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Discussed with Jim Connor

This is not going to be released to  
the press now --- therefore --  
keep here.

GBF 9/15/76



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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Bob Linder -

This did not go in  
thru us --- I do not know who  
hand delivered --- all handled by  
Jim Cavanaugh. Thought you should  
be aware of it.

Trudy Fry  
9/14/76



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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SIGNATURE

September 14, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

JIM CAVANAUGH 

SUBJECT:

Letter to Ashley Halsey Jr.

Attached for your signature is a letter to Ashley Halsey Jr., editor-in-chief of The American Rifleman and director of the Publications Division of the National Rifle Association of America.

The letter has been approved by Jim Cannon, Jim Lynn, and Ken Lazarus.

I have read the letter to the Attorney General, and he has no objection to it.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the attached letter.



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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Hand-delivered



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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 14, 1976

Dear Mr. Halsey:

I have studied carefully the views of the gun owners of America. Let me say from the outset that we share many points of view. I believe that America's decent citizens have had to pay far too much both in economic and human terms for the anti-social acts of a relatively few criminals. It is my view that the way to reduce violent crime in America is by the use of mandatory sentencing and minimum terms of imprisonment for any person convicted of using or carrying a handgun, or any other weapon, in the commission of a crime. Unfortunately, our judicial system today has failed to use the numerous existing statutes already on the law books to adequately punish the violent criminal. If judges remain reluctant to use existing statutes to punish violent criminals, there can be little hope that the nation's problems will be solved by the passage of still more laws.

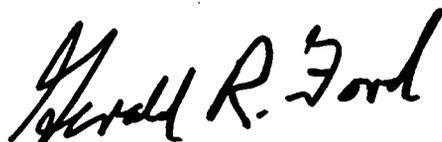
I found most enlightening the arguments you raised concerning the attempts to define the so-called "Saturday Night Special." Your discussion of the subtleties and the implications of the terms presently used shows a thorough understanding of the problems encountered in trying to establish clear legislative definitions. In addition, your statements concerning the possibilities for harrassment by federal employees are interesting. I will keep these points in mind when considering the impact of any future legislation in this area.



I will oppose any attempt to deprive law-abiding citizens of their traditional freedom to own firearms. I believe in punishing only those who commit crimes. I am unalterably opposed to the federal registration of guns or the licensing of gun owners. It has been my long-held belief that these measures would be futile in attempting to stop the criminal. Instead they would treat law-abiding citizens as potential criminals. Those who intend to use guns for criminal purposes will never conform to legal requirements of any sort.

In short, it is my intention to preserve for future generations the time-honored traditional freedoms that we and our forefathers have enjoyed throughout our 200-year history.

Sincerely,



Mr. Ashley Halsey Jr.  
Editor-in-Chief of The  
American Rifleman, and  
Director of NRA Publications  
Division  
National Rifle Association  
of America  
1600 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036



September 14, 1976

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GRF:JHC:cv

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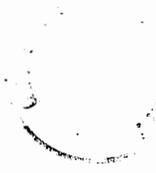
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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

September 14, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JIM CANNON  
JIM LYNN  
PAUL O'NEILL  
KEN LAZARUS  
DAVID GERGEN

FROM: JIM CAVANAUGH *JNC*  
*ev*

SUBJECT: Draft Letter on Gun Control

Attached is a draft letter setting forth views on gun control. I would like to have your suggestions and comments by 12 noon today.

Thank you very much.

Attachment

cc: ✓ Jim Connor

*Who to ?*

*what about Hartmann ?*



PROPOSED PRESIDENTIAL LETTER ON GUN CONTROL

I have studied the views of the gun owners of America very carefully. ~~Let me say from the outset that~~ we share many points of view. I believe that America's decent citizens have had to pay both in economic and human terms for the crimes of others. It is my view that the only way we will stop violent crime in America is by the use of mandatory sentencing and minimum terms of imprisonment for any person convicted of using or carrying a handgun, or any other weapon, in the commission of a crime. It is sad but true that our judicial system today has failed to use the numerous existing statutes already on the law books to punish the violent criminal. Ours is not a problem of crime in the streets; ours is a problem of crime in the courtroom. If judges refuse to use existing statutes to punish violent criminals, there will be little hope that the nation's problems will be solved by the passage of still more laws.

I found most enlightening the arguments you raised concerning the attempts to define the "Saturday Night Special." Your discussion of the subtleties and the implications of the terms presently used shows a thorough understanding of the problems encountered in trying to establish clear definitions. Your statements concerning



the possible harrassment by employees of the federal bureaucracy are insightful. I will keep these points in mind when considering the impact of future legislation in this area. I will oppose any attempt to deprive decent citizens of their traditional freedom to own handguns. I can assure you and your members that I will not support legislation which provides bureaucrats with more tools for harrassing law-abiding citizens. I do not support proposed legislation which would make criminals out of honest Americans.

I believe in punishing only those who commit crimes. I am unalterably opposed to the federal registration of guns or the licensing of gun owners. It has been my long-held belief that these measures would be futile in attempting to stop the criminal. Instead they would treat decent citizens as potential criminals. Those who intend to use guns for criminal purposes will never conform to regulations.

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