

GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



CAN "HOPLOPHOBIA" BE CURED?

Words are powerful things. It's significant that words come before guns in the Bill of Rights. When a dictator takes over a country, the first step is to shut down the broadcasters and printing presses — to control words. That's less effective these days thanks to the web and cell phones, so now they attempt to shut those down too. Disarming everyone comes second. Vladimir Lenin noted he wouldn't allow himself to be challenged with guns, why should he allow challenge with words, when words are the more dangerous thing. He knew something.

A single word can change the nature of an entire national debate, and *hoplophobia* is just such a word. Coined in 1966 by the late Col. Jeff Cooper, it comes from the Greek word *hoplites*, or weapon. Hoplophobia is a morbid fear of weapons, and a lot of people have it. Just mention a gun near a hoplophobe and the nervous discomfort begins. Place a gun near a hoplophobe, and the pulse rises, blood pressure soars, nausea, sweating, faintness and other symptoms rush in.

The definitive paper on this terrifying mental disorder was written by Dr. Sarah Thompson, Ph.D., and is posted with background at the blue hoplophobia button at *GunLaws.com*. The most chilling aspect of the paper is her description of how hoplophobes fail to cope with their disorder. They displace their fears through the psychological mechanism of *projection* — they project their fears onto everyone else. This explains a lot.

Hoplophobes are so afraid of guns, and especially what *they* might do if they ever got a hold of one, they project this onto everyone around them. They fear their own fear. They make the irrational assumption (it is, after all, a phobia, which is irrational), that if you have a gun, you would shoot them without cause — because this is what they fear *they* might do if they ever held this awesome power.

Hoplophobes are afraid of their own *inability* to control themselves. They presume (irrationally again) everyone with a gun is the same way, a ticking time bomb waiting to go off — just like they are. It's like the urge you may have felt at the tip of a high place, that urge to heave yourself over the side. You control it. Hoplophobes are afraid they can't.

This explains the never-ending nonsense arising every time a new carry law or gun-rights bill is enacted. Hoplophobes everywhere, like in every crack of our so-called "news" media, yell and scream about "blood in the streets" — which never happens. I did mention it's irrational, right? That doesn't stop them from fearing it each and every time, even though it *never* happens. Facts have no bearing or even meaning on a person who is phobic.

We see hoplophobic responses every time a psychotic madman goes

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berserk. The gun-o-phobes come out of the woodwork, bolstered by a complicit and equally fearful press, with politicians in tow (some of whom are only in it for the power grab), seeking new laws to disarm everyone *who didn't do anything wrong*. There it is — irrational behavior on a platter. It's not about guns. It's about sickness.

Unfortunately, because hoplophobes turn their fear outwards, they tend to inject themselves into the political arena, becoming one of the main forces fighting against your civil right to arms. They turn a medical condition into a political bludgeon, leading to a stunning conclusion: A significant part of the firearms debate is not about guns or politics or history or self-defense or resistance to tyranny — *it is about an untreated medical problem.*

Hoplophobes deserve pity, and need treatment. Instead they get political rhetoric. No wonder it's been so hard to advance this civil-rights cause — we're fighting a disease and don't realize it. A national effort to get hoplophobia into the DSM, the official mental-disorder catalog, is making little headway.

An Opportunity

One way psychiatrists deal with phobias is through *desensitization* — gradually introducing the afflicted to what they fear. We've all experienced this a bit when we take a nervous novice shooting. They come with a full bottle of fears, which dissipate as they learn the shooting skills. The worst hoplophobes won't go near a range; but that deep-seated fear is dispelled by those who do.

When a hoplophobe (or anyone) tells you they hate guns, an opportunity opens. Put a comforting hand on the person's shoulder, and in a soft reassuring voice tell them, "It's not good to hate." Then stand quietly while they stand like deer caught in headlights.

It's important you personally confront hoplophobia wherever you encounter it. When someone makes irrational claims about guns, or shows even subtle telltale hints of fear, ask, "Are you hoplophobic?" Man oh man does that change the flavor of things! Suddenly they're on the defensive, insisting they're not afraid of guns. Denial is a symptom of the condition. Let them know if they suffer under a phobia, it doesn't justify denying your rights in a misguided effort to ease their malady. Attacking your rights is just plain wrong, and will not help them.



Alan Korwin runs the *GunLaws.com* website, and is the manager of the *TrainMeAZ.com* campaign.



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