

Subject: Re[8]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns
From: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>
Sent: 6/4/2022 7:58:16 AM
To: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csp.com>;

". I'm a fisherman who unconsciously finds myself sharpening my hook collection at times, and am meticulous about maintaining my reels. "

And why do you do that? Not for talismanic reasons but because you are interested in obtaining the best performance possible. I personally know there is no more frustrating feeling than a fish spitting the hook you swore it had set right, or being unable to bring it in properly because your reel is suddenly a spaghetti bowl of tangled line. It is the same with firearms: you may miss a target because your sights are not set right or the gun is so dirty, the round does not go off. But when it comes to self defense, having a gun that does not work when your life is on the line is stupid and deadly.

"Do you go to a gun range often?"

As much as I can but never enough as I wish. Range visits are not just to pull the trigger, but spend time with others who are in the same culture. I am blessed to have a friend or two who have property big enough to have their own range and we spend a day of shooting, food and chitchat (serious and otherwise).

"Do you find yourself, as I do with my fishing gear, tinkering with them in your off hours?"

No and so does 99% of the gun owners. We had for a couple of decades now, guns that come out of the box at almost peak performance without the need for tinkering them too much (if at all) for most regular purposes. But you do have 'projects' for different purposes: You may want to add better sights because your eyes are getting old (like my case) or smaller grips because your hands are smaller. or a lighter trigger pull that allows you to shoot more accurately (The dumbest and most dangerous thing out there is a police issue sidearm with mandatory heavy triggers. A gun that has a heavy trigger makes the person wobble it and will send a shot inaccurately downrange rather than the target). But once you have reached the goal you set to look for, you stop messing with it. Other than cleaning it after you shoot it, you simply do not mess with it. And that goes for other aspects of the shooting sports like handloading of ammunition. You tinker and test till you find the best combination for a particular caliber and firearm, record it and stop getting creative. Incidentally I spend a lot of time handloading, but it is because I have a single stage press which requires me to be slow plus the absolute need of paying attention to detail while handloading or things may go Boom rather than bang at the range.

" if firearms are a tool, how do those tools play into your day to day life? Is it in part for sport or hunting? Do you carry primarily for self-defense?"

Self Defense and carry every day. You never know when and where somebody will decide to select you as victim of deadly force, so I rather be ready with the tools that will give me a fighting chance. As we say in our culture, "If I know it will be dangerous, I simply don't go there." The fight you avoid is the fight you truly win.

I used to do a lot of sport shooting and plan to do it again. I enjoy the competition and polishes my skills.

" Do you see yourself as a collector? "

I do, I simply do not have the budget, so my "collection" is limited. :)

" If I have any follow-up questions, I'll ping you."

At your convenience. It has been an enjoyable exchange.

Miguel.

PS: Check IDPA.com and see if there are clubs holding matches near where you live. Barring any local government restrictions, all clubs are very open and allow visitors to come watch the match. You will be briefed about what the sport is about and the safety precautions you must take to stay and observe. Be open, identify yourself and tell them another IDPA

member recommended you should see first hand what we do. You will get some nasty looks (CSM has not been very friendly to our culture) but I pretty much doubt they will not let you stay. Do go before the match start so you see and hear the walk-through and pay attention to the safety rules being enforced.

At my club back in South Florida, in almost 15 years of matches twice daily, we never had one single gunshot wound out of the possible hundred of thousands of round shot during that time. Our biggest issue was heat-related injuries and one guy who actually had a mild heart episode.

----- Original Message -----

From "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csp.com>
To "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>
Date 6/4/2022 6:58:50 AM
Subject Re: Re[6]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns

Subject: Re: Re[6]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns
From: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csp.com>
Sent: 6/4/2022 6:58:50 AM
To: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>;

Hi Miguel,

I want to thank you for this interview, our readers will very much appreciate these insights. One final question. Obviously you write about gun and gun-related issues. But how do you see yourself in relation to your firearms? You reject outright this talismanic idea as opposed to a tool, but we all relate to our tools a certain way. I'm a fisherman who unconsciously finds myself sharpening my hook collection at times, and am meticulous about maintaining my reels. So wondering if you can talk a little about how firearms present themselves in your daily life, beyond the expressive part of writing about them? Do you go to a gun range often? Do you find yourself, as I do with my fishing gear, tinkering with them in your off hours? Just a sense of, if firearms are a tool, how do those tools play into your day to day life? Is it in part for sport or hunting? Do you carry primarily for self-defense? Do you see yourself as a collector? If I have any follow-up questions, I'll ping you. But, again, I really appreciate this. I've learned a lot. best,

Patrik

On Sat, Jun 4, 2022 at 7:10 AM Miguel Gonzalez <miguel@gunfreezone.net> wrote:

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Read: [Beyond the vote: 100 years of women's leadership](#)
Patrik Jonsson
504-289-8366
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Twitter: @CSMSoutheast
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Subject: Re[6]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns
From: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>
Sent: 6/4/2022 6:10:10 AM
To: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csp.com>;

"And when I say "sacralized," I mean that we make it seem almost as if it detracts from human dignity, or the human good, simply to say that we need to have some reasonable limit on these things. To say something is sacralized is to say it's almost taken out of any possibility for conversation.

It is a strong statement, but we do sometimes speak about things that way, and I must say that in some sense, we have kind of sacralized the whole idea of the individual right, such that it trumps any communal concern. It becomes an untouchable aspect in the discourse, that the common concern for the good of the vulnerable is not in any way sufficient to limit the individual right to determine whether or not I want to own this kind of a gun, or that kind of gun, or, you know, a hand grenade for that matter.

So when you sacralize it, you kind of make it basically closed for discussion, because we practically treat it as if it were sacred."

This is an unfortunate example of a religious leader interjecting himself into a political discussion. I understand that it is something tempting to do because we all seek popular recognition, specially at his level. But in his statement he fails to see the irony he creates by assigning an almost evil intent to the inanimate object rather than seeking and healing what ails the souls of those who use the object to commit evil which is what he is duty bound to do. It is the equivalent of blaming the cross for the Crucifixion of our Lord.

----- Original Message -----

From "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csps.com>

To "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>

Date 6/4/2022 5:55:39 AM

Subject Re: Re[4]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns

Subject: Re: Re[4]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns

From: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csps.com>

Sent: 6/4/2022 5:55:39 AM

To: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>;

Hi Miguel,

Thanks again. More generally but perhaps particularly since you identify as Catholic, I'm hoping you can address what Bishop Daniel Flores of the Brownsville, Texas, diocese said last week, that Americans "sacralize death's instruments, and then are surprised that death uses them." [<https://www.pillarcatholic.com/p/bishop-flores-sacralized-guns-and?s=r>]
How do you square that statement with your beliefs and your view toward firearms? The Bishop is not pointing at any one group there, but that, as a people, we have somehow put these tools above the interests of man, to the point where we have lost control of their destructive impact on society. His point was clearly borne of frustration and from a point of gun control advocacy, but, I don't know, there's a grain of truth in it, at least to me, as someone who has owned guns and reported on gun rights for over a decade. Your thoughts?

pj

On Fri, Jun 3, 2022 at 6:27 PM Miguel Gonzalez <miguel@gunfreezone.net> wrote:

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Patrik Jonsson
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Subject: Re[4]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns
From: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>
Sent: 6/3/2022 5:27:17 PM
To: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csp.com>;

"instead of thinking about totems and cults: is gun ownership, for you, about more than the individual -- is it about patriotism, doing one's part in the community? In other words, is it just a tool or part of your identity? "

I guess it is all of the above in different measures.

It is patriotism because the right to gun Ownership is uniquely American. While gun ownership was strictly controlled in Europe, it became a necessity for the settlers as a mean to obtain protein and defend their land and property. By the time England figured out they may have been too liberal with allowing ownership, it was too late: Guns were part of the DNA of future Nation before the concept existed.

"doing one's part in the community?"

I lived in Florida for a quarter of a century and in that time, I had to deal with the aftermath of hurricanes. Since services were overwhelmed, you are (as in many cases) on your own to provide protection for your family and your neighbors. And that was not only me, but many in others in Florida who were part of communities affected by natural disasters. Even after Andrew, the worst possible hurricane, the level of looting and crime was never even a small percentage of what we saw in New Orleans after Katrina where the government decided that civilians could not defend themselves or have the tools to do so. Other states affected as bad or worse than NOLA did not see that dislocation of society because they were able to have the tools to defend whatever was left of thir property and even lives.

"is it just a tool"

It is a tool with an specific set of peculiarities and an assorted variety of uses.

"or part of your identity"

It is part of the identity of what represents and I support: A chance of being independent (as in not depending on the government for immediate help from violent crime). Some people will see me only as a "gun guy" and will assume the stereotype I spoke of earlier, and that is their problem, not mine. I will identify as the guy who has a chance to come out of a bad circumstance.

One thing that most people do not know is that many of us do not simply stop at gun ownership and taking a few shots on weekends as many assume. We involve ourselves in politics and ask the hard questions to our local politicians. We are also invested in how **not** get in trouble and analyze events and figure how and what should we act. We like to practice Avoidance, Deterrence and De-Escalation because if we do not have to use a weapon, the better off we will be. What locations seem to always have problems. what times do problems happen, how to keep your mouth shut when you are being insulted or ignore taunts by idiots who just love to get a rise out of you. Hell, even a tossed \$20 bill and an invitation to buy beer on your dime is cheaper than the six figures that will cost you endure a trial where you had to use a firearm for your defense. Our culture is many-layered and complex.

I am from Venezuela where Gun Control was strict since the 1920s and then went Gun Control Lobby dream under Hugo Chavez. It took me 3 years to get a carry permit and only because a friend became part of the upper echelons of government. I think I barely carried for a year when a newly elected president decided that everybody needed to re-apply and with a stroke of the pen and totally unannounced invalidated all permits in the nation. I walked around armed without a permit for almost a month before I found out. I could have been stopped by cops and gone through a rough time (including being shot) and that scared me to no end.

My family survived the Spanish Civil War as kids and then the oppression that came under Franco. I had a Great Uncle who was falsely accused of being a red and was slated for firing squad before he was saved by a friend who was

somebody in the military province he lived. The I had family who moved to Cuba and built their business successfully only to have it all taken away by the government and one of the boys sent to a Cuban concentration camp for participating in the Bay of Pigs. He was released after a very substantial bribe was paid and everybody else then had to leave Cuba for good, penniless. So, I have to laugh when I am being accused of being some sort of fascist because I belong to the US Gun Culture when my family background is covered with abuse from both sides of the Fascist spectrum.

If I may and since I mentioned New Orleans, I want to recommend you a book. Not very big but highly illustrative of why I belong to the Gun Culture and some may say rabidly:

The Great New Orleans Gun Grab

by Gordon Hutchinson and Todd Masson

Those who say that the excesses in other countries could never happen here, ignore what has already happened. Not at an Ethnic Cleansing scale, but not because they did not want to do it.

Robert Heinlein had a quote in "Beyond This Horizon" much used in our side:

"An armed society is a polite society. Manners are good when one may have to back up his acts with his life."

We only strive to live in such society.

Again, feel free to do any follow up you would like.

----- Original Message -----

From "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csps.com>

To "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>

Date 6/3/2022 10:00:19 AM

Subject Re: Re[2]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns

Subject: Re: Re[2]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns

From: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csps.com>

Sent: 6/3/2022 10:00:19 AM

To: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>;

Thanks for this, Miguel.

And just to assure you, I'm not trying to cement stereotypes or paint a particular picture. I'm taking ideas and questions floating around in our society and trying to get them answered by real people who think, live and understand this stuff on a level that a lot of people don't. So that's why your response is hugely helpful -- to deflate stereotypes and explore ideas in a way that are meaningful and, who knows, helpful.

But maybe a better way to phrase it, instead of thinking about totems and cults: is gun ownership, for you, about more than the individual -- is it about patriotism, doing one's part in the community? In other words, is it just a tool or part of your identity?

As part of that, I read a bit of your background on the site, but can you talk a bit more about where you were born, raised, the situation there as far as weapons (you allude to it below) and how coming here was a revelation as far as self-defense and individual rights etc. (I'm an immigrant from Sweden myself, which has its own issues with violence, and surely a place where mostly the bad guys have the weapons because they're nearly impossible to own as a civilian.)

pj

On Fri, Jun 3, 2022 at 9:32 AM Miguel Gonzalez <miguel@gunfreezone.net> wrote:

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Read: [Beyond the vote: 100 years of women's leadership](#)

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Subject: Re[2]: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns
From: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>
Sent: 6/3/2022 8:31:54 AM
To: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csp.com>;

"So, let me start off by just asking the extent to which gun ownership has become, in a way, an article of faith?"

Allow me first to fix a misconception that seems to be deeply rooted within certain individuals or groups: We do not pray or light candles to any type of weapon just like a biker does not kneel in front of a Harley or a car aficionado genuflects at the sight of an original Shelby Cobra. The "article of faith" is written in the Second Amendment of the Constitution and the "gospel" is the historic precedents here and abroad where unarmed people were massacred by either the government or civilians who had the privilege to be armed. I have no idea where the "cult-like" concept developed, but I suspect that just as "assault weapon" it was a political marketing tool to make gun owners appear as the dangerous group that was going to bring back the worst parts of intolerance.

"How would you describe your relationship with your firearm?"

You have relationships with living beings, not inanimate objects. No gun owner I know (and I know quite a few) sits in a dark corner and whispers sweet nothings to their pistols. Once again, you are asking about a propaganda item created for maximum impact but lacking on truth. Do you talk to your computer like it was a girl or a god? Do you pledge your undying love? Or your Keurig? Of course not. As with any other inanimate objects, we may address curse words if it fails operating, but we do not believe it has a life or magical powers. Touching an AR 15 does not suddenly fill your heart with the desire of mowing a classroom full of kids. That kind of evil was inside that particular human long before a decision was made to use such inanimate object against innocents.

"What's your perception of how others in the gun community view their firearms? "

Same as what I have explained above. I understand you are looking for a created archetype: The stupid looking White boy wearing cammo, big beer belly showing under a too short t-shirt and speaking with a Southern accent. In fact, we are now more than ever a true Rainbow Coalition that encompasses all colors, faiths and sexual preferences.

I am Hispanic and Catholic. Lived in South Florida for 25 years, 15 of them in competition shooting twice a month with at least 60 people, the majority of them what you call Minorities. We had other Christians, Jews, Muslims, Atheists and those who did not care to share if they believe in something or not. All of us would have strong political convictions, specially those of us who came from countries where "sensible gun laws" were imposed and the place became a nightmare of crime and political prosecution. And not a single one of them believes a gun is some sort of divine being we should pray to.

Feel free to follow up. I'll be in and out of computer range all day, but I will reply as soon as I am available again.

----- Original Message -----

From "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csp.com>

To "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>

Date 6/3/2022 7:49:13 AM

Subject Re: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns

Subject: Re: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns
From: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csps.com>
Sent: 6/3/2022 7:49:13 AM
To: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>;

Hi Miguel,

Nice to meet you, and thanks for agreeing to take some questions. So, let me start off by just asking the extent to which gun ownership has become, in a way, an article of faith? Obviously, not many people believe they are actual talismans, but obviously they for many people have become symbolic of something larger than just self-defense or even protection against tyranny. How would you describe your relationship with your firearm? Is it simple, complex, nuanced or direct, symbolic or is-what-it-is? How did you come to that dynamic? What's your perception of how others in the gun community view their firearms?

pj

On Thu, Jun 2, 2022 at 8:11 PM Miguel Gonzalez <miguel@gunfreezone.net> wrote:

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Subject: Re: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns
From: "Miguel Gonzalez" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>
Sent: 6/2/2022 7:11:03 PM
To: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csps.com>;

Do feel free to ask. If you do not mind, I rather do this via email since it allows me to construct my responses better and I am not so good in oral exchanges.

Miguel Gonzalez.

----- Original Message -----

From "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csps.com>
To "miguel@gunfreezone.net" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>
Date 6/2/2022 12:27:09 PM
Subject Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns

Subject: Christian Science Monitor story on intersection between faith and guns
From: "Jonsson, Patrik" <jonssonp@csps.com>
Sent: 6/2/2022 12:27:09 PM

To: "miguel@gunfreezone.net" <miguel@gunfreezone.net>;

Hi Mr. Gonzalez:

I'm a writer with the Christian Science Monitor, working on a story about the relationship between religious faith and gun ownership and carry. It's a fraught topic, sure, but also a big part of the philosophical debate going on about gun policy etc. Hoping you might be willing to talk a bit around that topic, to help our readers understand the undercurrents of America's gun rights debate, and the marginal yet powerful role of faith in it. I'm at 504-289-8366.

Many thanks,

Patrik Jonsson

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