

Unintended Consequences Study Guide

Unintended Consequences by John Ross (author)

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Plot Summary

Gun enthusiasts and strong 2nd Amendment advocates will enjoy *Unintended Consequences* because it supports their beliefs, principles, and political views. John Ross, through the character of Henry Bowman, has pushed the agenda that all Americans have the basic right to own any type of gun, ammunition, or other firing device in existence and that the federal government has grossly overstepped its boundaries in placing restrictions upon such ownership.

Henry Bowman is the son of a World War II pilot trainer who is both a gun and flight enthusiast. Fascinated with guns at a very early age, the agile and coordinated Henry grows into adulthood owning and building increasingly sophisticated guns and ammunition. By the time he graduates from college with a degree in geology, Henry's father has died and he is increasingly wealthy, which allows him to pursue weaponry as a top priority. Unfortunately, his mother dies early as well and Henry experiences significant traumas, including the murder of rapists he discovers in the woods and then his own rape at the hands of some drunk men. Emerging from these traumas through the positive action of teaching self-defense courses, Henry delves into a world of abused women, eventually developing an occasionally sexual but definitely pro-gun relationship with Cindy Caswell. His other close collaborators are attorney Ray Johnson and fellow gun enthusiast Allen Kane, both of whom share Henry's deepening anger with the activities of the ATF or the Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco Agency and its ability to fine, imprison, and even kill with impunity.

Ultimately, Henry and friends take the ultimate action of killing ATF agents who are planning raids on Allen's and Henry's homes and encouraging others to do likewise, via the Internet. A wholesale revolt begins to occur, against the ATF, the FAA, the EPA, and state and national politicians who have supported what the gun culture believes to be unconstitutional restrictions. Ultimately, the President capitulates, promising investigations and amnesty for all who have participated in the murders in exchange for an end to the violence. The reader is left to wonder who has really won this "war." While Henry and his followers have certainly emerged triumphant and unscathed, they have engaged in the same activities as their "enemies" of murdering men, women, and even children in the name of their cause, violating laws and other basic freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. Worse, they appear to do so without emotion or guilt and emerge as chilling examples of a political group run a muck.



Part I: Seeds, December 11, 1906 - May 15, 1939

Part I: Seeds, December 11, 1906 - May 15, 1939 Summary

Part I: Seeds, December 11, 1906 - May 15, 1939

Ross spends the first section of his novel laying the foundation for the modern "gun culture," through the stories of several characters, real and fictional. First, the reader is given the accounts of Ad Topperwine, a sharpshooter working for Winchester guns, testing a new semiautomatic rifle, designed by John Browning. Both men were gun enthusiasts and wholeheartedly supported the right of individuals to own whatever weapons they so chose.

As the setting moves forward in time, we are introduced to a fictional Lieutenant Cameron Wilcox who returns from World War I with a duffel bag full of weaponry that include treasures from the European war, including semi-automatic and fully automatic guns. As he confronts her own personal disasters during the Depression, he ultimately dies from wounds sustained during a veterans' march on Washington.

As the world moves closer to World War II, the persecution and execution of Jews become the focus of a wider statement about the importance of individual ownership of guns. Zofia, a young Polish Jewess, meets American Max Collins, marries him and moves to the United States. Her sister, married to Irwin Mann, is not so lucky, however. She and other members of Zofia's family are murdered by the Nazis, though Irwin somehow survives.

During this time, Prohibition is repealed and federal agents are scouring the countryside, ferreting out illegal stills. They find two brothers and, unable to arrest them on illegal alcohol production, do so when they find a shotgun, the barrel of which is an inch shorter than the 1934 Firearms Act allows. The charges against the two "moonshiners are ultimately dismissed by a federal judge, who, in so doing, has struck down the Firearms Act, declaring it to be a violation of the 2nd Amendment. The Supreme Court reverses the decision, declaring the firearms Act of 1934 constitutional. The "gun culture" is thus set up for opposition to the federal government.

Part I: Seeds, December 11, 1906 - May 15, 1939 Analysis

The "gun culture" is defined by author Ross as a group of individuals who believe that the 2nd Amendment, in its purest sense, is the right of American citizens to own any type and amount of guns they wish, without governmental intervention or restriction of



any kind. This "culture" begins to be portrayed as a group of individuals who comprise a cult-like camaraderie, focused on gun ownership, freedom from governmental restriction of any kind, and a will to fight encroaching governmental control over the lives of individuals. The comparisons between increasing federal restrictions and Nazi Germany are a bit thin during this section, but nevertheless, present, and the lines drawn between individualism and governmental restrictions are being introduced as a major theme of this novel. The stories of Zofia's family and Cameron Wilcox demonstrate the author's view that, no matter what type of governmental structure exists in a country, there is always the possibility that that government may become hostile to segments of its society and implement laws and interpretations of laws that injure those segments. The violence against veterans during their march on Washington during the Depression and the Firearms Act of 1934 are just such types of hostile actions.



Part II: Growth, May 12, 1942-June 18, 1959

Part II: Growth, May 12, 1942-June 18, 1959 Summary

World War II finds Max Collins enlisting in the Army, Lieutenant Walter Bowman training pilots in Florida, and Buell Jenkins working as an airplane mechanic at Bowman's training facility. In Poland, Irwin Mann has been transported to the Warsaw Ghetto, where he organizes a resistance group, teaches himself and others how to operate the weapons confiscated from Nazi troops. When the resistance ultimately fails, Mann escapes through the sewers. Max Collins finds himself the sole survivor of a plane crash in enemy territory but manages to escape capture by his sharpshooting ability, killing the German commander of a unit searching for him.

As the war ends, American troops return home, including Lieutenant Bowman. During his time in Florida, he built a specialized bi-plane with Jenkins which Bowman's commander tells him to take home to St. Louis with him. Post-war America becomes the scene of families returning to the normalcy of peacetime. In Colorado, Ray Johnson, an 8th grade student, is thriving on his family's horse ranch and pursuing his passion for hunting. Harold Gaines, a mediocre shoe salesman in St. Louis, and his wife have given birth to a son, Richard. Walter Bowman is the proud father of a new son, Henry. His wife, Catherine, is the sister of Max Collins, and this family comes to include Irwin Mann, who has made his way to America and found his dead wife's sister, Zofia.

By 1959, Walter Bowman, now 6, is flying with his father in the Stearman he built. He is fascinated with the gun section of the Guinness Book of World Records and has, at his early age, entered the "gun culture." Ray Johnson is graduating from Brown University and has enjoyed hunting in a different part of the country during his time there. With a gift of money, he purchases a new gun, looking toward law school and, ultimately an African safari. The chapter ends with a young obstetrician delivering a terribly damaged baby to the financially-strapped Gutierrez family, a seemingly unrelated event which will soon gain significance.

Part II: Growth, May 12, 1942-June 18, 1959 Analysis

Author Ross is still laying the groundwork for the eventual intertwining of his characters. At this point, there is obviously not a connection among Walter Bowman, Irwin Mann, Ray Johnson, Richard Gaines, or a poor Hispanic family with a deformed baby. The reader is given the information that Walter's wife is the sister of Max Collins, but little else. What is revealed is that there is a group of adults that has patriotic instincts and at least a couple of children who are rapidly becoming gun enthusiasts.



Part II: Growth, June 20, 1959-April 6, 1968

Part II: Growth, June 20, 1959-April 6, 1968 Summary

This section summarizes the lives of two major characters in this novel. Henry Bowman grows from child to teen, receiving his first guns from his father and uncle Max, traveling to shooting matches across the country, and gaining an unbelievable knowledge about each type of rifle, pistol, and automatic weapon from anywhere in the world. He is so knowledgeable that in watching the news coverage of the assassination of President Kennedy, he explains exactly how the gun used by Lee Harvey Oswald could not have possibly shot the President. His parents, the Collins, and Irwin Mann are amazed at his analysis. Henry's primary goal is to become a world-class marksman and he begins correspondence with some of the most renowned marksmen, gun manufacturers, and others who are railing against the increasing government restrictions on gun ownership. Particularly hated are the Missouri restrictions that require a gun purchaser to obtain letters from two prominent citizens attesting to his good citizenship, which are verified by a local sheriff and to adhere to the prohibition of carrying any gun on one's person. In Henry's father's words, Henry must remain vigilant as he grows, because at some point he may have to defend his 2nd Amendment rights. The big blow to Henry during this period of his teenage life is that his father is dying of cancer, but he continues to be a strong student at the exclusive John Burroughs High School and to be obsessed with guns. His father's dies on April 6, 1968.

Ray Johnson, older than Henry, completes his Harvard law degree and begins work for a New York firm. He also loves guns and continues to pursue his dream of an eventual African safari. Ray meets Pedro Gutierrez, the janitor for his apartment building. He learns that Pedro's wife Rosa had worked at Allied Chemical during her pregnancy, that their daughter is terribly handicapped and his wife too sick to work. Ray suspects that Rosa was placed in harm's way in the chemical plant and receives approval from his boss to take the case pro bono, so long as his regularly assigned work does not suffer. In fact, Ray wins a \$7 million dollar settlement, takes a leave of absence from his firm in order to take his safari. During the hunting excursion, his parents are killed in a car accident, and Ray decides that he will remain in Africa, opening his own safari business.

Richard Gaines is another teenager, living in south St. Louis and not doing as well in school as Henry Bowman. His father has been given an automobile and driver's license bureau to run, thus providing economic security for the family. Richard begins to take an interest in politics at the local level, and his life will intersect with that of Henry Bowman later in the tale.



Part II: Growth, June 20, 1959-April 6, 1968 Analysis

Henry has experienced the first trauma in his otherwise picture-perfect life. His father's death has a profound impact on him, though he continues his pursuits in education and in shooting skill. In fact, he expands his enthusiasm for weaponry by building and modifying guns and fashioning his own ammunition. Uncle Max becomes a father figure and continues to encourage Henry's skills in marksmanship, making certain that they continue to travel and shoot together. Irwin Mann takes an interest in Henry as well, and reminds him that, given the Nazi horror in Europe, no citizenry should ever feel completely safe from the over-reaches of a government that becomes too powerful, too restrictive, and too despotic. The seeds are clearly planted within Henry that an armed citizenry is crucial for any free society to survive.

Ray is living outside of American society, in countries that are succumbing to dictatorships and unruly governmental structures. He stays, however, because of his love for the big game hunt and his excitement at leading safaris. He is contacted by Max Collins, who has decided to take a safari and this will ultimately bring Henry and Ray together.



Section II: Growth: June 5, 1968- December 21, 1978

Section II: Growth: June 5, 1968- December 21, 1978 Summary

Robert Kennedy has been assassinated, creating a total of three murders of national figures in 5 years. Henry and Uncle Max are concerned that these events will result in further restrictions on gun ownership, and they are interested in accumulating as many rifles, semi- and fully automatic weapons as possible before this occurs. Many types of guns are already illegal. Max and Henry go to a live pigeon shoot in Nevada, held in conjunction with a large gun show. Henry will compete, and they will have an opportunity to purchase additional guns. During the three-day event, Henry wins, receiving a \$10,000 prize and an illegal Browning Automatic Rifle or BAR. The prize money is spent quickly for purchasing additional guns.

Back home, Henry goes on a three-day canoe trip with David Webb, an older teen Henry knows as a neighbor of his Uncle Max. Henry has brought along some of his modified pistols and demonstrates his ability to shoot pigeons in flight. When the boys pull in the canoe for a lunch break, Henry decides to climb a hill to look for a top spot to try additional shooting. He hears male voices and then comes upon a horrible rape scene, with the third and last rapist about to finish and kill the young victim. The men run for their rifles and, as they do so, Henry takes three quick shots, killing them. A third culprit, a young teen, then reveals the names of all involved. Henry instructs the boy to secure help for Cammie Lynn, the victim, promising to check back to be certain that he does so. Henry hurries back down the hill, claiming to David that his gun is broken. By nightfall, they are 30 miles from the scene and David is not told of the events. Upon returning home, Henry calls Cammie Lynn, and is assured that she is safe. Henry refuses to reveal his identity, in order to not be connected in any way to the murders, and continues with his high school career.

Henry's abiding interest continues to be guns, and he has accumulated a vast amount of them, of every variety. In 1968, a new federal gun law is passed that requires registration of certain weapons, so that a tax is paid on them. Henry decides to refrain from registering some of his guns, in order to maintain a secret cache about which the government will have no knowledge. If the government should ever come to confiscate citizens' guns, Henry will still have some.

Upon completion of high school, Henry attends Amherst College with a double major in geology and economics. His increasing anger with governmental restrictions, however, remain tantamount in his thought, and he produces a paper for an economics class demonstrating how gun control legislation has destroyed the gun manufacturing industry in the United States. His anger is further fueled by two ATF raids in out-state Missouri, conducted with blank warrants and resulting in permanent brain damage to an innocent



man. The purpose of the raids was to locate and confiscate buns on which federal taxes had not been paid, but the consequences were devastating for one family, and the agents were deemed to have acted in accordance with the law.

During the summer break of 1971, Henry's mother is out of town and Henry has begun a jogging routine, hoping to play rugby in the fall. He is accosted and raped by four men, a trauma he survives and yet results in eventual alcoholism. Not until the Christmas holidays does he confront his problem, joining AA and determining to turn his anger into the positive activity of teaching self-defense courses, primarily to women. These are quite successful. Upon graduation, Henry returns to the family home, his mother having died a short time ago and takes a job as a geologist with a local oil company.

Henry's uncle, Max, takes an African safari with Ray Johnson as his guide and, after a successful hunt, suggests that Ray contact his nephew Henry, in order to obtain some specialized ammunition for large animals. Ray does so, and a new long-distance friendship begins.

Richard Gaines has managed to barely graduate from a Missouri state college and will be a shoo-in for the open state representative position open in his home district. With the eventual death of a U.S. Congressman from his district, Richard is supported by the local Democratic leadership because it knows that he can be controlled. Richard easily wins the election and goes to Washington. There, he takes a strong stand against the growing survivalist movement in the country, composed of individuals opposed to big government. He is concerned that the growing movement may get out of hand.

Back in Rolla, Missouri, Cindy Caswell, teenage daughter of Boone Caswell, a drunken bum, is growing up in a violent household. Determined to overcome her circumstances, she becomes a stellar student and is assertive enough to stave off her father's sexual advances. She becomes a strong young woman.

Section II: Growth: June 5, 1968- December 21, 1978 Analysis

Henry has seen another violent political assassination and it is interesting that his response is not to the horror of the murder, but rather, to an analysis of the weapon involved and his suspicion that it could not have inflicted the carnage upon Robert Kennedy that it did.

The trip with Uncle Max to the shooting competition in Nevada reveals a great deal about the gun culture in general. Shooting live pigeons simply for sport may offend some who are sensitive to the value of all life, but there are greater insights into this American sub-culture. At the gun show, for example, it is clear that many dealers have illegal weapons and proudly display them without fear of local police intrusion. Indeed, as one of them states, many of the policemen in Nevada own illegal weaponry themselves. Henry purchases an illegal weapon, which will have to be dismantled for the drive home, because, as Uncle Max states, the tolerance decreases as they move



east across the country. It is also quite telling that Henry, at the age of fifteen, seems to be consumed with guns and shooting. He has not developed other normal interests of a typical teen in an upper middle-class environment. In fact, when he receives \$10,000, he goes straight to his gun catalogs to spend it all. In the 1960's, most teens his age would think of cars, clothes, social activities and college, if they had this large a sum.

The events of the float trip are particularly disturbing. On the one hand, it is laudable that Henry would come to the defense of the rape victim and place himself in harm's way. It is certainly understandable, moreover, that he had a need to kill three men that would kill him. On the other hand, one is struck by his lack of emotional response. In fact, he has surmised that the murders are thoroughly justified and that he need not involve law enforcement even after the fact. Moreover, he takes great pains to wipe things clean of his fingerprints and to hide his identity from both the remaining culprit and the victim. He appears to experience no trauma from the incident, continuing on the float with David. His choice not to tell David comes from something a gun dealer once said. One can get away with murder so long as the murder is of a complete stranger and so long as no one else is told about it. As the author hints, however, Henry will experience post-traumatic stress from this and other incidents, in the future.

Events of law enforcement misconduct are obviously detailed in order to further the author's point of view that individual freedoms can easily be denied and innocent people can be brutalized and even permanently damaged by those who have power and authority. The brutal rape experienced by Henry, moreover, serves to further the notion that every individual must be prepared to protect and defend him/herself, because he cannot rely on law enforcement to be present to do so. Interestingly, Henry never informs the police of the crime, primarily because of shame. Instead, he attempts to heal himself physically and emotionally, and, of course, fails and turns to alcohol. While the reader is not told how Henry ultimately "snaps out" of his self-destructive phase, he is obviously back on track by his junior year, taking a full load of classes and teaching self-defense classes. As with many victims who triumph over their traumas, Henry has turned his shame and anger into more positive outlets. and training others to avoid events such as his own rape has empowered him and revived his own sex life. He appears to be relatively whole now.



Part II: Growth, February 17, 1982 - April 19, 1993

Part II: Growth, February 17, 1982 - April 19, 1993 Summary

This section is primarily concerned with the increasingly violent activities of the ATF, as it conducts raids across the country, in order to find and confiscate illegal weapons. As well, new legislation is outlawing machine guns and other types of automatic weapons and ammunition, and gun owners and dealers are scrambling to acquire these within the one-month window before the law goes into effect.

Henry is following the raids with interest, along with his fellow gun enthusiasts in the St. Louis area. They are particularly appalled at raids in Philadelphia and Waco, Texas, which have made national news due to the "overkill" of the intensity of the raids and the deaths of women and children. As well, another shootout with bank robbers in Florida demonstrates that the FBI is horribly under-trained and unable to use its weaponry effectively. In all of these instances, ATF and FBI agents are absolved of any wrongdoing or ineptness.

Henry travels to Indianapolis to assist friend Allen Kane set up for a gun show. Henry garners quite an audience as he explains to guests at the show about the newest government restrictions on machine guns and assault rifles, a condition he finds deplorable. He attracts the attention of ATF Agent Wilson Blair, who, with a rookie agent, is attempting a "sting" or an attempt to catch gun dealers selling illegal guns, in order to confiscate their entire exhibits and gain notoriety within the agency. Sensing the motive of the rookie, Henry tricks him into asking for parts to convert a semi-automatic into a full automatic, handcuffs him and calls for an ATF agent on the PA system. Wilson Blair is so angry he telephones his boss in D.C. and gives him the names of Kane and Bowman, so that they can be fully investigated, in the hopes that they can be found violating the law in some way. Blair's ultimate goal is to raid these two dealers' homes.

Cindy Caswell is on a high school trip to Chicago when she is kidnapped by mobsters who intend to use her as a sex slave. She ends up in Las Vegas, under the control of crime boss Sal Marino, who passes her around to his mob friends as a reward. Finally in a position to escape, Cindy kills a fellow mobster in the act of sex, by sticking a wooden hair ornament through his eye and into his brain. She runs and lands in St. Louis, working for an insurance agent and drinking too much. Cindy meets Henry as an AA meeting, during which Henry tells his tale of the gang rape and Cindy confesses her murder and her fear that Marino is still looking for her. Henry does a little checking with a police friend and determines that Marino is on to much bigger things and not concerned with the man she killed as he had intended to kill him anyway.



At a shoot in Kentucky, Henry gains the attention of ATF Chief Greenwell, when he launches into a scathing critique of the ATF and its corruption. Henry is now clearly on the ATF "hit" list. His relationship with Cindy has grown, and she expresses an interest in discovering some way to earn some rapid cash in order to open a catering business. Henry takes her to PT's, a strip club in East St. Louis, where dancers have the opportunity to earn as much as a thousand dollars a night. Given her looks, Cindy realizes this is the answer to her need for quick money.

Part II: Growth, February 17, 1982 - April 19, 1993

Analysis

The obvious purpose of this section is to demonstrate the out-of-control nature of government agencies, specifically, the ATF and FBI, in their attempts to shut down any organizations or individuals who are anti-government and who, at the same time, appear to have caches of armaments and who may pose a "threat" of some type. Particularly disturbing is the the FBI and ATF collaboration in the raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. The justification for the one hundred strong agent raid, which ultimately resulted in the burning of the entire compound and the deaths of women and children, was that the leader, David Koresh, was engaging in bigamy and sex with minors. The ATF was involved because there were perhaps unregistered weapons upon which taxes had not been paid. This entire operation became a national embarrassment, and author Ross uses it to point to the growing power of governmental agencies that are acting outside the boundaries of law and basic decency.

Other purposes are to bring Henry and Allen Kane into the ATF radar, as a foreshadowing of an ultimate confrontation and to introduce the friendship between Henry and Cindy. Henry and Cindy, in fact, have an interesting friendship. Obviously, Henry has no qualms about introducing Cindy to the seedy culture of strip clubs in a dangerous section of the St. Louis metropolitan area and Cindy is obviously willing to do whatever it takes to accumulate the cash she desires. Both are obviously risk-takers and enjoy the challenges of life "on the edge."



Part III: Harvest, March 17, 1994 - May, 1996

Part III: Harvest, March 17, 1994 - May, 1996 Summary

Cindy's friend and lover, April, has been assaulted by three men as she leaves her job at a bar. Cindy contacts Henry who informs her that it is illegal for them to purchase guns for self-protection and suggests mace or pepper spray. Cindy is furious about the restriction and becomes an activist at the Missouri state capitol. A conceal and carry bill dies because the Congressional session is recessed prior to its passage, fueling Cindy's increasing anger.

Ray Johnson is returning to the United States after twenty years out of the country. Unfamiliar with the new restrictions, he is confronted by customs agents as he attempts to bring in weapons that are now illegal. Calling Henry, he receives the assistance he needs and flies directly to St. Louis. On the ride from the airport to Henry's home, Ray is given a few lessons on changes and cautions he must now take. Specifically, seat belts are now required, his \$8000 is older U.S. paper money will be suspect, and there are often checkpoints for police to check cars for drugs or alcohol. At Henry's home, Ray meets Allen Kan who is on his way to a Reno gun show. Allen has become an expert in ammunition and other "destructive devices," and has provided u.S. armed forces with training in their use. He is particularly angry about the fact that the "feds," in order to further restrict guns, have now focused on the restriction of ammunition as a way around actual gun control. Allen, who is a licensed ammunition dealer, is now restricted by these new laws, and greatly resents it.

Another new phenomenon with which Ray is unfamiliar is the Internet. Henry uses it but is concerned that the government wishes to put a chip in each computer in order to track usage and identities of those sending messages through this medium. During their time together, Henry continues to rail against all of the state and federal incursions into the lives of private citizens. As Washington debates a new crime bill which will further restrict gun ownership, a march incites 2nd Amendment advocates. Henry is convinced that the citizenry will not stand for all of this much longer. Further, it is his belief that the Oklahoma city bombing was a "set-up" of the ATF, in order to further instill fear into the public and maintain the employments of its growing number of agents. At the local level, gun advocates are supporting those legislators and the gubernatorial candidate who has a more favorable stand on 2nd Amendment rights. They are not, however, making much headway in their efforts.

Moving to the present day in this section (1996), the reader is informed that FBI agents are now tapping the phones of Allen Kane, Henry, and a third individual, named Millet, in the hopes of catching them engaging in illegal sales of guns and ammunition. They have become targets, because Wilson Blair is angry with them due to their activities which have embarrassed the ATF. Henry and Allen, meanwhile, are planning a trip West



during the summer of 1996 to a competitive show and a prairie dog shoot, and are discussing obtainment of of ammunition.

Federal agent Alex Neuman, who has participated in a couple of ATF/FBI combined raids is re-considering his career, having been shocked and disgusted with the activities of both agencies. He is being sent to Virginia for training and leaves the Wyoming office in charge of his subordinate, Trey Mullins, while he is away. Orville Crocker, a gun dealer in Wyoming, invites friend Curt Behnke for a prairie dog hunt on a friend's ranch. Their activities eventually become the focus of an ATF raid, and Trey Mullins, a bit of a rookie will go along with the ATF on this raid. The agents are ultimately killed by the two hunters, including Mullins.

At the same time, the ATF, lead by Wilson Blair, is planning raids on the properties of Kane, Henry and Millet, knowing that all of them will be out of town during these raids, giving them ample opportunity to search the premises and plant illegal guns and ammunition if necessary. Unbeknown to the agents, however, Henry and Allen have altered their plans. Allen will go on the shooting trip first and Henry will follow in his plane several days later, once he has completed some geological work at Kane's home.

When the agents arrive for the first raid at Kane's home, Henry is out in the shed, having just turned the lights out. He sees the van approaching and watches as the occupants prepare to shoot in the door of Allen's home. Believing that they are terrorists gang members or gun runners, he begins to pick them off, finally cornering Blair and a female agent, Jackson. They announce themselves as ATF agents and believe that Henry must be from another agency. Both Blair and Jackson are duct-taped and questioned separately. Jackson knows very little and is promptly killed. Blair "spills his guts" about the three raids, obviously believing he believes Henry is a part of some other covert government agency. Henry plays this angle and explains to Blair that the President finds his activities embarrassing of planting evidence, raiding homes of innocent people, killing their families, and basically setting himself above the law.

Part III: Harvest, March 17, 1994 - May, 1996 Analysis

The return of Ray Johnson to the United States gives author Ross another opportunity to discuss additional governmental restrictions on the personal lives of American citizens, including seat belts, periodic road checks for illegal substances, and the every-increasing restrictions on guns and ammunition. Ray shares Henry's increasing anger and frustration and realizes that he will have a large learning curve in order to understand new laws and regulations.

This section also begins to bring the characters together for the ultimate climax of the story. Ray and Allen Kane meet and Cindy is brought into the picture as well. Clearly, thee three and Henry share strong beliefs about the federal government and about specific agencies, lawmakers, and judges. Exactly what form their opposition will take is not yet clear.



The dye is cast, however, with the arrival of ATF and FBI agents at Kane's property. By murdering federal officials, Henry is now doomed, unless he is able to completely "cover" the crime and use his power over Blair to gain videotaped confessions, which he may use at a convenient future time. Even though his initial murders of some of the "invaders" were the result of his incorrect belief relative to their identities, he has committed a major felony and can leave no witnesses. In his mind, he has no choice but to kill Blair and Agent Jackson as well. The apparent lack of remorse for these crimes, however, leaves the reader to wonder how Henry, who consider himself a "good" citizen and a moral person, can engage in such horrific activities such as dismembering bodies and feeding the remains to hogs.



PART IV - War, June 7, 1996 - August 12, 1996

PART IV - War, June 7, 1996 - August 12, 1996 Summary

Henry forces Blair to create a videotape, confessing to all of the illegal activities of the ATF, in order to obtain convictions and, in many instances, to justify murder. He further admits to his intention to plant illegal items in the homes of Bowman, Kane and Millet. Henry then kills Blair, Agent Jackson, dismembers the bodies of all he has killed and feeds the remains to the hogs on a nearby farm.

Henry then calls the agents involved in the Millet raid, disguises his voice to sound like Blair's, and arranges to pick them up. They too are killed and fed to the hogs at the same farm. His final call is to the team planning to raid his own home, setting them up to land by helicopter in the quarry next to his home the following afternoon. Heading back to St. Louis, he ditches the ATF van in East St. Louis, retrieves his motorcycle from the back, and torches the van. Biking to a small airport, he steals a small plane, and flies to his home. The following afternoon, he lies in wait for the approaching helicopters and shoots all three out of the sky, taking off in the stolen plane. The county sheriff in charge of the investigation of the downed helicopters is unable to determine either the cause of the crash or the reason for the helicopters' presence in that specific area.

Meanwhile, Henry flies to Idaho, locates Kane, and drops a message to him designating an immediate meeting place. He relates the incidents of the past few days, and, together, they decide that Henry's alibi is that he has been in Idaho with Allen during this time. Henry takes the plane up, sets it on autopilot toward the Pacific ocean, leaves enough fuel to guarantee a landing in the Ocean, and parachutes out to Allen's waiting van. The final part of the plan is to contact Ray Johnson for legal advice and to allow the Feds to find them.

The Feds, however, are busy attempting to locate 10 agents who have "fallen off the radar." Unsuccessful, they then attempt to locate Henry, Kane and Millet. They locate Henry and Kane in town, and Henry feigns shock regarding the helicopter incident on his property. He then purchases a cheap motorcycle for cash, heads for the Salt Lake City airport and flies to the home of Ray Johnson. There, he reveals the events of the past few days, admitting that he himself has killed all of the missing agents. Ray is ready to defend Henry if necessary; however, because Henry has disposed of all evidence so thoroughly, prosecution is unlikely. Their other goal is to expose the corrupt ATF officials, the illegal activities of other agency employees, Congressmen who have supported tough gun control legislation, and judges who have upheld what they believe to be unconstitutional laws. They decide to post the names and addresses of all of these individuals on relevant websites and bulletin boards, encouraging members of the gun culture to "go after" them individually. As well, Henry is posting confession in the



name of Wilson Blair, whose body will never be found. Within days, a killing spree is occurring throughout the country, on the part of individuals who have in some way been wronged by the ATF, the FBI, or the EPA. As well, Henry, Ray, and Cindy are engaging in their own killing spree, having traveled to Washington, D.C. to target Congressmen.

The President has organized a task force to provide leadership in the issues of the federal agent disappearances and to the rather widespread murders of other officials across the country. The group consists of Directors of the FBI and CIA, ATF Director Dwight Greenwell, FBI agent Neuman, who has been called away from his training in Virginia, the Treasury Secretary and retired Chief Justice Harrison Potter, and newly appointed Holocaust Memorial Chairman, Irwin Mann. Together, they are attempting to determine whether the missing agents are dead, if Blair is truly alive and posting the confession messages on the Internet, and the group or groups responsible for the string of recent murders. In the course of the investigation, Justice Potter, who has done his homework, points out that the targets of the three recent attempted ATF raids are all licensed dealers who have provided weaponry, ammunition, and training to law enforcement agencies and collectors. The President is becoming suspicious of the ATF tactics, despite director Greenwell's insistence that all "rules of law" are followed. The released videotaped confessions of Blair, however, do not bode well for the agency.

As the Task Force continues its work, Irwin Mann provides his perspective that the individuals involved in the murders are obviously protesting what he believes to be an ever-increasing movement of the federal government to control all weaponry in the United States. He points out that this is dangerous business, indeed, and is exactly what Hitler had accomplished prior to his demonic rage across Europe.

Ultimately, a reward is offered for information leading to the identity of the "leader," and Henry and Cindy continue their murder spree in D.C. Henry, wants inside information regarding the task force's progress and, posing as a reporter, he contacts Representative Richard Gaines, threatening to expose his high cheating on an SAT test, if he does not pass along information from Task Force meetings. Gaines, of course, caves. In the wake of all of the violence, moreover, during which ATF and FBI agents and their families are murdered, there is a rather mass exodus from these agencies through resignations.

Ray Johnson encourages Henry to begin negotiations with the Task Force. They orchestrate a change meetings between Ray and Justice Potter at a book store. Disguised, Ray offers Potter the deal. The killings shall cease when the President strips non-law enforcement agencies from the right to carry guns and announces to the public that certain activities of these agencies are evil. As well, the President is to issue a pardon for all involved in the killings, via radio address the following day. Obviously, there will have to be more negotiations. When the radio broadcast does not occur, a retired Senator in Ohio, and staunch gun control advocate, is murdered. As well, a body from the helicopter that sank in Henry's quarry surfaces. As forensics experts descend upon Henry's property, in an effort to identify the bodies and discover how the helicopters were downed, negotiations between Ray and Potter break down, and murders continue, increasing in frequency and numbers. At the same time, Henry



releases Blair's full videotape to a news organization, and it is televised across the nation.

It is decision time for the President. He promises a full investigation of all imprisonments for violations of ATF, FBI, FAA, and EPA regulations, as well as a complete look at disarming all non-law enforcement federal agencies. He agrees, as well to a pardon for all those involved in the murders, so long as the killings immediately cease. These decisions will be made in a speech, to occur in 9 hours. Meanwhile, Neuman has been analyzing all of the forensics evidence from Henry's property and has narrowed the culprit in the helicopter shootings to Henry Bowman. He has nine hours to get to Missouri and arrest Bowman. Irwin Mann offers the Holocaust Center jet for the purpose of travel to Missouri, and Neuman agrees.

The jet leaves Washington with Irwin Mann, ATF director Greenwell, and FBI agent Neuman aboard. Placing the plane on autopilot, pilot Henry Bowman appears in the passenger section and shoots Greenwell and Neuman. He and Irwin will return to Missouri and feed the bodies to hogs.

The President, traveling with his wife to the Capitol Building for the speech, in which he will announce the terms of the negotiated settlement with the "revolutionaries," wonders out loud, "If Jews do not eat meat, what could Irwin Mann have meant when he stated that he was going back home to Missouri to feed his hogs?"

PART IV - War, June 7, 1996 - August 12, 1996 Analysis

The voices of reason appear to be Justice Potter and FBI Agent Neuman, who is attempting to establish a "profile" of the leader of this "revolt" and has rather open disgust for the behavior of ATF and FBI agents. Agency directors are focused on covering for their obvious activities, but are clearly unable to do so because of the videotape in Henry's possession, which is ultimately aired nationally. Public opinion has obviously put enough pressure on the President that he has instructed Justice Potter to continue in the negotiations with Ray Johnson, in order to resolve the situation and stop the increasing violence that is spreading across the country. Ultimately, the compromise is reached and Henry, along with all others involved in the "rebellion" will be pardoned. The nine-hour window of time between the President's announcement of the agreement allows Neuman time to attempt to find and arrest Henry, and this provides the final suspense, until, of course, it is revealed that Henry is the pilot of the plane. The fates of Greenwell and Neuman are sealed and everyone ultimately receives a pardon. The reader is left a bit unsettled. Murders have occurred and the author appears to believe that, rather than work within a democracy to change laws and to expose wrongdoing on the part of government officials, it is somehow justified to ignore law and commit horrific acts. These are the consequences, though "unintended," of a government that is unresponsive and they are somehow justifiable.



Characters

Henry Bowman

Born to an affluent family, Henry grows up in the outer suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri, attending a premier private school and ultimately earning a degree in geology and economics. He is fascinated with weaponry from an early age and becomes somewhat of a phenomenon within the gun culture by his early teens. At the same time, he is taught to fly small planes before the early death of his father from cancer. In his late youth and early adulthood, Henry experiences two traumas. Witnessing the rape of a young girl, he murders the rapists and is a bit surprised that he feels no emotion about having done so. As a college student, he is raped by a gang of thugs. He descends into despair and alcoholism until a former high school classmate is able to get him into AA. Vowing to overcome the emotional impacts he has suffered, Henry embarks on a career in geology, a passion for self-defense training, and a continued and ever increasing anger over what he believes to be violations of basic rights on the part of the ATF. Ultimately, he spearheads a national wave of violence and crime, as fellow believers respond to his call. The President eventually steps in, and Henry, along with his followers, receives amnesty in exchange for an end to the violence. Henry emerges a free man, but his future activities are left for the reader to contemplate.

Ray Johnson

Born in Colorado to a horse ranching family, Ray demonstrates his tremendous intellect early on. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, and this becomes a lifelong avocation. Upon graduation from law school, Ray takes a personal injury case which makes him a millionaire, enabling him to "retire" to Africa and pursue his dream as a safari guide. Through mutual acquaintances, Ray meets Henry, and they share both their love of guns and their pervasive hatred for the ATF and government restrictions in violation of the true purpose of the 2nd Amendment. Ray is particularly shocked that, upon his return to the United States after twenty years, the federal agency appears to have the power to act in any illegal manner, with impunity. He becomes a comrade in arms with Henry, participating in the murderous rage against those they believe deserve to die for their actions against honest gun owners. Along with their nationwide collaborators, Ray receives amnesty. However, the remainder of his life is a tale not told.

Cindy Caswell

Cindy has grown up in an abusive household but is strong and independent. On a high school field trip to Chicago, Cindy is kidnapped and lands in Las Vegas, the sex slave of a mobster. Her instinct for survival results in her murder of a mobster and a flight from Las Vegas. She meets Henry Bowman at an AA meeting, Along with another girl, she engages in a sexual relationship with Henry, but, more important, she shares Henry's



deep conviction that the rights of gun owners are unconstitutionally restricted and is willing to take an active role in his plans for revenge and change. Cindy becomes the lure for politicians targeted for murder and enthusiastically participates in the rampage. Cindy survives with amnesty, just as the others, and it is assumed that her friendship with Henry, Ray, and Allen Kane will continue.

Irwin Mann

Irwin lived in Poland during World War II and was relegated to the Warsaw Ghetto with other Jews. Understanding that their ultimate fate was death, Irwin determines that they will not die without a fight. He teaches himself weaponry skills, using the guns ghetto residents have managed to steal from dead German soldiers and, together with his fellow compatriots, manage to hold off the Germans for a while. Mann escapes through the sewers of Warsaw and, after accepting that his wife is dead, emigrates to the United States, landing in St. Louis at the home of his wife's sister and her husband Max Collins. Max is the brother of Henry Bowman's mother, and all of the extended family of adults encourages Henry's obsession with weapons and his shooting skills. Mann is ultimately appointed to head the Holocaust Center in Washington and is in this position when he realizes that Henry is the force behind the armed rebellion and murders. He manages to assist Henry with his last murders of the Director of the ATF and an accompanying FBI agent before returning to Henry's home outside of St. Louis.

Wlater Bowman

Walter Bowman joined the Army Air Corps during World War II and was stationed in Florida as a trainer of pilots. He met a mechanic there and together, they built an amazing plane against regulations, but known by everyone on the base. At war's end, the commanding officer told Walter to fly the plane home, and it was passed on to son Henry when he died. While his first love was flying, Walter also was a bit of a gun enthusiast and strongly encouraged Henry's abiding interest in them as well. His early death from cancer left the family wealthy but Henry without a critical void in his life.

Max Collins

Henry Bowman's Uncle Max became a father figure to Henry after the death of his father. Max was a strong part of the gun culture and saw to it that Henry was equipped with the latest and best weaponry as he grew up, as well as frequent trips in his exotic cars to shooting skill contests all over the country. Little is known about max once Henry reaches adulthood and he is absent from the story once the violence begins.

Allen Kane

A member of the gun culture, and along with Henry a licensed gun dealer and manufacturer, Allen Kane and Henry are strong friends. when Allen and Henry discover



that the ATF intends to raid their homes, probably plant evidence, and imprison them both, Allen arranges for a western trip for them both. Allen goes ahead, while Henry proceeds to the home of another dealer to be raided, surprises the ATF and kills them, returning to his home to take out the three ATF helicopters that are landing on his property. Allen is Henry's alibi, stating that Henry has been with him on a prairie dog hunt. Kane collaborates with Henry, Ray Johnson, and Cindy Caswell as they plan the deaths of other targets.

Alex Neumann

An FBI agent, Alex Neumann is conflicted about the role of the FBI in its collaboration with ATF agents during raids on gun owners and dealers. He has observed excess in power, violence, and clearly illegal activities. While he is disgusted with ATF agents, he remains loyal to the FBI and serves on the President's task force, as it attempts to investigate the murders and discover the perpetrators. Neumann becomes collateral damage, as he is killed along with Dwight Greenwell on the flight out of Washington, piloted by Henry.

Richard Gaines

Growing up in South St. Louis, Richard Gaines did not have the advantages of Henry Bowman. Fortunately, his mother was romantically involved with a local politician, and Richard became a prominent Democrat, eventually elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. He and Henry met briefly when Richard was looking for someone to take his SAT for him. Henry refused but never forgot Richard. Later, Henry was able to use Richard's cheating as leverage to discover the amount of knowledge and activities of the President's task force.

Justice Potter

A former Justice of the Supreme Court, Potter sits on the President's task force and is a voice of reason, as he advises the President on the best course of action. He clearly has sympathy for those who oppose the over-reaching power of federal agencies and wants them curtailed. He is instrumental in persuading the President to negotiate with the rebels and to offer amnesty.



Objects/Places

Goodman's

This is a sporting goods store in St. Louis, Missouri which Henry's extended family patronizes for knives and guns.

Stearman bi-plane

This is a wooden plane that Walter Bowman built while a pilot trainer during World War II.

Amherst

This is a college to which Henry Bowman went and where he earned degrees in geology and economics.

ATF

This is the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Agency, funded by the federal government and charged with enforcing federal regulations in these three areas

FAA

This is the Federal Aviation Administration, charged with enforcement of legislation and regulations regarding air traffic, planes, and pilots.

EPA

This is the Environmental Protection Agency, an arm of the federal government charged with protecting the air, water, and land from pollution by businesses and corporations.

Encryption Code

This is a device allowing spying into the computers of others.

Conceal and Carry Law

These are state laws that allow individuals to carry concealed weapons on their person.



2nd Amendment

This is the amendment in the Bill of Rights which allows individual American citizens to own weapons.

Paper Receivers

These are registered buns that have yet to be made, in order to avoid prosecution for possessing them when a future ban is imposed.

Backface Deformation Signature

This is the government term for the dent made by a bullet in a body armor vest.

Ruby Ridge

This is the site of government attack on a compound of religious/survivalist group, supposedly because of a failure of the leader to pay certain taxes on firearms owned. It morphed into a major murderous event and reaped criticism of the ATF and the FBI throughout the country.

Warsaw Ghetto

This is the Jewish ghetto under siege by the Nazis and in which Irwin Mann organized a resistance which held off the Nazis for several months.

Skill Shoot

This is a competition among sharpshooters held at any number of places across the country. Competitors demonstrate their skills shooting at targets, clay and real pigeons, and other areas of skill.



Themes

The Evils of Big Government

For as long as the United States has existed as a sovereign nation, with a democratic system, there have been political ideologies that range from strong federal control, to states' rights and the inalienable rights given to individual citizens in the Bill of Rights. Amendments to the Constitution beyond the Bill of Rights have consistently given the federal government more control over states, and in some instances, citizens, in order to further refine the parameters of federal, state, and individual rights. Interpretations of many of these parameters end in the federal court system, so that justices can interpret the meaning of both federal laws and amendments. In contemporary times, the political "right" has become the aggregate of those citizens who believe that the federal government has become too powerful and has gone far beyond the intentions of the original Constitutional framers. This particular novel is primarily concerned with the restrictions on the 2nd Amendment, the right to bear arms, and the potential consequences of continued governmental encroachment on the rights of individual citizens to own any type of weapon produced. The larger theme is overall growth of federal power, as it implements laws and amendments, through governmental agencies such as the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, FBI, and the Environmental Protection Agency, which are three of the agencies obviously under attack in this work. It is the belief of the author that these agencies act outside of the law and with impunity, even when their actions clearly violate the rights of citizens. The prediction is that, should the federal government continue on its current path, citizens shall unite to resist and violently oppose the increasing restrictive laws and procedures.

Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome

A twentieth century psychological term, post-traumatic stress syndrome refers to mental and emotional disorders that occur following traumatic incidents or events in one's life, such as war, rape, abuse, or the death of loved one. In this tale, three individuals experience traumas in their early lives. Henry Bowman murders three males who are raping a young girl and tells no one of the event; as well, he is gang-raped by a group of men during his college years. As a result, he becomes an alcoholic. Cindy Caswell is kidnapped while on a high school trip and is enslaved by a mobster for quite some time. Irwin Mann, a Jew in Poland during its occupation by the Nazis, has suffered the deaths of his wife and family members as well as the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto and the whimsical killing of fellow Jews throughout his residency there. These traumas, according to author Ross, are at least in part responsible for the violent and rather horrific means that Henry and Cindy use to murder their "enemies" within the ATF and Congress, and for the collaboration of Irwin Mann at the end, as he assists Henry to "escape" Washington and kill the final targets prior to the implementation of the amnesty promised by the President. The collaboration of Allen Kane and Ray Johnson are a bit more difficult to understand, for there were no serious traumas in their backgrounds,



only anger with the government and loyalty to Bowman. The fact that neither Henry nor Cindy received any counseling for their traumas can perhaps explain their rage, and other aspects of their lifestyles do indicate some instability, especially their sexual orientations and Henry's earlier battle with alcoholism.

The 2nd Amendment

"A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." So reads the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and it is the primary basis upon which author John Ross presents his argument against federal and state restrictions upon gun ownership. The controversy is not new and rather, as Ross clearly states, it began in 1934 with the first gun control act of Congress. According to Ross, the original law was passed in part as a means of providing ATF agents continued employment following the end of Prohibition, as well as to provide additional tax revenue for the federal government. Others, of course, state that restrictions upon gun ownership and the types of guns which individuals may own, are attempts to provide for greater safety of the general populace. The chronological growth of increasing restriction is fully explained in the novel, to include a prohibition of silencers, a prohibition of "sawed off" shotguns, the requirements for background checks prior to purchase, and the prohibition of certain automatic weapons and otherwise altered weapons and ammunition. All of these, Bowman believes, point to a dangerous trend to restrict gun ownership to the point that only criminals, members of the military, and government agents will possess firearms. This in turn allows criminals to engage in any kind of crime without fear of retaliation by victims and for government agents to commit violent illegal acts upon innocent civilians. The arguments on both sides of this issue have not changed over the years. Proponents of complete freedom of arms ownership point to the words of the 2nd Amendment. Opponents point to the significant changes in society and weaponry in general to warrant more flexibility in the amendment's interpretation.

Style

Point of View

In literary terms, the point of view of the author is the third-person, with both total and partial omniscience. The reader is given complete insight into both the actions and the thoughts of most of the major characters, especially those of Henry Bowman who is the single protagonist of this tale. The perspectives and principles of the author are, moreover, entirely wrapped into the character of Henry, with no attempt at disguise. Henry Bowman represents the gun culture, the individualist who resents and actively opposes increasing government regulation of private lives, restrictions upon the strict interpretation of the 2nd Amendment, and the "conspiracy" of government agencies who have amassed almost unlimited power which can be used with impunity. This perspective takes the political and philosophical ideology of individualists to the extreme and presents a scenario in which there is open revolt against the government, through violence and murder. It appears that author Ross is presenting an extreme consequence of continued government encroachment upon the rights of individuals in America, almost as a threat. It is his obvious belief that, if governmental encroachment into the private lives of citizens does not moderate, there could be open rebellion. If this novel were to be written today, it would perhaps be authored by a leader of the Tea Party Movement.

Setting

The bulk of the novel is set in the St. Louis Missouri area, as this is the area in which the main character, Henry Bowman, has grown up. During Part I, Seeds, however, the primary themes and background for the political views of Bowman and his colleagues are established by the events of World War II in Europe. It is important for author Ross to build a case for the danger of governmental control of private lives of citizens and to ultimately control who has wealth, property, privilege, and the weaponry to maintain them. Thus Hitler becomes the personification of government out of control. As Bowman grows up in Missouri as a gun enthusiast, he comes to understand the ever-increasing control of the federal government over the lives of Americans, and he develops friendships with like-minded individualists throughout the country. The reader follows Bowman to college and other characters to New York and Africa, as well as to a variety of shooting competitions in Western United States, and events in Washington D.C., Las Vegas, and Indiana comprise the settings of other important events. While Part I of the novel is set during the War and its aftermath, the remainder of the work encompasses Henry's Bowman's life from childhood in the 1950's to middle adulthood. The setting in the St. Louis area is understandable, as author John Ross is a native St. Louisan, and the variety of actual landmarks, schools, and areas of both the city and outlying county areas lend credibility to the tale.



Language and Meaning

As an obvious gun expert, author Ross spends an inordinate amount of his writing discussing details of specific types of guns such as pistols, shotguns, automatic weapons, handheld cannons, and ammunition for all of these. Such detail makes it difficult for the average non-gun expert to maintain interest in such technical descriptions and language, but it is possibly necessary in order to lend credibility to the characters and their expertise with weaponry. Still, the average reader can become bogged down in attempting to understand the intricate details of specific guns and the descriptions which often "lose" the reader who has very little background experience. The specific abilities of certain weapons to shoot within certain ranges and to effect specific damage are, nevertheless, important to certain events in the tale. Other language that is significant relates to political beliefs and ideologies, much of which is familiar to a contemporary reader, for it relates to beliefs and ideologies that are vocal and certainly current today. The political commentary is obvious and the conversations and thoughts of all characters present their political affiliations through their use of language.

Structure

The novel is divided into four distinct chronological sections. Part I, "Seeds," sets the stage for the current gun culture, through a description of the events of World War II and individuals who have survived it and who have returned home with an interest in weaponry and the belief in the importance of an armed citizenry. Part II, titled "Growth," refers to the growing gun culture within the United States, as well as the growth of resistance to what is perceived to be increasing restrictions on citizen rights by their government. This section also describes traumatic events in the life of Henry and his encounters and collaborations with others who are developing the same political ideologies. Part III, "Harvest," provides the coming together of like-minded gun culture activists and their decisions to fight the over-reaching activities of a number of government agencies, to include the ATF, the FBI, and the EPA, calling upon all victims and potential victims to join in the "battle." Part IV, titled "War," encompasses Henry's leadership in a stream of violence throughout the country, targeted primarily at government agency officials and Congressmen who have supported increased gun control laws and other restrictions on individual freedoms. Although a negotiated settlement involving the President is achieved, the reader is left with the warning that these types of "rebellions" are inevitable if the federal government does not reverse its current trends towards violation of individual rights.

Within each Part of the novel, there are small divisions separated not by chapters, but by dates. Each date describes one or more events in the lives of various characters or of historical significance. Unfortunately, these are short and may be completely unrelated to preceding or following events, and it is difficult to glean an overall picture of the plot development from such seemingly disparate events. Not until the final Part do

all of the events begin to meld into the overall motivations and actions of Henry Bowman and his friends.

Quotes

Most impressive to Irwin was the seemingly universal attitude Americans had that anything was possible. He had often found himself wishing, in his first days in America, that there had been more people like this with him in Warsaw eight years before" (Part I: pg. 100.)

"Henry," Irwin said finally. "I hope that you never lose interest in your shooting skills. If we had had a few less doctors and musicians in 1940, and a few more boys like you, perhaps what you see in these photos might not have been possible." Irwin Mann took a deep breath. "But Hitler and his brownshirts did not allow Jews like me to have guns" (Part I, pg. 181.)

"There are always men who want more and more power, and history has shown us that these kind of men will take all they can from the people they control. Sometimes they are finally stopped when the people fight back. Sometimes the people don't fight back, and they slowly lose their freedoms until it's too late" (Part I, Walter Bowman to his son Henry, pg. 183.)

"Henry folded the letter and put it back in his pocket. People who take shooting skills seriously have a natural affinity for one another Henry thought. It doesn't matter how old they are. Henry would observe this phenomenon over and over again in the coming years. Unfortunately, the people who would become the gun culture's mortal enemies would also be well aware of this truth" (Part II, pg. 213.)

"The experience with Cammie Lynn's attackers taught Henry Bowman two lessons that he would never forget. He learned that not only was it possible to kill someone and not be convicted, as the cop in the gun store had explained, but it was also possible to not ever be suspected of the killing in the first place" (Part II, pg. 269.)

"The Amnesty was going to allow registration of silencers without having to pay the tax, during the one-month "window." That was why Henry was spending a great deal of time cutting and putting serial numbers on various diameters and lengths of stainless steel aircraft tubing" (Part II, pg. 271.)

"Lou Ciamillo was not yet aware of several things. First of all, Ciamillo did not know that the search warrant for Ballew's apartment was, for the most part, still blank. The time would be filled in as 8:31 p.m., the last legal minute of daylight on June 7, as the blank warrant had specified that the search had to be conducted during the daylight hours" (Part II, pg. 305.)

"Henry did not know that the reason that he had never seen his late father take a drink was not...that Walter Bowman had not liked alcoholic beverages...The reason that Walter Bowman had shunned liquor all of his life was that the people on his side of the



family, particularly the me, had a genetic predisposition towards alcoholism" (Part II, pg. 316.)

"You don't go to sleep one night a free man and wake up the next morning to find you're a slave in your own country. It happens gradually, and when you realize it, it's too late" (Henry Bowman, Part II, pg. 325.)

"The ATF operations commander scribbled the words "Nothing Taken - ATF" on a piece of paper, dropped it on the floor, and called his men to gather up their things and return to headquarters. He and the other ATF agents left Lawmaster's house with the front door broken off its hinges, his safes cut open, and all his guns lying in piles in the middle of the devastated residence..John Lawmaster was never charged with any crime" (Part II, pg. 461.)

"The second revelation was that the ATF had lied to Texas officials in order to borrow three Texas National Guard helicopter gunships n the raid. Texas law prohibited lending state-controlled aircraft to federal agencies except in drug cases. In order to get approval, the ATF had told state officials that the Branch Davidians were operating a methamphetamine lab within the compound. When copies of the search warrants were made public, there was no mention of drugs, and the lie was obvious" (Part II, pg. 504.)

"The President himself said last month that we have too much freedom in this country, and we need to look more towards the greater good for our society as a whole." Henry smiled without humor as he watched Ray shake his head in wonder and disgust" (Part III, pg. 547.)

"If you believe you have the right to buy, own and shoot small arms in a safe manner, as much and as often as you want, and you exercise that right regularly, our government has branded you as the enemy. They will pursue you more relentlessly and attack you more severely than they do the people who pick up teenage runaways in the bus station and torture them to death on camera for black-market 'snuff' films" (Part III, pg. 551.)

"...the Founders wrote the first ten articles of our Bill of Rights as a reminder to the government of where it had no authority Nine of those ten articles were promises to the people. The other one was the Second Amendment, and it wasn't a promise. It was the guarantee that backed up all the promises" (Part III, pg. 565.)

"No," Cindy said without hesitation, "I am going to be killing a man because he voted away something that was not his to vote on in the first place. The people making the laws think that nothing is okay if they can get 51% of the legislators or the people to go along with it." (Part IV, pg. 701.)

"Now...you got a guy maybe thirty, forty, fifty years old. He sees his friends get their lives ruined by some trigger-happy government jerks who get promoted instead of fired when they screw up. does it amaze you that this grown man might actually on his own decide this was something worth risking his life for?" (Part IV, pg. 738.)



"A law that puts men in prison because a piece of wood is too short isn't 'the best decision given the information at the time.' It is morally wrong, and always has been. The federal government has painted itself into a corner on this issue, Judge, and you know it. In order to fix the problem, the President needs to shout something that no one in Washington is willing to even whisper. He needs to say to the public, 'What we have been doing is morally wrong'" (Part IV, pg. 773.)



Topics for Discussion

Compare the political ideologies of author Ross with those of the current ultra-conservative wing of the Republican Party.

If Henry Bowman were a real person, to what organizations would he likely belong in contemporary society? Why?

The issue of gun ownership and control are almost 80 years old and do not appear to have changed significantly. Briefly describe the positions of both sides of this issue.

One of the hallmarks of American democracy is that the United States is a nation of laws, with a process for changes in law when the majority supports such change. Clearly, Henry believes that this process has "broken down" and that he must take criminal action on a grand scale to achieve change. Under what circumstances might you support criminal action against what you perceive to be oppression? Can such action ever be justified? Support your answer with specific examples.

Until recently, the Department of Defense, and the Veterans Administration is particular, did not accept post-traumatic stress syndrome as a "real" condition. Those in the field of psychology and psychiatry, however, have long accepted the syndrome as real. From a legal standpoint, do you believe that criminal action as a result of post-traumatic stress can be a viable defense? Why or why not?

Henry Bowman appears to be an individual who lives "outside the law" throughout the book. When new restrictions require registration of certain firearms, Henry fails to register some of his weapons in order to maintain a secret cache. He engages in flying maneuvers banned by the FAA. He commits what he sees as justified murders in order to make a point and change governmental policy. Is there a basic flaw in this type of thought? Share your opinion.

There is a documented rise in private militia groups within the United States. While many of these are "secretive," others are rather open relative to their beliefs and activities, specifically white supremacy, anti-immigration, and anti-government restriction. They engage in regular military training activities, in anticipation of the day when they may have to engage in armed conflict with government forces. Do you find such growth threatening? Why or why not?