

A Message from the Executive Director

As you may have seen in your newspaper or on television during the days surrounding the New Hampshire presidential primary, I was attacked by the Center for Public Integrity, a left-wing organization created for "dirty tricks" campaigns.

The Center claimed that I was a neo-Nazi, a racist, an anti-Semite, and every other term that describes an extreme bigot. All of this trash, not surprisingly, was accepted by the national media without question and without any effort to corroborate this hateful and terribly damaging story.

Although the attack was directed at me, the ultimate target of this very carefully constructed smear campaign was to kill the momentum of the Buchanan campaign on the eve of the all-important New Hampshire primary.

In addition to my position as Executive Director of Gun Owners of America, I had accepted the volunteer position as co-chairman of the Buchanan for President Committee because I felt Pat has the strongest pro-gun stand of all the candidates for president.

By smearing a co-chairman of the Buchanan campaign with these filthy and disgusting lies, this group's real objective was to do great harm to Mr. Buchanan's candidacy.

Fortunately, its efforts failed miserably. Pat went on to win a stunning upset victory over Bob Dole and the rest of the crowded field of presidential hopefuls.

And my friends and colleagues, of all races and religions, closed ranks around me and my family to prove to the American people that racism has no place in my life.

Although I am ready to put this ugly episode behind me and get on with the business of preserving and restoring your gun rights, I feel an obligation to provide you with a full account of

The Media's Pratt Fall - Gun Owners of America

Written by Gun Owners
Friday, 01 March 1996 00:00

this unpleasant affair so that you would continue to feel confident about your decision to be a member of Gun Owners.

I would like you to keep this special report to share with your friends, family and business associates. If you belong to a sportsman's or hunting club, please feel free to make copies of this report and distribute it to all members.

You may also want to share your copy with your local newspaper. If they inadvertently participated in the smear by repeating what the national press was saying, this is their chance to right that wrong by printing the rest of the story.

It documents my response to the scurrilous charges made against me. It also includes statements from Roy Innis, Chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and Aaron Zelman, President of Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership.

Support has also come from Members of Congress. They know if the media can prevent this organization from speaking before gatherings they can stop communication between Representatives and their constituents.

Finally, I would like to know that Gun Owners continues to have your full support for the work we are doing. I am proud to say that GOA's distinguished Board of Directors has already met to discuss this issue and has given me its vote of confidence.

But the vote of confidence that would mean the most to me is from you. We have a large agenda for 1996 that includes the repeal of the Brady bill, passage of the Citizen's Self Defense Act and the defeat of bills that would allow the government to become more intrusive into the private lives of law-abiding citizens.

With your continued support we can win these battles. I look forward to your vote of confidence and the opportunity to continue to represent your views in Washington.

The Media's Pratt Fall

by Larry Pratt
Executive Director

The opponents of Pat Buchanan have launched a savage attack on his character by trying to malign my name. While his surging popularity certainly explains the vicious attacks against me, the allegations which have been raised are outrageously false.

Most of the media's attack is based upon a type of guilt by association. If we're going to play guilt by association, then should every person that attended the 'Million Man March' -- or every person that appeared on stage at that event -- be linked to holding the same racist views as Louis Farakhan?

Let's be fair, to speak to a group does not mean you sign up for their agenda. If the media wants to judge me by the company I keep, then let's use company that I choose to associate myself with, and organizations to which I voluntarily belong.

I am a member of Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership. The leader of that organization, Aaron Zelman, just recently issued a statement saying that JPFO and Gun Owners of America have worked hand in hand to restore the Second Amendment rights of all Americans, and will continue to do so. "JPFO considers Larry Pratt to be cut of exactly the same cloth as the many righteous gentiles who risked their lives during the Holocaust to rescue Jews from the hands of Nazi murderers," Zelman said.

I am a member of the Congress of Racial Equality. The National Chairman of CORE, Roy Innis, has this to say of our friendship: "We have walked the streets of the black community explaining to black people their rights under the Constitution. Larry Pratt and I will continue our efforts undeterred."

One of my pastors is an African-American. Twenty percent of my employees are either Jewish or African-American. These memberships and policies of mine reflect my Biblical opposition to racism. According to Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor

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Friday, 01 March 1996 00:00

free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

On a more personal level, the woman I have been married to for over thirty years is a native Central American and we speak Spanish in our home.

I loathe the Aryan Nation and other racist groups with every fiber of my being. I have never belonged to or advocated membership to any group which devalues the integrity of human life. In fact, in response to a question at the meeting I attended in Colorado -- which has now been publicly scrutinized in the press -- I gave a spirited defense of the Jewish group mentioned above. I heralded Aaron Zelman's work and told them his group (JPFO) should be strongly supported.

On a professional level, I have shared platforms with many who are my ideological opponents. For instance, last year during the debate over the so-called anti-terrorism bill, I took the stage with the ACLU to denounce that bill. Many of the provisions of that bill would strip the Bill of Rights to its bare bones, and would negatively impact minorities of all kinds (including gun owners). The press has not, however, selected to label me a closet liberal for that reason.

But let's keep things in perspective. The issue today is not my beliefs. The issue today is a scurrilous attack designed to derail the success of the Buchanan campaign, which is substantially due to the support of pro-Second Amendment Americans.

One should always consider the source of an attack. The group which has leveled the charges, the Center for Public Integrity, is hardly a neutral and independent group. Its advisory board is made up of members who have a very liberal and partisan bias. I specifically gave the above information about myself to the Center for Public Integrity before they published the report, but they refused to print it. What "integrity" is that?

The CPI relied heavily on information provided by an anti-gun activist who has been the subject of the same charges he so effortlessly hurls at me. Morris Dees, of the Southern Poverty Law Center, has been criticized by an African American former employee as being "more [of a] detriment to my people" than the Ku Klux Klan. And as for Dees' views on gun control? He was the head of an anti-gun group in the 1970's, making anything he says about a gun rights spokesman suspect indeed.

Even Senator Bob Dole's attack against me is politically motivated. He said last week that I should be fired and that I've given him "fits" for years. Indeed, Gun Owners of America has held him accountable for his role in helping pass the Brady bill and the semi-auto ban, and for specifically stopping amendments to repeal the gun ban.

I speak hundreds of times a year, and almost never am I the person who sets the agenda for the meetings. In fact, I often do not know who the other speakers will be. One thing is certain, however. In the over twenty years I have been involved in public speaking as Executive Director of Gun Owners of America, I have only spoken on the subject of the Constitution, and of the unalienable right of the people to keep and bear arms.

Rush Protests the Media Double Standard on Pratt

Rush Limbaugh recently exposed a classic case of media hypocrisy on his radio program (2/29/96). After former Rep. Kweisi Mfume was recently appointed as president of the NAACP, Rush noted that Mfume's ties to Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam have been virtually ignored by the major media. Moreover, the fact that President Clinton participated in Mfume's crowning ceremony has also been void of any media scrutiny.

Here's what Rush had to say about the double standard being applied to Larry Pratt:

"[Pratt] has taken it upon himself strongly to denounce the racism and anti-Semitism [of groups he unknowingly associated with]. . . . Mfume, by contrast, hasn't manifested any inclination to distance himself from Farrakhan -- not even in the wake of the Farrakhan's bizarre journey to Libya, Iran and other friendly spots. In fact, the ex-congressman hasn't even been asked to do so.

"More to the point, unlike with Buchanan and Larry Pratt, Clinton himself hasn't been -- and won't be -- called upon to renounce Mfume. Nor, indeed, has it ever been suggested that the President sever his ties to any of the ostensibly mainstream political personalities who shared the podium with Farrakhan at his Million Man March. In the end, some of these folks will undoubtedly wind up serving as honorary officials in the Clinton campaign. There is clearly a double standard."

What They're Saying about GOA and Larry Pratt

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David Kopel, noted Second Amendment scholar and GOA member:

"I've known Larry for nearly a decade. There's not a racist or anti-Semitic molecule in his body. Larry Pratt and his group Gun Owners of America have written literally hundreds of thousands of words on public policy, all of them available to anyone. The people at the misnamed Center for Public Integrity have not cited a single sentence written by Larry or GOA that has any hint of racism or anti-Semitism.

"Nor does this "Integrity" group point out that GOA has consistently emphasized the lethal dangers that gun prohibition poses to African-Americans, Jews, and other minorities who, when disarmed, are at the mercy of the majority.

"Pratt is reported to have spoken at rallies which attended by persons in racists groups. What is Pratt supposed to do, post guards at every speech he makes, to keep out anyone who may be a racist?

"Even by this high standard, Pratt has done pretty well. At a "Preparedness Expo," Larry went to the show's promoter and successfully urged him to order several racist organizations to remove their booths from the premises."

-- The Denver Post, February 20, 1996

Terry Dwyer, speaker and columnist, former ACLU member:

"I'm delighted when I can get any of my views in front of any audience anywhere. As long as someone is willing to print a complete column, I'm happy.

"For the same reason, I've accepted all the invitations I've received to be on radio talk shows. I don't check on what the hosts of those shows believe or have said on past shows. As long as they'll give me chance to say what I think so I can reassure those who agree with me and try to change the beliefs of those who don't, I'm happy.

"I'm a lot like Larry Pratt, the head of Gun Owners of America. I wish I were more like him. He's a soft-spoken gentleman who, because of his efforts to persuade his fellow Americans to improve their country, endures a great deal of ridicule. In a world of power-hungry flag-wavers who shovel taxpayer money to the greedy special interests who support them, he's a true patriot.

"My wife and I heard him speak at the Libertarian Party's 200th Anniversary of the Bill of Rights conference in Washington. His half-hour speech persuaded my wife to completely change her stand on gun control, and me to join his organization. He and Gun Owners make a convincing case that "the Second Amendment isn't about duck hunting." Unlike the NRA, they're Second Amendment (and Declaration of Independence) purists."

-- Morris County Daily Record, February 21, 1996

Pat Buchanan, Republican Presidential candidate:

"Larry stood by me when nobody else did back in 1992, and I'm going to stand by him. He's

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being attacked because he supports me. He's being attacked because he's defended Second Amendment rights his whole life, and that's why they're going after him. I would urge the gun owners of New Hampshire and America to stand with Larry Pratt and stand with me."

-- February 15, 1996

The Daily Oklahoman:

"The savage treatment of Pratt was inexcusable and irresponsible, as a few liberal commentators (to their credit) have said."

-- February 24, 1996

Jewish Gun Group Backs Pratt

The following is the press release issued by Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, February 15, 1996.

"Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, Inc. wholeheartedly support Larry Pratt, Executive Director, GOA, and strongly condemns recent allegations of anti-Semitism leveled against Mr. Pratt by the Center for Public Integrity. Such foul allegations are utterly devoid of merit. JPFO's officers have worked with Larry Pratt for several years. JPFO considers Larry Pratt to be cut of exactly the same cloth as the many righteous Gentiles who risked their lives during the Holocaust to rescue Jews from the hands of Nazi murderers.

"JPFO's published research shows that 'gun control' helped to clear the way for the Nazi genocide -- and at least six other major genocides -- in which 56 million persons, including millions of children, were murdered. As Jewish law mandates self-defense (see Talmud Tractate B'rachos [Blessings], p. 58a and p. 62b), JPFO, Inc., works with GOA and like-minded groups to restore law-abiding Americans' civil right to be armed."

Congress of Racial Equality

Statement by Roy Innis, National Chairman of CORE on Behalf of Larry Pratt

"Larry Pratt is a member of the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.). Larry is also a friend of mine.

"We have done projects together, and we have walked the streets of the black community explaining to black people their rights under the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"Larry Pratt and I will continue our efforts undeterred."

Media Paints GOA as Bull Dog on Capitol Hill

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Even while the media was trying to smear Larry Pratt in mid-February, they inadvertently paid the head of Gun Owners of America a tremendous compliment.

"When you're effective, the establishment can't afford to ignore you," said GOA Executive Director Larry Pratt. "GOA members have been terrific this past year. Their continued activism has helped win several legislative battles. And now the pundits in Washington are recognizing GOA members as a force to be reckoned with."

Indeed, the establishment in the nation's capital has developed a healthy respect for the grassroots members of GOA. Here's what the February 19 issue of Roll Call, the newspaper of record on Capitol Hill, had to say about the effectiveness of GOA and its members:

"[Larry Pratt's] group, the Gun Owners of America, has drafted language for a string of bills, most recently one to repeal all gun control laws, that have been introduced by close Pratt ally Rep. Stockman (Roll Call, Oct. 26). And Gun Owners played a leading role in killing last year's anti-terrorism legislation.

"In many of those legislative fights, Pratt's relationship with Dole has been extraordinarily sour. . . . Gun Owners activists have twice picketed the Republican Leader, in Idaho and at a local fundraiser for Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA). Both incidents occurred in 1993 and were in protest of Dole's perceived [sic] support for an assault weapons ban. . . .

"Also in 1993, the Springfield, Va.-based Gun Owners -- which claims 100,000 members [sic] -- orchestrated a fax campaign against Dole on the assault weapons issue that so overloaded his leadership office machine that staffers had to turn it off. . . .

"Apart from Dole, Gun Owners have posted some success on Capitol Hill, chiefly by killing the anti-terrorism bill in the House last year. The legislation was proposed in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, but Pratt and a coalition of liberals and conservatives opposed it because it expanded wiretapping, search-and-seizure authority, and other potentially intrusive law enforcement powers [like more gun control]. . . .

"Though the National Rifle Association -- which frequently butts heads with Gun Owners over whether to compromise on Capitol Hill or not -- tentatively supported the bill, Gun Owners was a main force that killed it, confirm NRA and Hill sources.

"An indication of the emotions and confusion dividing Republicans came in December during conservative activist Paul Weyrich's weekly strategy session for outside interest groups, where the main negotiator on the measure, Rep. Bob Barr (R-GA), spoke about a potential compromise. . . .

"Mike Hammond, a consultant for Gun Owners, stood up to assail Barr at the meeting, insisting that neither Gun Owners nor the NRA supported the compromise. . . . Just a week later, the compromise unraveled as conservative House Republicans -- many of them freshmen -- backed the Gun Owners position and refused to follow Barr." [Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)