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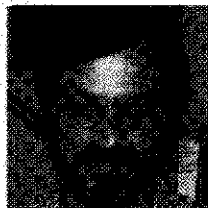
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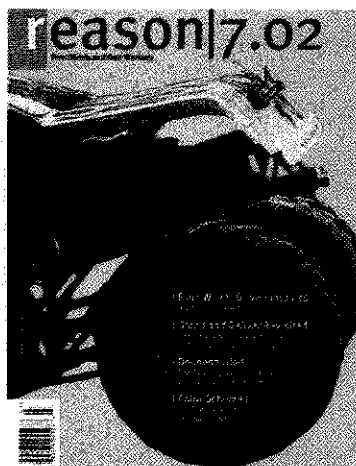


Charles Peña

In "Gun Control's Twisted Outcome" (page 20), historian JOYCE LEE MALCOLM looks at the United Kingdom's disastrous efforts to disarm its population. A history professor at Bentley College, Malcolm is the author of two books on guns: *To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an Anglo-American Right* (1994) and this year's *Guns and Violence: The English Experience*, both from Harvard University Press. In Reason's January 2001 issue, Malcolm became one of the first critics to expose the myriad errors in Michael A. Bellesiles' infamous book on the origins of America's gun culture, *Arming America*. Has Malcolm ever pulled a trigger herself? "I went clay pigeon shooting once," she admits, "but most of my targets fell to the earth undamaged."

Senior Editor JACOB SULLUM's two contributions to this issue share a common figure: William Bennett, the former drug czar turned professional moralist. Bennett plays a cameo role in "Urine—or You're Out" (page 36), a deconstruction of drug testing, and costars with Noam Chomsky in "Pride and Prejudice" (page 53), a gimlet-eyed review of the two men's 9/11-themed books. Bennett also figures prominently in Sullum's forthcoming book on the morality of drug use. But Sullum insists he's not obsessed with the finger-wagging pundit. "If he would just shut up," he says, "I'd be happy to stop writing about him."

In "Murder Most Foul" (page 59), the Cato Institute's CHARLES V. PEÑA takes a break from his routine as an expert on Iraq and terrorism to consider an even more harrowing topic: genocide. Given such grim professional interests, how does Peña keep himself sane? "I go zipping around in brightly colored leather," says the avid track motorcyclist, who estimates his top speeds reach around 140 miles per hour. When Peña's not burning rubber, his wife and 3-year-old daughter keep his heart racing.



SUV Paradise

Hans Eisenbeis' "Defense of the SUV" (July) displays the moral myopia that cripples so much libertarian thinking about the environment. Eisenbeis admits, in passing, that SUVs "contribute to our environmental dilemma; they burn more gas, oil, and rubber...and continue to pollute disproportionately once they've been scrapped."

He then dismisses these concerns by noting, correctly, that all cars contribute to these same problems, if in a smaller degree. Eisenbeis then glides smoothly on to discuss the symbolic, fantasy, and emotional virtues of the behemoths. He omits the reality that with a few hundred dollars invested in better engineering, the auto industry could make, say, a Ford Explorer get 34 miles per gallon, not 19, making our choice of vehicle far less consequential for global warming.

SUVs are, actually, real objects, with real material impacts on the world.

What Eisenbeis and so many others fail to note is that "we" who drive SUVs are not the primary victims of their environmental impact, and that the victims almost certainly do not agree that our desire to use "these massive trucks" as a "form of escapism...a bulwark against harsh realities the rest of the world still faces on a daily basis" justifies the carbon dioxide pollution they emit, given that this pollution makes those realities harsher for, say, the tens of millions who inhabit the Gangetic Delta of Bangladesh.

One of the most certain consequences of global warming is a rise in sea levels. That rise means that the already horrific loss of lives and property which results from typhoons coming off the Bay of Bengal will increase dramatically as storm surges reach further north into the low-lying villages and towns. The Bangladeshis have

never agreed to have their lives and property put at greater risk so that Americans can satisfy their post-industrial off-road fantasies. They receive no compensation for their loss. There is no contract, explicit or implicit, that gives American drivers the right to raise sea levels.

Under the common law, no one had the right to use their property in a manner which flooded someone else's. When the flooding is caused by millions of cars, SUVs, and power plants all over the world, and when it occurs tens of thousands of miles away, and perhaps years later, finding a mechanism to substitute for the nuisance lawsuits that were traditional in England is challenging. But the moral principle is the same. And since the death toll in Bangladesh alone is almost certainly going to be larger than the total number of American lives lost in all of our wars since 1775, this challenge deserves serious commentary.

If libertarians continue to pretend that global warming either doesn't exist, by denying the scientific consensus, or isn't important, because the American economy can probably adapt to a changed climate regime, they will only fuel one of the deep suspicions that the rest of us have about the libertarian concept of freedom—that behind it lurks a doctrine which comforts the comfortable and afflicts the afflicted by emphasizing irresponsibility for the well-off and well-connected, while indulging the expropriation of common resources, such as the climate, that provide security for the poor and powerless.

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I am a member of the Society of Automotive Historians and the Automotive

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