

The Los Angeles Legacy

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Nothing else could better demonstrate that police can't, and sometime won't, be able to protect the honest citizenry than the L.A. riots. And the public noticed.

The night the riots began L.A. Police Chief Robert Gates was asked why police didn't stop the half-hour near-fatal beating of truck driver Reginald Denny—a horrible event which I and much of the rest of the nation saw “live” on TV.

Gates shrugged: “There are going to be situations where people are going to go without assistance. That's just the facts of life.”

It was also a fact of life that uninsured storekeepers of all colors—but particularly clearly targeted Koreans—either shot it out with rioters and looters or saw their property destroyed and their employees beaten or killed.

I've talked with a sixty-ish black woman who defended her building with a 15-shot Beretta 92F; a Korean gun store manager whose employees fired some 200 rounds with a half-dozen guns including a Mossberg 500B and Colt “Sporter” AR-15; and a white aerospace worker who helped defend his condo with an AK47.

Every one of those models has been declared an “assault weapon” by various laws; not one of those people felt over-gunned.

Several pro-gun activists—including the aerospace worker—told me their friends and co-workers, many of whom had previously derided them for defending private firearms ownership, said: “Okay, now I'm on your side. What kind of gun should I buy?”

Thousands who bought guns were outraged that with their businesses and apartments under direct attack, they had to wait 15 days for the purchase of any type firearm—even to legally buy or borrow one from another individual.

California lawmakers who enacted the Connelly waiting period bill, already nervous about the political impact of redistricting, are talking about ramming through an “instant check” substitute law.

The dumbest comment by any national politician came from Democratic Presidential Candidate Bill Clinton. In ticking off what he would do about the L.A. riots, he called for passage of the Brady seven-day handgun waiting period bill (California’s law is 15 days on all guns) and “the DeConcini Assault Weapon bill” banning future sales of 14 models (California’s Roberti-Roos law bans both sale and unregistered possession of almost 100 models).

Gun owners—even law enforcement officers—were prohibited from buying ammunition by Sheriff Sherman Block and the L.A. County Supervisors. For a time, dealers were even told they couldn’t release previously purchased guns to persons who had gone through the background check and 15-day wait.

Barry Kahn of B&B Sales in North Hollywood told me there was a near-riot of law-abiding citizens—including police officers—when the 200-300 customers jammed in his store were told by Sheriff Deputies that they couldn’t buy any ammunition.

Barry said he has “over 1,000” prepaid guns in his holding area, most of them purchased by “what *used to be* ultra-left wing, pacifist, anti-gun, pro-gun control types who have come to the realization that law enforcement personnel are not able to always be there to defend them.”

According to CBS News, while run-of-the-mill looters were stealing stereo sets, TV sets and microwaves, L.A.’s organized gangs were focusing on gun shops.

I was told by a previously reliable source that at Western Surplus, where over 1,100 guns were stolen, a gang leader stood on a counter conducting a military-style firearms issue. Each person in a long, orderly line of looters was required to give his name and gang affiliation, and was presented with a gun. Anyone who was not a gang member was chased out of the store.

What is known for certain is that on May 6 the feuding Bloods and Crips gangs declared a truce between each other and declared “Open season on LAPD.”

This could be the beginning of “a long hot summer”—as the riotous middle-1960’s were called.

Something else that is certain, as made evident by radio talk show callers and even on National Public Radio, the L.A. riots have resulted in a tremendous number of first-time gun owners and will-be gun owners.

And the “gun control” cause has suffered a severe setback.