

Handgun Control Inc.

AN ANALYSIS OF HANDGUN CONTROL, INC.

The following document represents the research by a friend and client, Sashai A. McClure. At the time of this writing, Sam (as she prefers to be called) is an undergraduate student at the University of California at Berkeley. She has done a tremendous amount of research into Handgun Control, Inc. and it deserves to be read by all gun owners.

Richard Bash

-----  
INTRODUCTION

Handgun Control, Inc (hereafter abbreviated "HCI") is a difficult organization to research. In many aspects, the group is very secretive and reluctant, yet it is very open about others. Interviews are easy to secure, but getting the same answer twice is a difficult proposition. Very few of my interviews yielded significant results other than revealing their penchant for mystery and secrecy.

Most of the information accumulated and presented herein has been attained through the oddest of sources. I found several computer bulletin board services (abbreviated BBS) to be quite helpful, particularly the Combat Arms BBS (see bibliography for address and telephone number) of Castro Valley, run by Mr. Richard Bash. Through his system, I was able to access a national echo which relays messages nationwide. Other systems include that of Mr. Neal Knox and that of the Berkeley Police Department ("The Guardian"). Of these systems, only the latter had a neutral position in regard to the gun control controversy, however all information (unless otherwise noted) garnered through the BBS's that is presented herein has been confirmed through other sources and in most cases, by members of HCI.

Great help was also afforded me by of all groups, the National Rifle Association (NRA). The people there were more helpful to my research than HCI was, supplying me with printed information (even information uncomplimentary to the NRA) and interviewees experienced with HCI.

Oddly, HCI provided the most insurmountable barrier to my examination. In general, no one was able to give the same answers to the same questions twice, and repeated requests for information went unheeded. A mailed response was received only once: I had called pretending I wished to join and was sent a membership packet and several papers advocating gun control and gun elimination. Some allegations were substantiated, some were not. Those pamphlets and leaflets which did include references supplied only a very limited bibliography, mostly the same source repeated several times.

Phone calls also fell upon the proverbial deaf ears. Interviewees (members, secretaries, receptionists and public relations personnel) while not incompetent, were generally uninformed and seemed to parrot the corporate line when uncertain. They did not appear to have thoughts of their own. Interviews with more influential members could not be secured.

Thus with little provisions of printed materials and interviews, I was forced to consult with other organizations. Most of my information has been confirmed to my satisfaction, except that on the formation of the

organization itself. There are several stories wandering about on this subject and after several efforts to contact HCI on this matter and attaining no results, I have chosen to present the most plausible and substantiated report, that from Mr. Neal Knox's BBS.

Virtually all my sources either have been or will be uploaded to the aforementioned Combat Arms BBS in exchange for Mr. Richard Bash's services. The reader may wish to check there first to view these sources, thus avoiding the hassle of having to track them down himself/herself.

---

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.) Formation
  - 2.) Organization and Membership
  - 3.) Goals and Reasons for Existence
  - 4.) Methods and Publicity
  - 5.) Appendix I
  - 6.) Appendix II
- 

#### FORMATION

There are several discrepancies in everyone's tale of how HCI was originally formed so as mentioned, Neal Knox's story being the most substantiated and therefore, plausible, shall be used here.

According to Nelson T. (Pete) Shields, III., (founding chair of HCI) ex-CIA agent, Edward (Edwin?) O. Welles, was the first chairman of the National Council to Ban Handguns (NCBH) which was later renamed Handgun Control, Inc. What is curious about this (other than alleged CIA involvement in the move to ban private firearms ownership) is a competing group was formed in the same year as NCCH (1979) by Reverend Jack Corbett under the auspices of the United Methodist Church. Rev. Corbett describes Welles as a "guiding light" to what Knox refers to as "an ostensibly competing organization."1 Further evidence of Welles' involvement with two competitors is provided by a telephone conversation Mr. Knox was conducting with Rev. Corbett in which Rev. Corbett "was stymied by my [Neal Knox] recitation of facts that refuted his anti-gun arguments, Corbett handed the phone to Welles-- to my utter astonishment."2

(It should be noted that at the time Edward O. Welles had founded HCI and NCBH, he was the owner of two handguns (allegedly buried in his backyard) and a Sharps-Borchardt rifle. It is very unusual that a man such as he would form an anti-gun coalition.)

After this, the discrepancies about HCI's origins become enormous and impossible to sort through. There are many who advocate the position that Shields is a puppet controlled by Welles. Others disbelieve any further connection between Welles and the coalitions other than founding. Many moderates as well as extremists speculate on the possibilities of a CIA

conspiracy. In my research, I have been unable to corroborate any origination stories other than the one from Mr. Neal Knox, and even it contains unanswered questions.

In any event, the group was eventually connected to John and Sarah Brady indirectly via John Hinkley Jr.'s 1980 assassination attempt on then President Ronald Reagan. Drawing a loaded .22 revolver from his coat, Hinkley emptied its cylinder in 2.8 seconds, wounding the president and his press secretary, Mr. James Brady. Brady was shot in the head and as a result, is now permanently confined to a wheelchair. His wife, Mrs. Sarah Brady, began advocating legislation for further gun control. Four years later, Mrs. Brady found her son in a friend's car playing with a loaded .22. Though it is the contention of many that at this point she founded HCI, it had already been in existence since 1974. Instead, as a political wife, she quickly became the chair. Hence the confusion of many as to whether HCI is "that Shields group or that Brady group." It is both.

---

#### ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP

The following information was requested from HCI on three separate occasions to no avail. The National Rifle Association responded after my futile efforts to gain response from HCI with a listing of HCI's organization, and its National Committee which seems to be only a forum for the boasting of celebrity membership.

HEADQUARTERS: 1225 I Street, NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

TELEPHONE: (202) 898-0792

REGIONAL OFFICES: 703 Market Street \*  
Suite 1511  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 546-1884

310 Fourth Street  
Suite 724  
Minneapolis. MN 55415  
(612) 333-2823

\* The San Francisco office has moved to Los Angeles, Calif. At the time of this writing, I do not have the new address and telephone number.

STAFF: 15

FOUNDING CHAIR: Nelson T. (Pete) Shields, III  
CHAIR: Sarah Brady  
PRESIDENT: Charles J. Orasin

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: F. Robert Meier, Treasurer  
Lois Hess, Secretary

David Birenbaum, John Phillips, Carl Bogus, Helen Raiser, Hon. John Corderman, Maurice Rosenblatt, Hon. Lee Fisher, Jeanne Shields, John Hechinger, Odile Stern, Larry Lowenstein, Edward (Edwin) O. Welles

PUBLICATION: Washington Report, quarterly

PAC: National Handgun Control Political Action Committee

MEMBERSHIP: 200,000

Although HCI claims to have over 1,000,000 members, the method they use for tabulation relies upon contacts with interested parties by any means, not an actual count of dues paying members.

HCI NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Steve Allen  
Mr. Arthur Ashe (deceased)  
Ms. Lauren Becall  
Mrs. Marjorie Benton  
Mr. Leonard Bernstein (deceased)  
Mr. Lloyd Bridges  
Hon. Edmund G. Brown, Sr.  
Ms. Ellen Burstyn  
Mrs. Julia Child  
Mr. Jackie Cooper  
Mr. Hume Cronyn  
Hon. Joseph Curran  
Mr. Stephen Dart  
Mr. William Dorman  
Mr. Gerald Dunfey  
Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.  
Hon. Dianne Feinstein  
Hon. Kenneth Gibson  
Rabbi Joseph Glaser  
Ms. Betsy Gotbaum  
Mr. Michael G. Gross  
Mrs. Elliot Jones Halberstam  
Ms. Mariette Hartley  
Hon. Richard Hatcher  
Hon. Janet Gray Hayes  
Mr. Andrew Heiskell  
Mr. Hal Holbrook  
Hon. Maynard Jackson  
Mr. Albert Jenner, Jr.  
Mrs. Shirley Knight  
Ms. Patrick Kennedy Lawford  
Mr. Jack Lemmon  
Hon. Edward Levi  
Honorable John Lindsay  
Ms. Marsha Mason  
Ms. Jane McMichael  
Dr. Karl Menninger  
Mr. Patrick Murphy  
Mr. Paul Newman  
Mr. George D. Newton, Jr.  
Mr Victor Palmeri  
Mr. Gregory Peck  
Mr. Russell Peterson  
Mr. Sol Price  
Mr. Milton Rector  
Ms. Lee Remick

Mr. Will Rogers, Jr.  
Mr. James W. Rouse  
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
Mr. Neil Simon  
Mr. Rod Steiger  
Dr. Emanuel Tandy  
Ms. Jessica Tandy  
Mr. Eli Wallach  
Ms. Ruth Warrick  
Mr. Francis Wheat  
Mr. James Whitmore  
Mr. Andy Williams

#### AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Center to Prevent Handgun Violence  
1400 K Street, NW  
Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005

"The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence is HCI's 'educational' spin-off that portrays firearms and their ownership as inherently dangerous. Advertisements concentrate on children and firearms accidents involving juveniles."<sup>3</sup>

In addition to this list of members, HCI counts amongst its supporters, "[e]very major law enforcement organization in America."<sup>4</sup> Upon researching this contention however, it was learned that only high police officials and their organizations are in support of HCI. The common ground among law enforcement HCI supporters is politics. Most are police chiefs and such who are either directly elected to their posts or are appointed by another elected official. The regular street officer appears to be either neutral about the organization and its activities or opposed, much to the infuriation of some of their supervisors. Witness the plight of San Jose Officer Pyle who after testifying against gun control in Sacramento (1989) returned home to find that Chief Joe MacNamara no longer required his services. He was put on desk duty and his case is on appeal.

Further investigation of HCI's allegation of law enforcement support produced the American Law Enforcement Officers Poll for 1989. It was sent to 16,259 Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs and command personnel nationwide. The curious reader should refer to the appendix for a copy of this poll. The stated purpose of the poll "... was to enlighten the Congress, the media, and other organizations regarding the opinions of our nation's top law enforcement officers."<sup>5</sup> For the most part, the poll's questions are not much better in absenting themselves of obvious bias than are the questions of the gun control crowd. However, it seems to be the only poll conducted directed at regular line officers as opposed to their politically appointed or elected supervisors. Its results state that the majority of street law enforcement personnel do not support the views of HCI. Clearly, HCI has overestimated its law enforcement support, basing its claims on the support of a few organizations which are listed as:

- \* Fraternal Order of Police (207,000 members)
- \* National Association of Police Organizations (90,000 members)
- \* International Association of Chiefs of Police (14,500 members)
- \* National Sheriff's Association (30,000 members)
- \* National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) (2,200 members)<sup>6</sup>

Upon contacting these organizations (the last two could not be reached) it was confirmed that they do indeed support the practices and views of Handgun Control, Inc, though this claim is vehemently denied by a member of the Fraternal Order of Police. Mr. R. Peters contends that the regular membership of the FOP in no way endorses the gun control/elimination activities of HCI. Presentation of the group's magazine confirms this, though it must be noted that the leadership of the group disagrees with its membership and supports HCI.

As a last point on HCI's accumulation of supporters, there is some controversy about the groups ethics in gaining them. The 1989 Federal Lobbying Report (for the first half of the year),

"... showed that HCI gave anti-gun Columbus Oh. Police Officer Dewey Stokes, who heads the Fraternal Order of Police, \$2,000 on June 30, 1989. HCI has now given him \$3,000 since the first of the year. It does not say why he received it, only that it was a 'contribution.'"

They also show that HCI gave \$500 to the Florida Police Chiefs on June 30, 1989.

"In addition, the reports also show that Phillip C. McGuire, former associate director for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, received substantial payment for expense requests."

'It appears that HCI has bought their relationship with a segment of the anti-gun law enforcement community,' said John Barnett, projects director of the Second Amendment Foundation."<sup>7</sup>

More research is necessary to determine how true Mr. Barnett's comment is. When HCI was asked about this, the representative from public relations declined to comment, but then added that appearances are often deceiving. Clarification as to his meaning on this was not provided.

#### GOALS AND REASONS FOR EXISTENCE

To use the words of the NRA in describing the agenda of HCI:

"HCI was formed to lobby for legislative control and government regulations on the manufacture, importation, sale, transfer, and civilian possession of handguns. Their efforts have expanded to include attempts to limit the private ownership of semi-automatic firearms, specifically rifles."<sup>8</sup>

Using the words of HCI commercials and printed propaganda:

"... fighting to keep handguns out of the wrong hands."<sup>9</sup>

In the words of founding chair, Nelson T. Shields, III.:

"I'm convinced that we have to have Federal legislation to build on. We're going to have to take one step at a time, and the first step is necessarily--given the political realities--going to be very modest ... Our ultimate goal--total control of handguns in the United States--is going to take time ... The first problem is to slow down the increasing number of handguns being produced and

sold in this country. The second problem is to get handguns registered, and the final problem is to make the possession of all handguns, and all handgun ammunition totally illegal."10

The common denominator of the three reasons listed above for the existence of HCI is legislation for governmental regulation and restriction of handguns (now expanded to all semi-automatic firearms, specifically rifles). In its membership drive pamphlet, HCI proudly displays and discusses briefly the recent legislation for which it has pushed passage. Unfortunately, they do not list bill numbers so it is impossible to tell which legislation is really being discussed and whether or not HCI is presenting the facts. In my research, this proved to be quite common with HCI declarations. Their words are better than mine in describing their achievements:

"INTERSTATE SALE OF HANDGUNS: HCI lobbyists protected existing gun controls by persuading Congress to continue a ban on the interstate sale of handguns, despite a \$100 million NRA campaign to gut our national law.

"UNDETECTABLE HANDGUNS: We broke the NRA's stranglehold on Congress when federal lawmakers passed a bill outlawing plastic, undetectable handguns. The NRA spent millions of dollars trying to persuade Congress that these handguns, which could slip through metal detectors, were not a problem. Our strong alliance of police groups and a bipartisan coalition of legislators forced the NRA to change its position.

"COP-KILLER BULLETS: Unbelievable as it may seem, the NRA defended the sale of armor-piercing bullets that can penetrate the bulletproof vests worn by our nation's police officers. Handgun Control lobbied fiercely on Capitol Hill against these needless bullets. We won.

"SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIALS: These easily concealable, low-quality handguns have one purpose--use in violent crime. Sarah Brady, along with other HCI supporters and law enforcement officials, helped persuade Maryland lawmakers to stop the sale of Saturday Night Specials in the state. The gun lobby immediately launched a drive to repeal the law at the ballot box, spending over \$6 million in a campaign of hysteria and misinformation. But Marylanders soundly rejected the NRA and voted to keep the law.

"ASSAULT WEAPONS: Military-style assault weapons, designed solely to gun down human beings quickly and efficiently, are an ever-growing concern of America's police officers. Despite the increased use of these weapons by drug dealers and hate groups, the NRA spends millions of dollars to defend their sale. With the help of law enforcement and Handgun Control, Inc., California became the first state to outlaw the sale and manufacture of these killing machines. New Jersey followed, and Virginia and Maryland have also enacted restrictions on assault weapons."11

The validity of these claims and others will be addressed a little later. It is through emotional passages such as these that membership is solicited. Adding to these, are acts of shocking criminal activity utilizing firearms. The stories in the membership pamphlet read:

"In Atlanta, James Calvin Brady walked out of a mental hospital

and into a pawn shop where he quickly and easily purchased a handgun. The next day, Brady, who had a history of cocaine addiction, went into a mall's crowded food court at lunchtime and opened fire, killing one young man and wounding four others."

"Lancelot Armstrong, wanted by authorities on charges of rape and assault, lied about his criminal past on the federal form he filled out to buy a TEC-9 assault pistol. He later used the gun to kill a deputy sheriff in Broward County, Florida. Police found the receipt for the gun in Armstrong's wallet when he was apprehended."

"In Boca Raton, Kenneth Misher, owner of an optics store, was murdered by his business associate and colleague of 15 years who went out on his lunch hour and purchased a handgun with a credit card. Later that day, the co-worker shot Misher several times and then turned the weapon on himself."<sup>12</sup>

Again, the pamphlet contains no documentation of these incidents, thus their validity cannot be challenged. It may interest the reader to know that these same incidents are implemented repeatedly throughout HCI's advocacy and lobbying. It is rare that the group uses different examples of handgun violence.

The membership form is also an emotional plea. The new member is required to contribute \$15 in dues, but is urged to send \$29, the alleged price of a Saturday Night Special. I asked several gun dealers in the area if they could sell me a \$29 handgun and between chortles of laughter, I was told that no such handgun exists.

The primary goal of HCI at present is passage of the Brady Bill. Awaiting passage for a couple years, HR467 has been defeated several times and keeps coming back for more. According to HCI, the Brady Bill (named in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Brady) would institute a national seven-day waiting period for all handgun purchases. The supposed effect of this period would be "... to ensure we aren't selling handguns over-the-counter to those with a criminal past. And angry or suicidal individuals would have time to cool off-- rather than buying a gun to settle an argument or to take their own life."<sup>13</sup> During this seven-day period, the seller of the handgun would send a copy of the BATF form required of all purchasers, certifying that they are eligible to purchase a firearm under the provisions of the 1968 Gun Control Act, to the chief law enforcement officer in the region. This officer would be directed to conduct a background check and if no record is found within seven days, the purchaser is entitled to the weapon. Unfortunately for the Brady Bill and its supporters, the Department of Justice recently issued a statement to the effect that due to the scattered systems of felony record accounts, a background check on a given individual whether seven days or seven months are allotted, is quite impossible. If the reader is interested in reading the actual text of the Brady Bill, it is printed in full as downloaded from the Combat Arms BBS in the appendix. The validity of its claims will be addressed in the next section.

The Brady Bill, while forming the cornerstone of HCI's legislative wishes, is not the only goal. The membership drive pamphlet lists the rest of these goals as:

- \* Banning military-style assault weapons
- \* Prohibiting the manufacture, importation, and sale of Saturday Night



### Specials

- \* Establishing registration requirements for the private sale of concealable handguns at gun shows and by citizens
- \* Barring multiple sales of handguns
- \* Requiring stringent safety classes for those who buy handguns
- \* Mandating strict reporting requirements for the theft of handguns from gun dealers and gun owners
- \* Establishing control over who can manufacture and sell handguns with licensing procedures
- \* Creating GUN-FREE ZONES around all our schools

Again, the validity of these goals will be discussed in the following section.

### METHODS AND PUBLICITY

Rarely does HCI present evidence for its allegations. The group relies very heavily upon emotionalism and its members and supporters are very good at it. Called upon frequently to testify before Congress for gun control, Sarah Brady always pushes her wheelchair husband before her, eliciting comments of sympathy for both. The figure of the once upright man begging Congress to prevent further wheelchair victims is a pathetic one and pity runs high. When James S. Brady speaks, even the most rabidly pro-gun are moved to sympathy for the man's condition:

BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, NOVEMBER 21, 1989.

"I am honored to be here, but it's not the honor that compelled me to appear today. It's the anger--anger at Congress that in 1988 failed to pass a measure which would have reduced the handgun violence plaguing our nation."

"I had no choice but to be here today because too many Members of Congress have been gutless on this issue. They have closed their eyes to tragedies like mine. They ignore the statistics. Well, this statistic has decided to break his silence."

"Those Members of Congress who oppose a simple seven-day waiting period should try being in my shoes for just one day. I am not seeking sympathy. But I want you to really understand what being shot has done to me and my life."

"There was a day when I walked the halls of this Senate and worked closely with many of you and your staffs. There was a wonderful day when I was fortunate enough to serve the President of the United States in a capacity I had dreamed of all my life. And for a time, I felt that people looked up to me. Today, I can tell you how hard it is to have people speaking down to me. But nothing is harder than losing the independence and control we all so value in life. I need help getting out of bed, help taking a shower, and help getting dressed."

"There are some who oppose a simple seven-day waiting period for handgun purchases because it would inconvenience gun buyers. Well, I guess I am paying for their convenience. And I am one of the lucky ones. I survived being shot in the head. Other shooting victims are not so fortunate."

"I am a Southern Illinois boy who grew up hunting and at home with guns. I don't question the rights of responsible gun owners. That's not the issue. The issue is whether the John Hinckleys of the world should be able to walk into gun stores and purchase handguns instantly."

"I felt compelled to get involved because there are too many cowardly lions walking the halls of Congress. I fight every day to maintain the courage I need to survive. I pray that Congress can find the courage to quickly pass the Brady Bill."<sup>14</sup>

This quote is illustrative of the techniques HCI has at its disposal with which to convince. The reader shall note that nowhere in Mr. Brady's plea is there reference to hard evidence that his bill will work, only a discussion of how miserable his life has become in a wheelchair and an insult to those who disagree ("cowardly lions").

Other ways in which HCI gets attention is through smear campaigns directed at its main opponent, the NRA. Usually these smear campaigns are in the form of painting the NRA as a powerful beast that until now, could not be tamed. The tamer of course, is the "grassroots" organization made up of ordinary people, HCI. The great American classic of the underdog beating the tyrannical master is deployed time and again, mostly by citing the NRA's enormous monetary assets. Upon contacting both groups, the NRA Annual Report (which includes the group's expenses) was received in less than a week. Such a report was never sent by HCI despite two separate requests. The NRA had no records of HCI's finances of course, but when the problem was explained to the representative, a news clipping was sent.

It is claimed by HCI that the NRA spends millions working to defeat "sensible ... gun policy"<sup>15</sup> A cursory check of the NRA Annual Report confirms the year 1989 saw \$19,749,403 devoted to the NRA-Institute for Legislative Action (NRA-ILA). As mentioned, no figures were obtained from HCI as to their total income.

Shedding light on the subject is a news article in "The New GUN WEEK" which printed the 1989 Federal Lobbying Reports (1st Half Gross Receipts), reprinted here:

\*\*\*\* 1989 Federal Lobbying Reports \*\*\*\*

(1st Half Gross Receipts)

Handgun Control, Inc.	\$3,827,020
National Coalition to Ban Handguns	265,719
ANTI-GUN TOTAL	\$4,092,739
Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms	\$1,158,572
NRA/Institute for Legislative Action	915,603
Gun Owners of America	361,715
PRO-GUN TOTAL	\$2,435,890
ANTI-GUN ADVANTAGE	\$1,656,849

The reader is asked to ignore the obvious inflammatory nature of the language used in this quote. The language is biased, but the figures are correct.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, Handgun Control, Inc is as or more wealthy as the National Rifle Association.

Exaggeration and misstatements appear to be the norm for HCI. I refer the reader back to the section where HCI's legislative accomplishments are listed. On that list is a note about plastic handguns which can be slipped, undetected, through metal detector security systems. HCI proudly states, "... NRA was working feverishly to block all attempts to ban plastic, undetectable handguns that could easily be smuggled onto airplanes." A little investigation found that currently, there is no item such as a plastic, undetectable gun in existence, nor are there plans for development. The legislation in question however, was so poorly worded, it would have banned several 100% metal handguns in addition to giving the Secretary of the Treasury authority to ban ANY gun. In short, HCI supported legislation banning handguns that do not even exist. In interview, a disjointed and incomprehensible answer was given which seemed to say, "But if next century technology should provide us with a plastic gun, we'll be ready for it." (HCI member who declined to state his name)

Also on HCI's list of recent accomplishments is the banning of "cop-killer" bullets. I was unable to elicit a response from HCI on this one, but an NRA representative mailed me a pamphlet with the following information:

"Police across the country begged the news media not to report that officers were wearing protective body armor. They rightly feared that criminals would attempt to shoot officers in areas of the body not covered by their vests. Indeed, in 1983 and 1984, there was an increase in the number of law enforcement officers who were killed by gun shot wounds to the head, just as rank and file officers warned. In attempting to ban the KTW bullet--a bullet with a Teflon coating used as a barrel lubricant--the proposed legislation was so poorly crafted that it would have banned virtually all commercially available ammunition used in hunting, target shooting, and self-protection. The NRA helped Congress write legislation which prohibits a specific type of ammunition from being sold other than to police and the military--merely regulating what had long been the industry practice. Anti-gun Congressman Mario Biaggi, who introduced the original ban-the-bullet-bill that NRA and the U.S. Treasury Department opposed, said, 'Our final legislative product was not some watered-down version of what we set out to do. In the end, there was no compromise on the part of police safety.' HCI and the national media demonstrated where to shoot police; NRA fought to protect the rights of police and honest citizens."17

All of the exaggerations and misstatements on the part of HCI have led many to look with not a little apprehension at the remarks quoted earlier by Nelson Shields. It is the idea of many that HCI is not for gun-control, but rather for gun-elimination. Adding to the climate of apprehension is the seeming stranglehold on the media HCI and other anti-gun groups have. Magazines such as Time print biased and sometimes untrue articles on the gun issue a couple times each month, regardless if there have been any notable incidents involving guns prior to publication. People of both pro-gun and neutral positions wrote in to Time magazine after a particularly misrepresentative article entitled "Death by Gun" appeared in a July 1989 issue. The letters complained of the biased nature of the article, pointing out that over half of the 346 gun deaths discussed were suicides which would

have simply found other means of self-destruction if guns were absent. Others berated the silliness of counting a heart attack victim as a gun-related death--the man had been shot at, though not hit, and summarily died of a heart attack. Gun owners in particular took offense at the inclusion of police and civilian justified homicides in the article. In response, Time wrote,

"The July 17 cover story is the most recent in a growing number of attempts on the part of TIME editors to keep the gun availability issue resolutely in view. Such an editorial closing of ranks represents the exception rather than the rule in the history of the magazine ... But the time for opinions on the dangers of gun availability is long since gone ... . As we see it--and as we indicated in the report--our responsibility now is to confront indifference about the escalating violence and the unwillingness to do something about it." 18

Time, in addition to articles like this, gives much "advertising" to HCI and its cause. Frequent articles espousing the merits of gun-control and HCI in Time and other sympathetic media amounts to free media exposure (except in cases of actual news reporting) NRA and other similar organizations' ads are systematically rejected however. The Firearms Education Institute (FEI) has estimated HCI's free media exposure at \$650 million as compared to the NRA's paid advertisements at \$15 million. The representative also hastened to add that pretended news articles carry more weight than actual paid advertisements.

Articles such as the following from the December 1990 issue of Glamour magazine are particularly helpful to HCI's cause:

The following is from Glamour's "Ten Women of the Year"

SARAH BRADY: FOR WORKING TO REDUCE THE HANDGUN EPIDEMIC IN THE U.S.

In 1984, three years after her husband, White House aide James A. Brady, was shot in an assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan's life, Sarah Brady found her five-year-old son Scott playing in a friend's car with a gun that turned out to be a loaded .22. It was the last straw for Brady, who launched an all-out fight for tougher gun control laws. She had worked for two congressmen before her marriage, so she knew her way around Washington and, as chairperson of the lobbying group Handgun Control, Inc., she made herself--and her husband, who is disabled and confined to a wheelchair--a highly visible opponent of the powerful National Rifle Association (NRA). She fought the "invincible" NRA state by state and proved it's NOT invincible. This year, Brady's lobbying paid off: In a 27-9 vote, the House Judiciary Committee approved legislation to require a seven-day waiting period to buy a handgun. "This margin of victory," says Brady, "illustrates that Congress is serious about reducing gun violence and keeping handguns out of the wrong hands."

-- "Women of the Year 1990", Glamour magazine, December 1990, page 96.

It is through the media that HCI champions its success in large part, but there is another aspect. NRA representative Pat O'Malley attributes much of their success to direct mail. HCI mailings come within one day (sometimes as much as two) of social security checks. Periodically, mass mailings based on

political party membership (Democrat) are also sent. Most of HCI's mass mailing lists come from left-wing and liberal publication's subscriber lists. If an individual receives periodicals such as Newsweek, Time, People, Life, The Washington Post, etc., than he/she is likely to at some point receive a mailing from HCI. The one this researcher received came in an envelope with, "Now is your chance to tell the NRA to go to HELL!" scribbled on the outside. Inside was a list of the National Committee with celebrities proliferated throughout, and four pages of heavy-handed propaganda, stamp signed by Nelson Shields, and no Board of Directors list. The mailing was packed full of slurs against the NRA, painting the organization to be a militant group which has had the nation by the throat since the NRA's existence. In closing the letter, Shields, in language that can only be described as begging, implores the reader to join HCI at once, "for another one of us will be murdered by a handgun in the next 60 minutes."

It is through this type of mailing that potential supporters receive postcards like the one this researcher received in the membership packet. It features a photo on the bottom half of the card of a .38 snub-nosed revolver (the firearms which enjoys the largest popularity amongst the one half of the U.S. population that is armed). It would be said by some that the photo is a depiction of flag desecration as the revolver has been painted as a U.S. flag. Above the photo, written in black capitals the postcard states:

"In 1988, handguns killed  
7 people in Great Britain  
19 in Sweden  
53 in Switzerland  
25 in Israel  
13 in Australia  
8 in Canada  
And 8,915 in the United States

God Bless America"

More to the point, in small print below the pictured revolver is a plea to, "Help stop handgun violence. Call 1-900-226-4455." Upon calling this number, I was greeted by a recording of Sarah Brady relating the most recent gun control news. I was then instructed to supply my name and demographics for the purpose of sending "an urgent letter" to my representatives in Washington "urging support of stronger gun laws." I was also informed that this call had just cost me \$2.75 and that the Bradys were very pleased with my presence as a member of HCI. (To their credit, the charge was also given in tiny numerals on the postcard.) This 900 number proliferates virtually all the mailings sent out by HCI and appears extremely effective. It aids supporters by giving updates while inundating representatives with mail from registered voters urging gun control.

Recently, HCI's mailing practices have come under suspicion and there is discussion of investigation. The question concerning many is the speed at which HCI is able to send out its mailings after each highly publicized gun related event. According to an NRA member who also belongs to HCI for information purposes (he declined to state his name for fear of being removed from HCI's membership rolls) letters about the 1989 Stockton tragedy were in his mailbox in less than two days. News articles were also swifter than normal. It is the contention of several individuals that HCI may have been privy to prior warning that Patrick Purdy would commit his atrocity. A little research has found that no investigation is yet under way, and none is planned. The fact remains however, that HCI and the news media were able

to publicize the event with unusual swiftness. Layout and printing take time.

Through the virtual media monopoly (in regards to firearms), direct mail, and this 900 number, HCI keeps in close contact with its members, supporters, and potential supporters. This close contact has made Handgun Control, Incorporated a successful group and a considerable opponent of the NRA.

Unfortunately, because the organization has been exposed repeatedly for falsehoods, one is inclined to be hesitant about shrugging off rumors of their Purdy mailings. It is likely to be hysteria, but in view of HCI's record with the truth, it is difficult to have certainty. When I began this research I had a fundamental respect for HCI as a worthy opponent of the NRA, of which I claim membership. My research of this organization has tarnished this image of mine, and I now have little respect for it. I fail to see why if HCI believes itself to be correct in fighting for gun control (or gun elimination, depending on who one asks, in view of Mr. Shields sentiments) it feels obligated to distort fact and to resort on occasion to outright lies. The lies appear very condescending when it is discovered how easy it is to prove them as such. One of my first interviews was with a secretary who informed me that over 90% of all rapes are committed with the assistance of a gun. The FBI Uniform Crime Report 1989 states otherwise, setting the figure at 26% instead. I was told by HCI that a firearm is statistically more likely to be used against a family member or against its owner in the commission of a crime than it is to protect its owner. Researcher and professor Gary Kleck has found that a firearm is used to commit a murder every 60 minutes. (HCI concedes this figure and indeed exploits it) However, Kleck also found that a firearm is used successfully in defensive action every 48 seconds. HCI never responded to my three written queries about this figure. It is for the reason of HCI falsehoods that I can no longer say that I have respect for what I had believed to be a worthy adversary.

-----  
APPENDIX I.

H.R.467

(The Brady Bill)

101st CONGRESS 2nd Session

H.R. 467

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A BILL

To provide for a waiting period before the purchase of a handgun.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the "Brady Handgun Violence Prevention."

SEC. 2. WAITING PERIOD REQUIRED BEFORE PURCHASE OF HANDGUN.

(a) In General.--Section 922 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

(p)(1) It shall be unlawful for any licensed importer, licensed manufacturer, or licensed dealer to sell, deliver, or transfer a handgun to an individual who is not licensed under section 923 unless--

" (A) (i) (I) before delivery of the handgun and within one day after the date the transferee proposes such transfer, such transferor has provided the chief law enforcement officer of the place of residence of the transferee a copy of a sworn statement by the transferee as described paragraph (3); and

" (II) before delivery of the handgun, such transferor has received from such officer written notice that such officer has received such sworn statement; and

" (ii) (I) 7 days have elapsed from the date the transferee proposed such a transfer to the transferor and the transferor has not received information from the chief law enforcement officer that receipt or possession of the handgun by the transferee could be in violation of Federal law or of a State or local law of the residence of the transferee; or

" (II) at any time after the transferee proposes such transfer, the chief law enforcement officer notifies such transferor that receipt or possession of the handgun by the transferee would not violate Federal law or State or local law of the

residence of the transferee;

"(B) the transferee has presented to the transferor a written statement from the chief law enforcement officer of the place of residence of the transferee which states that the transferee requires access to a handgun because of a threat to the life of the transferee or of any member of the household of the transferee; or

"(C) (i) the transferee has applied to the State in which the transfer is to occur for a permit allowing the transferee to possess a firearm;

" (ii) the law of such State requires such application to contain, at a minimum, the information described in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (3);

" (iii) the transferee has received such permit from the State in which the transfer is to occur;

" (iv) not more that 365 days have elapsed from the date the transferee received such permit; and

" (v) after the transferee applied for such permit and before the State granted such permit, the law enforcement authorities of the State verified that the transferee is qualified under law to receive a firearm.

"(2) Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted to require any action by a chief law enforcement officer which is not otherwise required.

"(3) The sworn statement referred to in paragraph (1)(A)(i) shall contain only--

" (A) the name, address, and date of birth appearing on a valid identification document (as defined in section 1028(d)(1) of the transferee containing a photograph of the transferee and a description of the identification used;

" (B) a statement that Federal law does not prohibit the receipt of the handgun by the transferee;

" (C) the date the sworn statement is made; and

" (D) notice that the transferee intends to obtain a handgun from the transferor.

"(4) Any transferor of a handgun who, after such transfer, receives a report from a chief law enforcement officer containing information that receipt or possession of the handgun by the transferee is in violation of Federal law or of State or local law of the residence of the transferee shall immediately communicate all information such transferor has about the transfer and the transferee to--

" (A) the chief law enforcement officer of--

"the place of business of the transferor, in the case the transferor is a licensed importer, licensed manufacturer, or licensed dealer; and

" (B) the chief law enforcement officer of the place of residence of the transferee.

"(5) (A) Any transferor who sells, delivers, or otherwise transfers a handgun to a transferee shall retain the copy of the sworn statement of the transferee with respect to the handgun transaction for a least one year after the date the transaction is completed.

" (B) Unless the chief law enforcement officer to whom a copy of such sworn statement is sent determines that a transaction would violate Federal, State, or local law, the officer shall, within 30 days after the date the transferee made such statement, destroy such copy and any record containing information derived from such statement.

"(7) This subsection shall not apply to the transfer of a handgun in a State if the law of such State--

" (A) prohibits any licensed importer, licensed manufacturer, or licensed dealer from transferring a handgun to an individual who is not licensed under section 923, before at least 7 days have elapsed from the date the transferee proposed such transfer; or

" (B) requires that, before any licensed importer, licensed manufacturer, or licensed dealer completes the transfer of a handgun to an individual who is not licensed under section 923, a law enforcement officer of the State verify that the transferee is qualified under law to receive a handgun.

"(8) (A) Notwithstanding any other provision of this title, any licensed importer, licensed manufacturer, or licensed dealer who violates this subsection shall be fined not more than \$1,000, or imprisoned for not more



than one year, or both.

" (B) The penalties provided in this paragraph shall be the only penalties imposed on a licensed importer, licensed manufacturer, of licensed dealer, for a violation of this subsection.

"(9) For purposes of this subsection, `chief law enforcement officer' means the chief of police, the sheriff, or an equivalent officer, or the designee of any such individual.

"(10) The Secretary shall take necessary actions to assure that the provisions of the subsection are published and disseminated to dealers and to the public."

(b) HANDGUN DEFINED--Section 921(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(25) The term 'handgun' means a firearm which has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand or any combination of parts from which a handgun can be assembled."

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.--Section 924(a)(1) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting "section 922(p)," by inserting "section 922(p), after "section," the first place it appears.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.--The amendments made by this section shall take effect 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

-----  
APPENDIX II.

American Law Enforcement Officers Poll, 1989

distributed and administered by the National Association of Chiefs of Police

THE POLICE VIEW OF GUN CONTROL

The following statistics were supplied by the National Association of Chief's of Police, based on the American Law Enforcement Officers Poll for 1989 sent to 16,259 Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs, and command personnel nationwide. The purpose of the survey was to enlighten the Congress, the media, and other organizations regarding the opinions of our nation's top law enforcement officers. It is believed that the National Association of Chiefs of Police is the only law enforcement association to actually conduct these surveys. Questions, and responses are printed here exactly as polled.

Q: Do you believe that the banning of firearms (handguns, shotguns, or rifles) will reduce the ability of criminals to obtain such weapons?

90.18% responded NO.

Q: A "military type" of long gun (rifle, shotgun, etc.) is now being described as one being able to hold more than five rounds of ammunition. It must be fired by pulling the trigger each time. The legal description would cover many semi-auto weapons. Do you believe that banning such weapons would reduce the likelihood of criminals obtaining them?

86.73% responded NO.

Q: Do you believe that law-abiding citizens should have the right to purchase any type of firearm for sport or self defense under state laws that now exist?

68.71% responded YES.

Q: Do you believe that the banning of private ownership of firearms will result in fewer crimes from firearms?

87.62% responded NO.

Q: Would you agree that most criminals obtain their weapons from illegal sources?

89.94% responded YES.

Q: Some states have longer waiting periods than others. Would you agree that it should be a state mandated law rather than a federal regulation as to firearms purchase requirements?

62.64% responded STATE.

Q: Do you believe that a waiting period to purchase a handgun or any type of firearm will have any effect on criminals getting firearms?

70.91% responded NO.

Q: Many of the most terrible crimes with firearms have been carried out by persons with long histories of mental instability. Would you agree that all physicians treating any person for mental illness that could be a threat to themselves or the public, should be required to report to the US Public Health Services so the information could be made available for records checks on all firearms applications?

95.03% responded YES.

Q: Historically, the militia is "all men between the ages of 16 to 45". Under the present armed forces defense of the United States, the National Guard must be able to mobilize in three days to back up our regular armed forces worldwide. Therefore, the only defense would be the "state militia" in time of war. Would you agree, that for the sake of the defense of the United States, citizens should be allowed to have their own rifles, shotguns, and handguns for emergencies, natural or man made?

85.89% responded YES.

Q: Do you feel that the system of criminal justice has broken down to the point where it is the inability to deal with criminals caught by police (prosecution and imprisonment) that is the major cause of crime in America?

86.46% responded YES.

Q: Do you think the courts are too soft on criminals in general? 95.60% responded YES.

Q: Do you think the media that depicts violence, especially on TV, while at the same time encouraging the banning of firearms ownership by law-abiding

citizens for sport or self-defense, is hypocritical?

89.95% responded YES.

- 
1. "CIA-NCBH Connections"; Neal Knox; downloaded from the Combat Arms BBS, Castro Valley, 10-12-90.
  2. ibid
  3. "Anti-Gun Organizations"; compiled by the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action, November 1989.
  4. HCI pamphlet; "Just the Facts About the Brady Bill"
  5. American Law Enforcement Officers Poll for 1989, distributed and administered by the National association of Chief's of Police
  6. HCI pamphlet; "Just the Facts About the Brady Bill"
  7. "HCI Raises \$3,827,020 in First Half of Year"; The New GUN WEEK, Friday, November 10, 1989
  8. "Anti-Gun Organizations"; compiled by the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action, November 1989
  9. HCI pamphlet; "You CAN Do Something About Handgun Violence"
  10. Quote downloaded from the Combat Arms BBS, Castro Valley, 10-12-90.
  11. HCI pamphlet; "You CAN Do Something About Handgun Violence"
  12. ibid
  13. ibid
  14. Quoted in an HCI pamphlet; "Just the Facts About the Brady Bill"
  15. ibid
  16. "HCI Raises \$3,827,020 in First Half of Year"; The New GUN WEEK, Friday, November 10, 1989
  17. NRA pamphlet; "Don't Buy HCI Lies"
  18. Time Magazine letter in response to "Letters to the Editor" received by researcher.

[Image]

Back to THINGS THAT SHOULDN'T BE!

[Image]

Any comments? Stick'em in the box!