

After the assassination of Robert Kennedy, the author of "The Death of a President" voluntarily turned in his gun. Now, in an eloquent plea, he urges others to follow his example

An act of conscience

by William Manchester

In 1917, a gallant young English officer flung his Military Cross into the sea and wrote:

*... Pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and
laughter go.*

Siegfried Sassoon's one-man mutiny didn't shorten the horror of World War I by a single day, and for years I wondered why he bothered. Now I know: in a time of mindless violence, all people of conscience must make some gesture, however futile, against the savage tide menacing everything they love.

My own gesture against today's guns of fear, made last summer, was that sort of token protest—the isolated dissent of a private citizen in mourning for an assassinated friend, troubled over the safety of the American home, and shocked by the transformation of his country's households into do-it-yourself arsenals which inflict 120,000 casualties a year.

That grim toll may seem reason enough for concern. Certainly most people think so. But then, they always have; for over a third of a century the Gallup Poll has consistently reported that four out of five Americans want tight control of firearms. Yet Congress, like Nero, prefers

the fiddle to the fire extinguisher. After the death of President John F. Kennedy, eighteen measures to regulate weapons were introduced in Congress. The firearms industry's tax-exempt, multi-million-dollar lobby managed to spike them all. And, after Senator Robert F. Kennedy's murder, the gun law which *did* pass was a mockery of the tough bill he had believed in.

If the public is scorned, a single individual, obviously, can do very little. Nothing is left to him except the symbolic act. Still, the power of symbols sometimes grows, and those who have stared into the face of violent death may be moved by an

continued on page 277

urgency they had never felt before.

Like Siegfried Sassoon, I am one of them. Between 1942 and 1945 I was a Marine Corps infantryman. Wounded on Okinawa, I was discharged after a long series of operations, and nearly a year later a peculiar memento of the Pacific was returned to me. That keepsake was ultimately to become my instrument of protest, for it was a privately owned pistol.

It had become mine through chance. My GI .45-caliber Colt automatic had been stolen on Guadalcanal. My regiment was about to go into combat—and I had no weapon. At the last moment I bought another Colt from a rear-echelon soldier for thirty-five dollars, thus becoming, so far as I know, the only World War II Marine who paid for his own gun.

Like most war souvenirs, this one quickly passed from a conversation piece to an attic dust-catcher. For over twenty years it lay unloaded on a back shelf. I forgot about it. And then I was reminded.

The first reminder came on November 22, 1963. Although guns were no longer available on Guadalcanal, it seemed, they were for sale to anyone in the United States with a grudge and a money order. The ease with which Americans could obtain firearms appalled me. In the aftermath of the Dallas tragedy, for example, an enterprising New Jersey reporter filled out a coupon, mailed it off with a check signed "L. H. Oswald"—and got his rifle by return mail.

"Guns don't kill people," the firearms lobby replied to critics; "people kill people." That was cheap sophistry. People *with guns* kill people, and it is a sad comment on the mood of the nation since President Kennedy's murder that never in human history have so many people in the United States owned so many firearms.

The consequences have been as grim as they were inevitable. An omen appeared even as the first Kennedy funeral cortege was approaching Arlington. Two teenaged Brooklyn sisters had been watching the military escort on television. Fascinated by the soldiers' manual of arms, they decided to practice it with the family rifle. Within a few minutes their rehearsal was over: the older girl lay dead, and her thir-

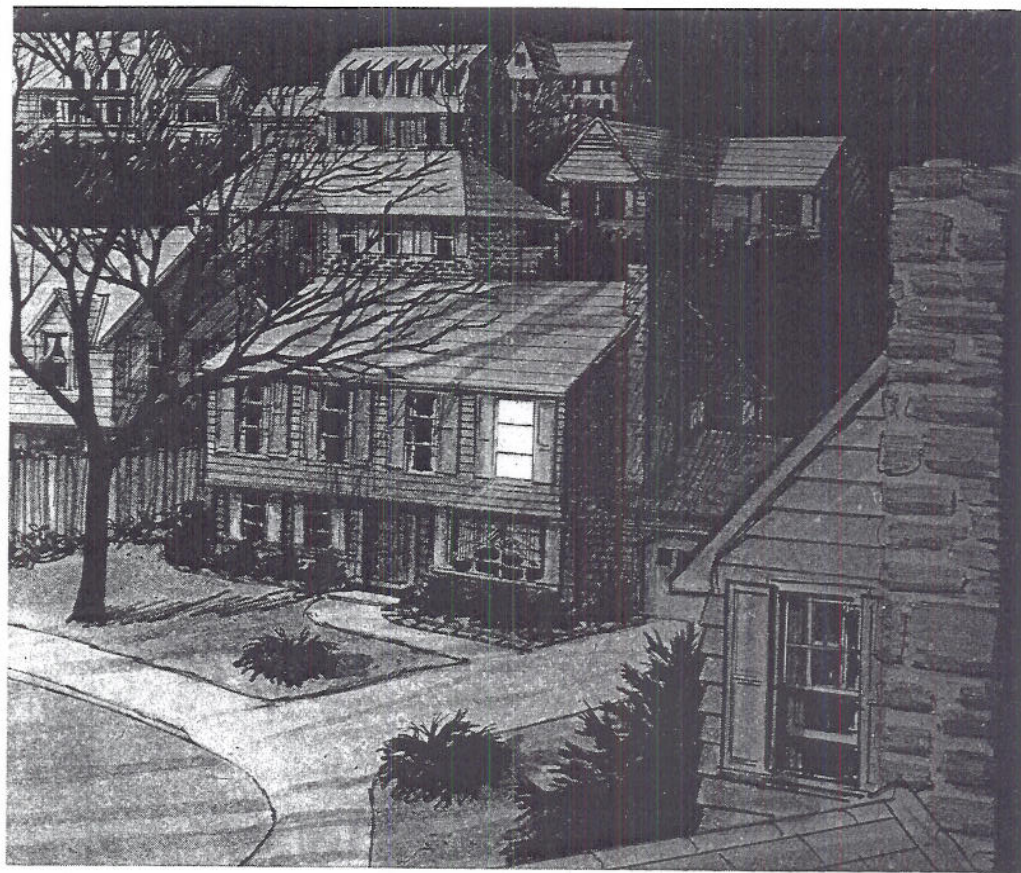
teen-year-old sister was being held for manslaughter.

To be sure, that was an accident. So was the shooting of two preschool New Yorkers by their eighteen-month-old brother; so were the lethal blunders of three fathers, in Detroit, Chicago, and Santa Monica. The first, awakened by a sudden footstep in the night, snatched up his revolver and shot his three-year-old daughter through the head. The second, while practicing a "fast draw," killed his year-old son. The third, the most incredible of all, put a tangerine on his five-year-old daughter's head, aimed at it, and drilled her between the eyes. He said he had been playing William Tell and "I guess I fouled up."

But the accidental killing of one's child is more than a foul up. That little girl—and the 3,000 other children who have died at the hands of careless parents or playmates since the crime in Dallas—would be alive today if the

weapons hadn't been *there*. Because the U.S. is the only civilized country which permits private ownership of firearms, Americans may, in Lyndon Johnson's phrase, buy them as casually "as baskets of fruit or cartons of cigarettes." The price we pay for this folly is staggering: seventy-seven homicides for every one in Japan, England, and Wales combined. Indeed, more people have died at the muzzles of private guns in the twentieth century than in all U.S. wars, beginning with the Revolution.

The past two years have been marked by a giddy new pace in the buildup of home armories. Collectively, Americans now own somewhere between fifty and two hundred million rifles and pistols, and every day 15,000 additional ones cross the counters in 100,000 retail outlets. Illinois eight-year-olds have been arrested carrying revolvers; Oklahoma police have searched for armed murderers as young as ten; Los Angeles citi-



How many sleepless hours must you have before you change your ideas about sleeping tablets?

Are you cheating yourself of sleep just because you think all sleeping tablets are alike? They're not. One tablet is different. That's Nytol.[®]

Of course, Nytol is safe. Never becomes a habit. It's earned the Good Housekeeping Seal. The difference? Nytol is ready to go to work faster. Laboratory tests prove Nytol dissolves more than twice as fast as any other leading brand. So it helps you get to sleep fast, get all the good, sound sleep you need. In the morning, you wake up feeling great.

Remember, Nytol has the Good Housekeeping Seal. You can sleep on that.



Hear Young Again!

I'm not deaf! Under normal conditions, I hear well enough. But sometimes my ultraminiature DAHLBERG MIRACLE-EAR® hearing aid is a blessing. I just put it in my ear and I hear more clearly. It is so natural sounding—nothing above my ear, or below my ear. Nothing behind my ear or in front of my ear. No tubes, nor wires, no scratchy sounds.

It is especially designed for those who hear but do not always understand—a classic symptom of nerve impairment. If diagnosis shows you have this type of loss, this modern hearing aid may give you the extra "lift" you need to live a full and active life!

Rush this coupon. You'll receive descriptive pamphlet promptly.



U. S. PATS. RE. 26,258;
3,374,318; D-200,858
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. 55440

© 1968, DAHLBERG ELECTRONICS, INC.

**MAIL
AT ONCE!**
NO OBLIGATION
WHATEVER

Miracle-Ear® DEPT. GH118, P.O. BOX 549
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55440

Please Rush Full Information on Miracle-Ear, Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE DEFECTIVE
★ **Good Housekeeping** ★
GUARANTEES
REPLACEMENT OR REFUND TO CONSUMER

Relieve moderate ARTHRITIC RHEUMATIC MUSCULAR PAINS when they re-occur



Maybe you've tried just about everything to get rid of such pains without any luck. But have you tried DOLCIN Tablets? If you haven't you should know there's nothing in all the world that's *faster, safer, better* for nagging, moderate Arthritic, Rheumatic or Muscular Pains...when they re-occur...than DOLCIN Tablets.

They've helped many men and women come out from under the shadow of pain. They may do just the same for you. But you'll never know until you try. So get yourself a bottle of DOLCIN Tablets at the drugstore today. Take them regularly and faithfully. Don't put it off...try DOLCIN® Tablets today. ©1968, Dolcin Corp.

"WASH" YOUR RUGS AND CARPETS WITH AIR!

TRAP DUST & DIRT IN WATER



THE MODERN CLEANING MIRACLE!

Rainbow's patented Aerodynamic Jet Rug Tool and new Aerodynamic Jet Upholstery Brush "wash" rugs, carpeting and fabrics in sustained jets of powerful air. Then Rainbow traps dust and dirt in water, curtailing your annoying dust problems.

write for free literature on "the machine of tomorrow"—today!

REXAIR INCORPORATED
1000 Buhl Bldg., Detroit, Mich. 48226
If you are interested in distributing the exclusive Rainbow, some areas are available. Write for details.

ZUD

REMOVES rust & stains

It's Wonderful!



From bathtubs, sinks, bottoms of copper pots, ceramic tile floors, aluminum storm doors, windows, glass.

RUSTAIN PRODUCTS FAIRLAWN, N.J. 07410

PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE DEFECTIVE
★ **Good Housekeeping** ★
GUARANTEES
REPLACEMENT OR REFUND TO CONSUMER

CLEANEST, EASIEST, SAFEST

Way To Rid Your Home Of

MICE



NOW! Rid your home of mice completely with d-CON® Mouse-Prufe, the amazing mouse killer that's—

MOST EFFECTIVE . . . has twice as much mouse-killing ingredient as other leading brands. It's an ingredient recommended by the U.S. Government.

CLEANEST AND EASIEST . . . just pull tab—bait feeds automatically.

SAFEST . . . when used as directed, safe around children and pets.

No wonder Mouse-Prufe outsells all other mouse killers combined—

d-CON MOUSE-PRUFE

zens, with three million privately owned guns, are more heavily armed than those in Saigon.

Much of this panic buying has been inspired by riots, much can be traced to extremist fringe groups, and some can be put down as the irresponsible work of such public servants as the mayor of Dearborn, Michigan, who has urged the women of his community to pack pistols. Yet the real answer lies deeper. It is rooted in what writer Carl Bakal has called the "firearms mystique," that distinctly American phenomenon which has given us Wyatt Earp television, Bonnie and Clyde films, Mickey Spillane paperbacks, realistic toys of death, and, presiding over all, the Man with the Golden Gun.

Explanations for these grotesqueries are various: a yearning for the image of power in an age of mass frustration; the need for aggressive outlets; a longing to enhance virility; loyalty to the myth of a romantic Old West which never existed. Significantly, the phenomenon is almost exclusively masculine. Little girls, sensibly, play with dolls. Little boys, senselessly, start with cap pistols (Bang! Bang! You're dead!), graduate to BB guns (a greater cause of the loss of eyesight, according to state medical societies, than fireworks), and frequently wind up as life members of the National Rifle Association.

Here American women have a superb opportunity: by reasoning with their husbands, they may liberate themselves from the dark threats lurking in gun closets and bedside pistol drawers. They should do it, if only for their own sakes. Consider a few figures. According to FBI reports, eight out of ten homicide victims are relatives, friends, or neighbors of the killer. Three in ten are members of his immediate family, and of these cases, over half involve "spouse killing spouse, and twenty percent parents killing children." Once every three hours around the clock, somewhere in the United States, a sacred relationship with a loved one ends in murder. And most of the murderers are men.

Few of these are acting upon premeditation, but in the gentlest household there are moments of overpowering anger. And that is all it takes—a moment. Unsupported by the weapon in that gun closet or that pistol drawer, the irrational flash of temper might have been dissipated harmlessly, or comparatively so. Firearms, on the

continued on page 283

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES

"Is your new baby a boy or a girl?" the proud little boy was asked.

"It's too early to tell," he said. "It's still wearing swallowing clothes."

—Lane Olinghouse

Good Housekeeping

Bulletins from

The Children's Center

The Expectant Mother 35¢

The care of the expectant mother during the important prenatal period is discussed in this authoritative 25-page booklet. Includes tips on shopping for the right clothes and equipment.

Baby's First Year 35¢

This 35-page booklet provides detailed instructions on a baby's care during his first year.

Mother-Daughter Talk 15¢

This can be of help in explaining to girls approaching adolescence the physical aspects of growing up.

Meals for Children 25¢

The Good Housekeeping Institute has prepared these nutritious menus for children from one to four years of age. Recipes are included.

Lists of Boys' and Girls' Names —Their Meanings 35¢

Boys only ..20¢ Girls only20¢

Toilet Training 15¢

For mothers who wish detailed advice about toilet training their children, this leaflet can be of considerable assistance.

Answering Small Children's Questions about Sex 15¢

Do you know how to answer your child's first questions about sex? This leaflet has some good suggestions.

Diet and Exercise Before and After the Baby Comes 25¢

Tells what foods to eat—and why—to protect health of mother and provide adequately for development of baby-to-come. Suggests basic meal patterns. Also tells how to exercise safely and to keep feeling fit during pregnancy, and how to regain a pretty figure after baby is born.

Women of Forty-Five 15¢

For women approaching the menopause, this leaflet provides information that can prevent unnecessary worry.

To order: Send cash, check or money order to Good Housekeeping Children's Center, 959 8th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019. please add Zip Code.

AN ACT OF CONSCIENCE

continued from page 278

other hand, translate unreasoning wrath into an irreversible final solution which, an instant later, may be inexplicable to the murderer himself. The FBI has traced over half of all household homicides to "impulse rage" arising from "arguments over a cigarette, ice cream, noise, etc." Over noise? It happens. In Chicago, one blind spouse, firing at the sound of a voice, actually committed murder in a quarrel over the tapping of a white cane.

Those who have merely read of homicide may think a fatal shooting is something which happens to other people. But the country's domestic armory is now so large that no one is really safe. When a President of the United States can be picked off on a sunlit street and a senator gunned down in a hotel corridor—while rooftop snipers are lining up policemen in their sights—we are all at the mercy of gunmen. Having turned the home of the free into the land of fear, gunmen are now writing our history. For, however you felt about the Kennedy brothers, the fact remains that today and tomorrow would be different if they were alive.

After the death of the second Kennedy, I realized that the enemies of sanity had, in effect, declared war upon society; and that, I suppose, is why I made the connection with that other, long ago war and with the pistol in my attic.

Obviously, I should have made it much earlier. We all tend to judge issues in personal terms, however. And to me the second Kennedy assassination was, if anything, a greater blow than the first. Two years earlier Bob Kennedy and I had been estranged by a hideous misunderstanding, but that rift had been closed long before he fell mortally wounded in Los Angeles. I was leading a New England citizen's movement supporting his presidential candidacy, and at the time of his death, as Jacqueline Kennedy told me after his funeral, he was writing a letter to me acknowledging the Kennedy Library's receipt of \$750,000—the profits from my book, *The Death of a President*.

Bob Kennedy had often talked to me of the hatred and violence which mar our society. He called them "a stain," which they certainly are. Only those who knew him were aware of how deeply he felt about this. Like Jefferson, he had "sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man," and, in the end, it was this tyranny of violence which took his life.

After the graveside services, after the eternal flame had been left to shine upon the twin unending scars, I was left with the feeling that nothing made sense now, that no tribute could be adequate, that thoughts were best left unformed and words unspoken.

Yet a man must do something.

I went for my gun.

The world had turned over many times since I had last taken it from its holster in battle, but it was the same standard Model 1911 M1A1 .45 auto-

HOME STUDY

HERS

I.C.S.

INTERNATIONAL
CORRESPONDENCE
SCHOOLS

Women's Division

Dept. Y6285K, Scranton, Penna. 18515

Please rush me your FREE women's career kit, with special information on the field of interest I've checked below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Psychology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Decorating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art & Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Languages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> M'g'ment & Suprvsn. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Preparatory | <input type="checkbox"/> Personality Dev't p'm't |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Programming | <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Bus. M'g'ment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English & Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School | |

Mrs. Miss _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

I. C. S. is an accredited member,
National Home Study Council.

Show HER this ad

This is the way to show the woman in your life how she can make up for lost education. Broaden her outlook. Bring more purpose and enjoyment into her daily life.

Here, for example, is her chance to finish high school. Or prepare herself to help you in your work or business. Or get a good job that will help take care of college expenses for the children and build security for the years ahead.

I. C. S. offers the highest standards of instruction. Lessons are written by authorities, organized into easy-to-follow units.

She gets personal guidance and correction service with every assignment. She gets the coveted I. C. S. diploma upon graduation.

Show her this ad. And if she's done the same for you, make a family project out of learning. She'll enjoy it, and so will you.

It's one sure way busy men and women can work together toward a better way of life.

FURNITURE SHOPPING?

Good Housekeeping's Traditional Furniture Chart can help you to decide what you really want for your home. A handsomely illustrated booklet, it contains 270 drawings of traditional pieces from the late 15th century to the middle of the 19th century. Information about their place in history and their function in the home is included. Although this 38-page booklet primarily discusses traditional furniture, newer more contemporary designs are usually an adaptation of these classic pieces. The chart has sections on chests, beds, chairs, tables, cupboards, desks, bookcases, sideboards, sofas and mirrors. To order, send 50 cents in coin to the Good Housekeeping Bulletin Service, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York 10019. Please include your ZIP code.

Hagerty SILVER CARE

THE UNANIMOUS CHOICE OF
THE WORLD'S 21 LEADING
SILVERSMITHS

21 leading Silversmiths use Hagerty. They recommend that you use it and most important, they distribute Hagerty as the very finest silver care available. Hagerty is the craftsman's selection... shouldn't it be yours?



Your silver's worst enemy "tarnish" has been defeated. Hagerty chemistry gives you a new Silver Care Team that works like magic — new Silversmiths' Polish and Gloves prevent tarnish at least 10 times longer than ordinary polish... literally make all other silver polishes obsolete. Send for free folder, "Here's how to care for your fine silver (the way 21 of the world's leading silversmiths do)."

W. J. HAGERTY & SONS, LTD., INC.
Dept. GH, South Bend, Ind. 46624

Baby's First Year

Detailed instructions on baby's care during difficult first year. Weight chart included. Send 35¢ to Good Housekeeping Children's Center, 959 8th Avenue, New York City, N.Y. 10019. Please add your zip code #.

Chamberlain's HAND LOTION



Free PUMP DISPENSER
with \$1.19 (9 oz.) size

25% GLYCERIN...

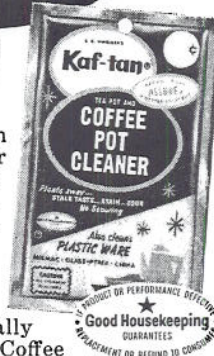
NOTHING RICHER SOLD FOR
Rough, Dry, Chapped Skin.

Also available in 59¢ and 33¢ sizes.
CHAMBERLAIN DISTRS., Des Moines, Ia.



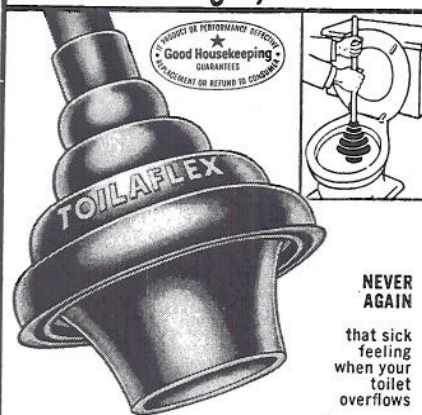
Floats away STAIN
... ODOR ... STALE
TASTE

KAF-TAN clean your beverage maker and enjoy untainted fresh flavor. Safe... easy to use... any beverage maker... any material. Most food Stores. Look for KAF-TAN... usually displayed near the Coffee Filters.



SPLENDID FOR PLASTIC WARE TOO!

POWERFUL PLUNGER CLEARS CLOGGED TOILETS in a jiffy!



NEVER AGAIN

that sick feeling when your toilet overflows

'TOILAFLEX' Toilet ALL-ANGLE Plunger

Unlike ordinary plungers, Toilaflex does not permit compressed air or messy water to splash back or escape. With Toilaflex the full pressure plows through the clogging mass and swishes it down. Can't miss!

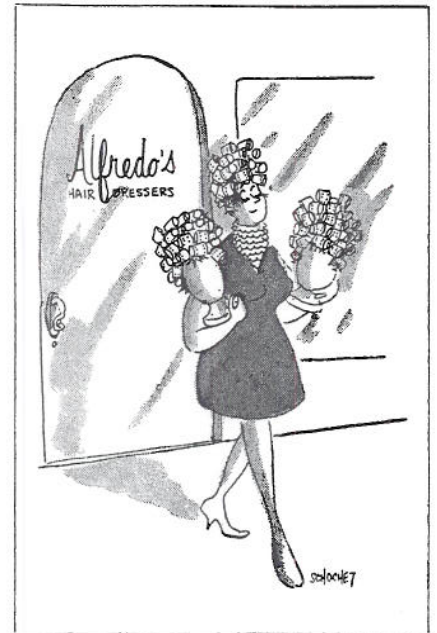
- DESIGNED TO FLEX AT ANY ANGLE
- RECESSED RIM TRAPS AIR & WATER
- CENTERS ITSELF, CAN'T SKID AROUND
- TAPERED TAIL GIVES AIR-TIGHT FIT

Get the Genuine 'Toilaflex'

\$2⁶⁵ AT HARDWARE STORES EVERYWHERE
Higher in Canada

matic, serial number 1075455, with a checkered Coltwood stock and a blue finish. It was now worth ninety-four dollars and wasn't for sale. I cleaned it and took it to the nearest police station.

The lieutenant looked startled. No one in our city had ever surrendered a weapon before; procedures were rather hazy. However, after explanations, the lieutenant agreed that my pistol would go to the bottom of the Connecticut River. He slid it down the desk to a sergeant. It went along quietly.



Perhaps I should have felt a trace of sentiment; after all, it had saved my life once. But that was a quarter-century ago, and it seemed to me that the savage values of that time were as irrelevant to today's America as those of Wyatt Earp. Having lived on battlefields, I did not want to see my country become one.

So now my old sidearm lies rusting among fish. The story of its watery fate has appeared in the press, and since then my mail has been divided between soaring encomiums and thundering denunciations. Depending upon which batch of letters I read first, turning in a pistol is either magnificent or subversive. None of my correspondents seems to have reflected that I may have been moved by simple common sense. That is how it was, though. I reached the conclusion that private disarmament is the most obvious solution to today's unrest. I say, let's turn in our guns! Indeed, I don't see how you can make a case against it.

Of course, I did have one other motive, the most personal of all. To others it may seem a very small thing. But I rest better knowing that there is one American household from which the instrument of terror has been removed, one home where violence will remain a stranger, and one family which is free—to borrow a phrase from a man who was a loving father—from the enemy within. ♦