of injury or loss has been perpetrated against you. In the past, if someone stole something from you, damaged your property, or caused an injury, and if that person were found guilty of the crime, then restitution -- making you whole -- was a part of the punishment meted out by the court (and jury). This assured you that, if the guilty person were found, tried, and convicted, that then you suffered no loss, as a result of the crime. Over time, the courts have developed a schedule of fines that enhance their own revenue, but the concept of restitution has been lost. If you have not provided for insurance, then you will never be made whole. Recovery from crimes against you is for you to deal with, on your own. The court will collect their due, and then turn the criminal back on the streets to prey on others.

LOSS OF THE MEANING OF PUBLIC

Let's now look at a word that has been used, before, in this discussion:

From Webster's 1828 Dictionary:

Public *n.*: The general body of mankind or of a nation, state or community; the people, indefinitely.

Public *a.* :

1. Pertaining to a nation, state or community; extending to a whole people; as a public law, which binds the people of a nation or state as opposed to a private statute or resolve which respects individuals or a corporation only.
3. Open; notorious; exposed to all persons without restriction.

4. Regarding a community; directed to the interests of a nation, state or community.
6. Open to common use; as a *public* road.
7. In general public expresses something common to mankind at large, to a nation, state, city or town, and is opposed to private, which denotes what belongs to an individual, to a family, to a company or corporation.

From Black's Law Dictionary, fifth edition:

Public, *n.* The whole body politic, or the aggregate of the citizens of a state, nation, or municipality. The inhabitants of a state, county, or community. In one sense, everybody, and accordingly the body of the people at large; the community at large, without reference to geographical limits of any corporation like a city, town, or county; the people.

Public *a.* :Pertaining to a state, nation, or whole community, proceeding from, relating to, or affecting the whole body of people or an entire community. Open to all; notorious. Common to all or many; general; open to common use, Belonging to the people at large; relating to affecting the whole people of a state, nation, or community; not limited or restricted to any particular class of the community.

Did you notice that the government was not once mentioned? Well, if the government is not mentioned then a public building, a public roadway, a public park, public lands, or any other object defined as "public" does not belong to the government, rather, it belongs to "*the body of the people at large*". So, why is it that children are no longer able to camp (sleep out) on public land, or in a public park, when they were allowed to do so just fifty years ago? Most states still allowed "open camping", which meant that you could camp on any land owned by the people, collectively. Can you imagine how many would have survived the Great Depression, as they moved west and sought jobs, if they had no recourse but to rent a room, or, well, is there even an alternative? Why is it now that we are barred from public lands, except during certain hours, or with a certain permit, or, maybe, not at all? Is this not a loss of our freedoms?

Speaking of *public*, let's look at one of the mainstays of the inherent strength of this country -- education. Public schools date back to the sixteen hundreds, where the local community contributed both to build a schoolhouse and to hire an instructor. The concept of the community being in charge of the schools was consistent with educating the students to become a betterment to the community. "Ad valorem" (property) taxes were the means of funding, and the decisions of who to hire, what to build, the curriculum, which textbooks, etc., was left to the local school board -- elected out from among the members of the community. As time went on, state governments set standards, though they had little influence over other matters within the school. The state involvement was directed at policy, not detail.

In 1953, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) was created in the United States government. Over time, local revenues were replaced with federal funds, and not only [policy, but detail, regarding the education of our children, was transferred to the national government. School boards were relegated to little more than where to purchase what the HEW mandated. Control over content, curriculum, etc., was no longer in the hands of the parents. The freedom to choose what education your child received in his first 12 years of education was

completely removed from your control, and the determination of the foundation for the rest of the child's life was laid in the hands of the government.

It might be said that the government has stolen from us that which is, rightfully, ours -- Public.

CORPORATE SEIZURE OF OUR RIGHTS

We cannot discuss freedom without touching on one of the principle enumerated freedoms, as defined in the Bill of Rights. This most important freedom is "Freedom of the Press". Exactly what Freedom of the press is has become rather muddled, over the years. The courts have construed it as the right to keep a source's identity secret, under the argument that to not allow such secrecy jeopardizes the reporter's ability to gather information for stories. However, is it possible that Freedom of the Press, that the means by which we are informed, might have other, and, much more significant meaning?

Let's look at two aspects of that freedom that are worthy of considerations:

"The FREEDOM OF THE PRESS hath, in consequence thereof, been esteemed one of its safeguards. That freedom gives the right, at all times, to every citizen to lay his sentiments, in a decent manner, before the people, If he will take that trouble upon himself, whether they are on point or not, his countrymen are obliged to him for so doing; for, at least, they lead to an examination of the subject upon which he writes."

"John DeWitt," Essay III, Nov. 5, 1787

And, as was clearly understood, in those days in which this Freedom was so highly regarded, there were many newspapers, each privately owned, and each having its own political views. Therefore, each side of the arguments of the day could be heard.

Unfortunately, the laws promulgated by the Congress have allowed a consolidation of news sources to the point that three syndicates control over 90% of the news that is unleashed upon us, each day. Those syndicates dictate (though through very subtle means), what can and what cannot be heard, or read. This defies both of the above examples of what freedom for the press was intended to afford us. This Freedom, by which we were to be informed, has become a means by which we have become misinformed, and, yes, propagandized and indoctrinated to the messages that are controlled by just a few.

Conclusion

As Benjamin Franklin said on his Memoir (1818), "*They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety*". Moreover, we can see that the Congress, the government that was established to serve us, has determined to provide us the "safety" that they feel that we deserve -- and, we have not objected.

However, as you can see in reading the above losses of freedom, there might well be other motives behind their actions. They have become the source of redistribution of wealth and the grantors of economic favor. And, they have done so at the expense of the Freedoms that so much blood has been shed to obtain and preserve.

Much like the process of aging, we have failed to notice these transgressions, though, if we simply stand back and observe, then it is quite evident that the loss of our freedoms, over decades, and even generations, has been a slow and meticulous process. Whether by design, or by accident, it does not matter. These lost freedoms (liberties) were enjoyed, well within the lifetime of many of us, but they are now gone. Subordinated to the social engineering (and deprivation of freedom) that has been ongoing, in this country, for quite some time. What truly matters, for ourselves and our posterity, is what we will do now that we are fully aware of the diminishment of that which was a gift from God, as well as our birthright.

Our opposition should be based upon principle, not upon comfort. If this erosion of freedom makes you uncomfortable, that is a start, but it cannot stop there. This travesty occurred because we were not outraged at the first loss of our freedom, the step that began the erosion. If we were opposing government intrusions based on principle, rather than comfort, then the first lost of freedom would be the beacon to remind us that the next lost freedom might be our own favorite freedom.

Do we owe any less to the task at hand as those who have come before us? Their sacrifices were for their posterity, far more than for themselves, for they did not know just how much that they, individually, would lose in the process. If the price of freedom is such that it is worthy of their commitment of their very lives, then can we expect no less of ourselves? Or, has our complacency reduced us to simple beggars, begging for that which is rightfully ours, and unwilling to sacrifice our own safety to restore those freedoms, not only for ourselves, but, too, for our own posterity?

* * * * *

If someone wants to hurt my child, I care not what the reasons are; I care only about protecting that child, whatever the cost.

If we ever are to prevail, we need that same clarity, borne of instinct, to protect that which cannot protect itself.

Our constitution does not protect us, we protect it.

Our liberties are not born in the Constitution, they are merely enshrined there.

E. Sutton