

A true look at the gun debate

By Tabitha Armstrong

With more school shootings there is a push for new gun laws, for the government to do something, for assault weapons to once again be banned, for guns to be harder to purchase, and for those mentally unstable to be unable to buy them. In all of this outcry politicians are scrambling to do something to appease voters – laws are being hastily written and others are being pushed to vote before originally planned.

We as a country need to take a pause for an honest discussion we are not having. We need to take a hard look at the cause of this violence – look at all of the data and ask if “assault weapons” are harder to get, will the violence actually stop? And in passing quick gun laws are we giving up something we will never get back? (The definition of assault rifle by the Merriam Webster Dictionary is “any of various intermediate-range, magazine-fed military rifles (such as the [AK-47](#)) that can be set for automatic or semiautomatic fire; *also* : a rifle that resembles a military assault rifle but is designed to allow only semiautomatic fire” for the remainder of this article semiautomatic weapons with high capacity capabilities such as AR-15s, Ak-47s, AR-10s, etc. will be referred to as assault rifles as this is what the debate centers on)

Before the defensive walls go up, before second amendment supporters cry “no new gun laws” and before gun law proponents stop reading because this article must be “pro-gun” – take a minute to step back. There is a reason for the second amendment, and there is a reason this type of violence (mass shootings) has risen and neither is about guns.

I am going to say it is time to have a real conversation that both side want to ignore!

A school shooting leads immediately to two camps forming the “anti-gun” and the “pro-gun” as the media puts it. But that is a divisive tactic – it causes division and it is why no changes have been made. We need to approach this issue completely differently! In a way that takes into account there has to be changes made, BUT that the second amendment cannot be sacrificed for it.

Because this is social media, I will lay my argument out here so you can decide to read on, ignore, or skim to the part you are interested in:

1. End the gun talk – the problem is something different
2. A look at the gun law debates and why these measures won't work
3. Comparing US gun deaths and violence to other countries
4. Why violence is increasing
5. A look into the second amendment and its purpose
6. Why we need to think hard before passing new gun laws.

Some of the facts here will back up numbers being spewed from both sides. There are facts that will offend both sides. But we need to get passed our personal feelings. Passed what we hear on the media. What we are being told other countries are saying. America has a real problem – and that problem is America is at a turning point and it isn't gun violence. This recent (20 years) violence is a symptom of a much larger Culture Problem. So please stick with me until the end of the argument.

1. Guns DO NOT Kill people – people kill people!

Gun deaths as a whole have steadily declined since 1993. But mass killings seem to be on the rise. Today, when we talk about mass killings, we as a country tend to be talking about mass shootings. Guns are harder to get now than they were in the 70s, the 80s, and (for certain guns) the 90s. And the cities with the strictest gun laws have the most gun crime and gun deaths. Laws are NOT solving the problem.

American gun deaths can be seen in chart 1A below, and when compared with other causes of death the chances of being killed by a gun in America are incredibly small (about .003%) (see appendix 1).

But, as a country we are experiencing more mass shootings and these events, when they occur, are sometimes more deadly than they have been in the past. This has led to the misconception that if these shooter couldn't get guns, than these atrocities wouldn't happen... That isn't necessarily true – there are many recent mass killings where assault rifles were not the weapon of choice and some that used alternatives to firearms altogether. These arguments also do not take into consideration the planning that was involved in many of these large scale massacres. With the level of planning, it is reasonable to assume that these killers would have found another way – if not assault rifles than other guns, if not guns than homemade explosives, fires, or even vehicles. Look to England, France, China and you can see mass killings still occur, murder still happens without legal guns. It is a fact - those that want to do harm will!

As we argue over guns, the major issues are being ignored. WHY are there more MASS shootings – why do people want to hurt others at a far higher rate in today's world than ever before! We can no longer look at these disasters and say "That was just an evil person who did that thing." Instead we think terrorist, or are shown a child that killed his peers (it is mostly male shooters), and in all the gun debate, all the commiserating, the WHY is left out – and nothing changes.

Unfortunately, mental health, gender, economics, and a growing sense of desperation in this country are all topics government and media want to avoid – these topics point to the government and corrupt media (propaganda) as the root cause of the issues and that causes politicians to loose votes, or worse – unites people behind a cause.

The gun debate on the other hand gains votes based on which side you agree with.

So, it is easy to seize on the inanimate object used to do the killing – guns.

2. Gun Control Laws

Let's look at the laws on the table. Some of these laws have a lot of support even from second amendment protectors – but the worry is misuses, abuse of power, and that small measures are the first step in a longer fight. There is also the real fear that since current laws on the books are not being enforced or handled properly, why would these new laws be any different?

Universal Background Checks

This is the most common and most pushed gun control laws across the country. A background check consists of checking a federal database to be sure the purchaser doesn't have something on his or her record to prohibit the sale. Seems simple enough, right?

But this system already exists. It is true that there is a “gun show” loophole, meaning personal sales between two people don't have to be called in. There are a few things to look at here:

1. It is already illegal to sell a gun to a felon.
2. How can an individual person do a background check?
3. How will this law stop criminals?

If it is already illegal to sell firearms to a felon, why aren't there more arrests of people that have broken this law by doing so in a private sale? It is the responsibility of a seller to insure that the person buying the gun is actually allowed to own it. The reason for this loophole was really to protect private sales and inheritances – In states like Vermont, and many rural areas, family guns are part of the heirlooms passed down through generations. They may be the only thing of true monetary value a family has – and there are often memories passed along with them. In all of my research I have yet to come across verifiable numbers showing how many guns used in criminal events were purchased through private sale – I found a few articles throwing out numbers from both sides but without attribution to reliable sources I cannot include them. But, research has been done into how many guns are purchased through the “gun show loophole”, and it isn't as many as people think. Only about 22% of guns are acquired through personal sale, gifts, or family members

(<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/01/fewer-americans-are-buying-guns-without-background-checks/>). Many democratic law makers cite a poll claiming it is 40% - a poll that interviewed less than 300 people about 25 years ago.

Other recent research shows that lawful gun owners are not the ones committing crimes. Less than 20% of gun related crimes are committed with legally acquired guns (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/07/27/new-evidence-confirms-what-gun-rights-advocates-have-been-saying-for-a-long-time-about-crime/?utm_term=.37fcfc2cdd7a). And of those 20%, most are used in domestic

violence cases or by people that cleared a background check even though they should not have based on current law. In fact – most guns used in the mass shootings (<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data/>) from 1982 'til now were purchased at gun stores – where background checks were performed. And many of the shooters, many with mental health issues, passed those background checks though they should not have.

So based on the criteria of background checks – what would stop you from passing a background check?

- A person who has been convicted in any court of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year or any state offense classified by the state as a misdemeanor and is punishable by a term of imprisonment of more than two years.
- Persons who are fugitives of justice—for example, the subject of an active felony or misdemeanor warrant.
- An unlawful user and/or an addict of any controlled substance; for example, a person convicted for the use or possession of a controlled substance within the past year; or a person with multiple arrests for the use or possession of a controlled substance within the past five years with the most recent arrest occurring within the past year; or a person found through a drug test to use a controlled substance unlawfully, provided the test was administered within the past year.
- A person adjudicated mental defective or involuntarily committed to a mental institution or incompetent to handle own affairs, including dispositions to criminal charges of found not guilty by reason of insanity or found incompetent to stand trial.
- A person who, being an alien, is illegally or unlawfully in the United States.
- A person who, being an alien except as provided in subsection (y) (2), has been admitted to the United States under a non-immigrant visa.
- A person dishonorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces.
- A person who has renounced his/her United States citizenship.
- The subject of a protective order issued after a hearing in which the respondent had notice that restrains them from harassing, stalking, or threatening an intimate partner or child of such partner. This does not include ex parte orders.
- A person convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime which includes the use or attempted use of physical force or threatened use of a deadly weapon and the defendant was the spouse, former spouse, parent, guardian of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabiting with or has cohabited in the past with the victim as a spouse, parent, guardian or similar situation to a spouse, parent or guardian of the victim.

- A person who is under indictment or information for a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

(<https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/nics/about-nics>)

Based on the Mother Jones' mass shooting chart (<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data/>), many of those shooters fell into one of these behavior categories felons, domestic abusers, mental health patients, stalkers, open restraining orders, or addicts – all things that bar passing a background check – yet, they did. Many of these shooters should not have been allowed to make those purchases. Did restrictions expire? Were charges reduced and so these people weren't flagged? Was information not correctly reported? It turns out there are ways felons can gain back their right to own guns – but violent offenders and habitual offenders are not in the running (you can see these here <https://www.newsmax.com/fastfeatures/can-a-felon-own/2014/11/17/id/607940/>). So how would universal background checks have stopped these events? It appears that there were failures in the current system – failures not being addressed now, instead new laws are being discussed.

2. Individual background checks for private sales are not currently possible without paying for them. This would bar many sales, as the guns are not worth the money. Some rhetoric has called for private sales to be brought to a gun store. A new .22 Rifle from Walmart can run from \$70 to a few hundred dollars (check their ecommerce store). So a used .22 many not go for more than \$50-\$100. Add on a fee for a background check/or a fee for the store owner and you may have a price for a small game hunting rifle that prohibits the purchase or isn't worth the cost. If the background check were to be free, the processing to be free, and no registration needed (as well as issues in the current system being fixed) there may be less opposition. But none of the mentioned issues have been fully addressed – just more rhetoric from both sides.

Take this into consideration when it comes to inheriting family guns. Families know who amongst them can legally own firearms. If an estate passes down firearms to someone that doesn't pass a background check – shouldn't they be held accountable? But for the most part, law abiding citizens inherit these guns (remember less than 20% of all guns used in crimes were obtained legally). Now, imagine inheriting your father's hunting rifles and old revolvers and then having to pay for them? Pay for a background check and/or processing fee per gun? Pay to register each gun? This is what many opponents of the universal background checks are worried about (we'll talk more about registration later).

3. How will this law stop criminals currently buying through the "loophole" system– It won't. Criminals will not take the time to go to a gun store to have a background check performed. Research into illegal gun purchases show that the largest source of illegal gun purchases happen at Federally licensed gun stores – through crooked dealers, dealers selling their stock to the illegal gun trade, or through straw purchases

(<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/guns/procon/guns.html>). Criminals will still buy guns from black market dealers, dirty licensed sellers, steal them, or buy from people willing to sell to unknown strangers - whether it is legal or not – just as they do now. So only law abiding citizens will be in the system, will pay the extra fees, will be affected by new background checks and expanded purchase laws. And as most crime is committed with illegally obtained guns, the crime rate will not go down.

Registration is often discussed along with background checks. The idea is that if a gun is registered then it can be tracked. This meets with more opposition due to historical reasons (more on that later). But again, we run up against only legally purchased guns being registered. Illegally purchased or illegally obtained guns will go unregistered. A look at the Mother Jones' accumulated mass shooting table and there are a number of illegally obtained guns in that list – none of these laws would have stopped those shooters. And then we look at stolen guns. Many gun owners do not look at their guns every day, so many don't know one has been stolen until it isn't there when the owner goes to use it. If there is a required registry and a gun gets used in a crime before the gun is reported stolen (or before the owner notices it is stolen) – owners are worried they will be accused of the crime. There are thousands of guns stolen every year from cars, purses, people's homes, the exact number isn't known because not everyone reports the theft and other times because the theft could have taken place over months or years and can be added to a specific date range for reporting.

Ban Assault Weapons

The biggest policy change we hear about is to bring back the assault rifle ban. From 1994-2004 there was a ban on sales of assault rifles and large capacity magazines—and yet mass shootings still occurred. Through the ban there were 17 mass shootings (Mother Jones' Chart). Of those 17 shootings 4 included an assault rifle, but only 2 of these events were committed with only an assault rifle. Of those 17 mass shootings 9 used either single or multiple handguns and 6 used a collection of handguns, hunting rifles, shotguns, and in 2 cases assault rifles. The department of Justice was quoted as saying, "Should it be renewed, the ban's effects on gun violence are likely to be small at best and perhaps too small for reliable measurement," by the New York Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/14/sunday-review/the-assault-weapon-myth.html>). The ban never took the existing assault rifles away from those that owned them, and yet the number of mass shootings was the same as it had been in the decade prior to the ban (17 mass shootings between 1984-1994) with 3 of those involving assault rifles (Mother Jones' chart) The truth is, most killing and most gun crime is done with handguns (<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/14/sunday-review/the-assault-weapon-myth.html>). When you figure in that less than 20% of guns used in crimes are legally obtained, it is easy to see this type of ban does little to curb crime rates or death totals.

The reason the focus is on Assault Weapons is because of recent mass shootings, and because it is the easiest target to latch on to. But Assault Weapons are not the problem.

In the US mass shootings over the last 33 years have broken down as follows:

1984-1994 (11 years): There were 18 mass shootings

- 4 involving assault rifles
- 11 involved handguns
- 6 involved hunting rifles
- 6 involved shotguns
- 5 involved revolvers.

Of the 18 events:

- 0 used a shotgun only
- 5 used only a single handgun
- 3 used multiple handguns
- 1 used a hunting rifle only
- 1 used an assault rifle only
- 2 used a combination of a hunting rifle and a shotgun
- 2 used an assault rifle and a variety of other guns
- 3 used a combination of hunting rifle, shotgun, and handguns
- 1 used a hunting rifle and a handgun.

1995-2004 (10 years): There were 16 mass shootings

- 3 involving assault rifles
- 14 involving handguns
- 4 involving a hunting rifle
- 4 involving a shotgun
- 5 involving revolvers

Of those 16 mass shooting events:

- 0 used a shotgun only
- 4 used only a single handgun
- 5 used multiple handguns
- 1 used a hunting rifle only

- 0 used an assault rifle only
- 0 used a combination of a hunting rifle and a shotgun
- 2 used an assault rifle and a variety of other guns
- 2 used a combination of hunting rifle, shotgun, and handguns
- 2 used a hunting rifle and a handgun.

2005-2014 (10 years) There were 36 mass shootings:

- 1 involving a hand built assault rifle
- 6 involving assault rifles
- 29 involving handguns
- 1 involving a hunting rifle
- 11 involving a shotgun
- 5 involving revolvers

Of those 36 mass shooting events:

- 1 used a shotgun only
- 14 used only a single handgun
- 7 used multiple handguns
- 0 used a hunting rifle only
- 2 used an assault rifle only
- 0 used a combination of a hunting rifle and a shotgun
- 4 used an assault rifle and a variety of other guns s
- 1 used a combination of hunting rifle, shotgun, and handguns
- 0 used a hunting rifle and a handgun
- 6 used a combination of a shotgun and a handgun
- 1 used a homemade assault rifle

2015-2017 (3 years): There were 24 mass shootings:

- * 1 involved modified fully automatic rifles
- 7 involved assault rifles
- 18 involved handguns

- 3 involved hunting rifles
- 2 involved shotguns
- 0 involved revolvers

Of those 24 mass shootings events:

- 1 involved a modified rifle
- 1 involved an unknown rifle
- 1 used multiple shotguns
- 7 used only a single handgun
- 2 used multiple handguns
- 1 used a hunting rifle only
- 2 used an assault rifle only
- 0 used a combination of a hunting rifle and a shotgun
- 5 used an assault rifle and a variety of other guns
- 0 used a combination of hunting rifle, shotgun, and handguns
- 2 used a hunting rifle and a handgun
- 1 used a combination of a shotgun and a handgun
- 1 used modified automatic rifles (This was Los Vegas – and though many other rifles were found it only appears the automatic weapons were used).

Of all 94 incidents:

- * 51 shooters were known to have mental illness or were referred to as mental instability and still passed a background check
- * Another 28 had unknown mental health
- * 50 shooters obtained their guns legally
- * But only 17 shooters were known to have had no prior mental health history

A look at these facts shows that **yes** there is an increase in mass violence; **yes** there is an increase in obtaining weapons when one shouldn't pass a background check (through illegal means or a faulty background check/system failure); but **no** it isn't just assault rifles.

PART 3: Comparing Countries

(Note: Population, deaths, homicides, and homicide by weapon are all listed in appendix 2)

So one may look at the above numbers and say “Strict Gun Control laws, such as in Australia, would solve this problem.” But that isn’t necessarily true either. In the decade of the most mass shootings in the US, there have been an increase in mass murders throughout the world – some with guns and some without. And since 1984, there are plenty of examples of mass murder without gun violence.

We will start with examples in the US of mass murders without guns.

United States:

April 15, 2013 - Boston Marathon Bombing – homemade bombs in back packs killed 3 but injured 80, severely maiming many

April 19, 1995 - Oklahoma City Bombing – Car Bomb blows up a building killing 168 people and injuring over 500

Feb. 26, 1993 - Van Bomb Under Trade Center – Kills 6 injures over 1,000

Ted Kaczynski – Unabomber - over 25+ years kills 3 and injures 23 with bombs

2015 – Oklahoma 2 teens kill 5 injure 1 with knives (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/five-dead-broken-arrow-oklahoma-two-teens-detained-n396961>)

2011 New York City – Man hits group with car, gets out and starts stabbing with an 8 inch kitchen knife 4 dead and 5 injured

1990 – Happy Land Social Club, Manhattan – Second exit blocked and building lit on fire killing 87 people

April 17, 2013 –Texas - Deliberately set fire causes explosion at Fertilizer plant kills 15 injures 160 (<https://www.cnn.com/2016/05/11/us/texas-fertilizer-plant-blast/index.html>)

These are just a few, well documented examples here in the States. But these are not unique to the US.

Let’s take a look at countries that have strict gun control (UK, Australia, Germany, China, Japan, etc.)

England (UK):

2010 – Derrick Bird kills 12 people and injures 11 with a 12 gauge shotgun and a bolt action rifle (<http://www.bbc.com/news/10259982>)

1996 – Scotland Dunblane Massacre school shooting – 16 kids and teacher killed 15 injured with a pistol and 2 revolvers - led to more laws on handguns in the UK (<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2013/mar/14/dunblane-massacre-scotland-killing>)

2017 - London Bridge - Van hits people on sidewalk and suspect begins stabbing others
8 killed 48 injured

2017 - Westminster – Vehicle used as the weapon 5 killed 45 injured

2017 Manchester – homemade bomb outside of a concert uses nuts and bolts as shrapnel – 23 killed 500 + injured

1999 - Nail Bombings London 3 killed 129 injured many maimed

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/london-nail-bombs-the-two-weeks-that-shattered-the-capital-1666069.html>

Australia:

2000 – Man burns hostel killing 15 backpackers

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/1387948/Loner-found-guilty-of-hostel-arson-murders.html>

2002 – Shooting in Melbourne University Kills 2 injures 5

<https://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/10/21/1034561430158.html>

2017- Melbourne Car Attack 6 dead (2 died from injuries – 4 at scene) and 30 injured

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jan/20/car-pedestrians-bourke-street-melbourne>

2011 - Arson in nursing home kills 11

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/10082224/Nurse-pleads-guilty-to-murdering-11-in-Sydney-nursing-home-fire.html>

2009 - 5 killed in home, bludgeoned to death (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-12/robert-xie-verdict-lin-family-murders-trial/8163294>)

2014 - Mass stabbing kills 8 children (<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/dec/19/at-least-seven-children-killed-in-mass-stabbing-in-cairns>)

2006 - Hit and run kills 6 injures 7

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/03/05/2181150.htm>

China:

2012 – Man enters school and stabs 23 children

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/world/asia/man-stabs-22-children-in-china.html?mtrref=www.google.com&qwh=93388CAA92127E5700545CDB09A1EDBE&qwt=pay>

2010 - Nanping School Massacre - Man kills 8 children wounds 5 more with knife

2014 - Guangzhou China – 6 stabbed at rail road station

2014 - Kunming Yunnan China 35 deaths 143 wounded – four men with long knives

2010-2012 Series of Mass stabbings/hammer attacks/cleaver attacks 25 dead 2,115 injured

1999 – Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Japan – Man drives car into a station and begins stabbing 5 killed 10 injured

Japan:

2001 Japan – Osaka school a man kills 8, wounds 15 with kitchen knife (chose this one because again it is in a school)

Here are two that were well planned in advance:

2011 - Norway Van bomb and guns – killed 77 and injured 319 Van Bomb made with legally obtained fertilizer, pistol bought legally after obtaining a license - he was involved in a gun club; semi-auto hunting rifle purchased legally after obtaining hunting license.

2001 - Switzerland – Zug Canton Parliament – 14 killed 18 injured. After serving 18 months in detention a man uses a pistol, revolver, pump action shotgun, and hunting rifle to let off 90 shots in Parliament.

Yes, these are all select incidents but there are many more. They show that gun laws will not stop violent people from committing violent crimes. If not guns, than arson, knives, or explosions become the go to weapons.

The argument that arises from facts such as these is, “but less guns will reduce crime. Even if not all homicides can be stopped, at least with stricter gun laws we can limit it, right?” This doesn’t appear to be true either.

A look at the increasing rates on knife homicides, bludgeoning homicides, and beating people to death in countries where there are strict gun laws show that people will resort to whatever means are available – and the heinousness of hand to hand killings is just as gruesome (if not more so) than shootings.

First, the US gun death stats are often compared to Canada, the UK, and Australia. To begin with this is absurd. And here is why – Australia has about 10% the population of America, Canada has about 11% percent the population, and England/Wales has about 19% (based on 2012 population numbers – as these are the years in the following charts). Comparing flat death numbers is absurd – it is why we have crime rates and homicide rates and use percentages.

In all of these areas, the US still has higher rates as a country in comparison to the countries mentioned. But, let’s look at facts. We know that more crime and homicides happens in urban areas, especially large cities. So let’s compare these countries:

The United States has 158 cities over 150,000 people with 33 over 500,000 and 14 of those over 1 million people

England/Wales is next with 40 cities over 150,000 people with only 7 over 500,000 and only 2 of those over 1 million people

Canada has 39 cities with over 150,000 people with 12 over 500,000 and 3 of those over 1 million

Australia has only 14 cities over 150,000 people with 6 over 500,000 and 5 of those over 1 million people

Comparing Gun Deaths

The US firearm homicide numbers have been falling steadily since 1993. Even with the lift of the Assault Weapons Ban, the numbers continue to fall (see appendix A). While the largest percentages of homicides are committed in the US with a firearm, our total homicide numbers do not even reach 1% of all deaths in the country. And it is true that we do have a larger homicide rate than many European countries and “Gun Controlled Countries”, but often the countries America is compared to have populations 10-20% the size. All crime stats show that the more people in a given place, the higher the rate of crime and violence as a whole (and at a larger percentage rate). Based on the sizes and the number of major city in the US, we would expect to see higher crime and homicide rates over countries with fewer major cities based on statistics alone (so more cities with million+ populations the larger the crime rate by measurable terms).

Add in that 75% of US gun-related violence takes place in just 5% zip codes, and you are talking about a very different underlying issue than just easy to access firepower. (<https://www.sovereignman.com/trends/heres-what-happened-when-venezuela-imposed-gun-control-laws-17984/>)

But, interestingly enough, the US’s crime rate by city is in keeping with cities of similar size in other countries. Look at New York City and London – the murder rate is higher in New York but the gap is closing...

A person is, “Almost six times more likely to be burgled in the British capital than in the US city, and one and a half times more likely to fall victim to a robbery...London has almost three times the number of reported rapes and while the murder rate in New York remains higher, the gap is narrowing dramatically,” (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/20/london-now-dangerous-new-york-crime-stats-suggest/>).

The US actually ranks around 83rd in countries for homicide rate – with countries like Jamaica (5th), South Africa (8th), Bahamas (12th), Greenland (26th), Russia (33rd) placing well ahead (<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/murder-rates-by-country.html>; <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators/VC.IHR.PSRC.P5/rankings>)

So what this all boils down to is a little common sense

1. Larger Countries have higher crime rates and higher homicide rates
2. Countries with larger cities have higher crime rates and higher homicide rates

3. If guns are removed, alternative means of murder are found

So will removing guns decrease the crime rate or the homicide rate in the US?

Preliminary findings in some scientific studies are beginning to show that restricting gun access results in declining firearm deaths and in overall crime rates, but researchers warn against jumping to conclusions as this isn't conclusive evidence. They say more research needs to be done to see what other efforts are enacted at the same time (such as getting permits from local police) to better determine the overall cause of the decreases. Very rarely are gun laws stand alone measures. There are also many examples where gun laws help with crime in one area while increasing it in others, but again a look at other policies enacted would have to be analyzed.

<https://www.npr.org/2016/01/09/462252799/research-suggests-gun-background-checks-work-but-theyre-not-everything>;

Currently it is easy to find articles that claim gun control laws in areas where there are a lot of guns will limit gun crime (this is a no brainer no guns=no gun crime) these do not speak to the overall crime rates or homicide rates. Research is beginning to show in favor of the pro-gun side in this matter - stricter gun laws are NOT reducing overall homicide. In fact police presence seems to be the number one factor in some of the larger dips in homicide rates – not guns laws

<https://crimeresearch.org/2013/12/murder-and-homicide-rates-before-and-after-gun-bans/>)

Take cities of the same size with similar gun laws across the world and you will come back with different results; look at cities with similar populations and opposite gun laws and you can come back with similar results – gun laws are not the deciding factors

<https://www.sovereignman.com/trends/heres-what-happened-when-venezuela-imposed-gun-control-laws-17984/>).

A good example is Venezuela where the murder rate is out of control despite harsh gun laws imposed in 2012 (<http://time.com/4341450/venezuela-state-of-emergency-murder-caracas/>)

A good look at detailed research done into laws and their actual effects on gun control comes from this detailed article (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/i-used-to-think-gun-control-was-the-answer-my-research-told-me-otherwise/2017/10/03/d33edca6-a851-11e7-92d1-58c702d2d975_story.html?utm_term=.d8b3fc9aecc6)

After 8 months of research into gun deaths, the writer maintained an “anti-gun” stance in her personal views – but came out against gun laws touted by politicians.

“By the time we published our project, I didn't believe in many of the interventions I'd heard politicians tout. I was still anti-gun, at least from the point of view of most gun owners, and I don't want a gun in my home, as I think the risk outweighs the benefits. But I can't endorse policies whose only selling point is that gun owners hate them. Policies that often seem as if they were drafted by people who have encountered guns only as a figure in a briefing book or an image on the news.”

Another common argument on assault rifles and high capacity magazines is that no one needs them. We will revisit this topic later – but a quick note on clip capacity - a practiced shooter can exchange a clip or reload so fast that the size of the clip doesn't matter...

“It can take about two seconds, or less, to drop an empty magazine and insert another.” (<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/27/the-high-capacity-magazine-myth/>)

4: Trend Towards Gun Violence?

While mass killings are on the rise, violent crime as a whole is down. SO why the trend toward mass killings? Here is a look at some issues that are more unique in America from mental health to child rearing to technology. These are only opinions – but they are based on solid research.

Domestic Violence

In the last few years there has been more attention paid to guns and their use in domestic homicides – especially in the state of Vermont. Laws have been proposed allowing officers to remove weapons from the home if they feel there is a threat. This has met with objections based on “due process” as well as second amendment violations as there doesn't have to be a conviction. There have also been points made about how removing guns but leaving knives and hammers speak more to a fear of guns not of abuse.

Most homicides are in fact caused by a domestic situation. According to the Violence Policy Center in 2012 1,706 women were murdered by men in single victim/single offender incidents. Of those women, 1,594 cases could identify the relationship of the victim to the male killer - of those cases 93% were murdered by a man they knew. For victims that knew their offenders, 62 percent (924) were wives or intimate acquaintances of their killers (<http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2014.pdf>)

It was reported that half of all women killed, and 7% of men, were murdered in a domestic incident (<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/07/21/538518569/cdc-half-of-all-female-murder-victims-are-killed-by-intimate-partners>).

This is not unique to the US. In Australia, for 2011-2012 there were 243 homicides with 185 of them being domestic homicides. That's 76%.

In Vermont, offenders are supposed to be removed from the home. If there is an abuse incident officers can remove the offender and an emergency protection order can be obtained. In this case, removal of guns from the home would only affect the victim's access to them.

There are many incidents where victims allow partners back into the home regardless of the restraining order – in these cases guns may make it easier to commit murder, but it isn't the cause of the death – the abuse is. What I mean by that is, if no gun were present - statistics say another item would have replaced the gun as the object of abuse

and/or murder. While it is true that the presence of a gun makes death more likely for the victim, it doesn't increase the rate of abuse. Shooting a domestic partner is not accidental, nor is it done as a scare tactic, it is done in anger

There are many reports and studies currently being done on this issue – most have come to the conclusion that less availability to guns means less gun related deaths. Other studies are showing preliminary results that stricter gun laws do reduce the rate of domestic homicide overall but there are not conclusive numbers or a common consensus as to what the decreased rate is, or if other measures are also responsible.

Most people would not say a violent offender should be allowed to keep or buy guns. Current laws say convicted domestic abusers cannot buy guns. But what about before conviction? The problem becomes who gets to decide?

Police? We have see all over the news and the internet police abusing power, so is that a road you want to take setting legal precedent for police confiscation of property before conviction?

In Vermont a revision of such a proposed law was that a judge should decide if a person is violent, a danger to themselves and a danger to others, justifying the confiscation of weapons.

But what qualifies as domestic violence under these new rules? Is it just for those that have beaten their partner or child? Or does it include spanking your child? There are no set laws or standards as to what is "violence" and punishments such as spanking or slapping a mouthy child have wound up in court.

Gun laws do not eliminate domestic homicide – "There were a total of 432 domestic homicides recorded by the police in England and Wales, between April 2012 and March 2015. This represents 30% of all homicides where the victim was aged 16 and over during this time period."

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2016>).

As for the US, the most recent year I could find verifiable information for was 2007 where intimate partners committed 14% of **all homicides** in the U.S.

<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvv.pdf>).

Again we have to look at existing laws. Felons and those convicted of severe or repeated domestic abuse are not supposed to pass background checks and are supposed to have guns removed from their homes and possession – so why is it that those convicted of domestic abuse are still found with guns? And would any new law change this? The answer is no – those currently breaking the law would continue to do so.

The amount of guns in the US and the ease at which we get them is nothing new. In fact, the US historically had a gun in just about every home. So why is there more gun violence now? A look at the Gun Stats chart (appendix 1) shows you that gun violence is going down.

But mass shooting are up – WHY?

A look at the Mother Jones Chart will show you that most of the shooters had identified mental health issues, with some being diagnosed schizophrenics. With larger population growth we would expect to see a larger number of people with mental health issues but not a larger percentage. In 1987 one in every 187 people was thought to be experiencing a mental health issue; that rate is now considered to be 1 in 5 with 1 in 25 experiencing a rate that interferes with daily life – how did we get there? (That is a topic for a different article).

If mental illness is rising so drastically, is it any wonder that events such as mass killings and mass shootings are increasing as well?

There are mixed studies into mental health and its correlation to shootings and violence but there is no denying larger numbers of these mass shootings which are directing the gun law conversations did in fact have mental health issues (https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/mental-illness-and-violence)

There are a number of things going on in the US currently that could be looked at in the overall mental health discussion. In the 30-31 years over which the mental stability of the states seems to have decreased we have seen other drastic changes in our society. We currently live in a country where people are unhappy and without faith in their government's decisions (pew research <http://www.people-press.org/2017/05/03/public-trust-in-government-1958-2017/>)

Year percent of people confident in Gov't Decisions

1985 43%

1990 30%

1995 27%

2000 38%

2005 32%

2010 23%

2015 18%

2017 18%

Economics

Year Median Income Poverty Line Official Poverty Rate

1990 \$53,350 \$13,359 13.5

1995 \$53,330 \$15,569 13.8

2000 \$58,544 \$17,603 11.3

2005 \$56,935 \$19,971 12.6

2010 \$54,245 \$22,314 15.1

2015 \$57,230 \$24,257 13.5

<https://www.census.gov/> and <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEHOINUSA672N>

Look at the data showing median income, poverty line, and percent of families below the poverty rate, and it is easy to see why there is an increase in economic desperation. From 1990 to 2015 the median income only increased by a total of \$3,880 (it spiked in 2000, dropped drastically and is only now recovering), but during that same time frame the poverty line has risen by \$11,924 closing the gap between poor and average pay. The poverty rate has remained about the same at 13.5%. Looking at median income vs. the poverty line, and factoring in the price of goods over 25 years and you are looking at a bleak economic picture, placing more people in the lower middle class (just above poverty) than in the previous two decades (info from www.census.gov).

Income has remained stagnant over 25 years but the prices of all goods and services have increased.

Think about it this way – to make \$25,000 (the poverty line) a year you need to make \$480.76 a week, or roughly \$12 an hour for a 40 hr a week job. To make the median a two person income would be \$57,230 - that's \$1,100 wk or \$550 per person on a double income that's \$13.00 an hour per person. But most jobs available do not pay that. In fact, less than half of all jobs in the US pay \$18.00 an hour or more (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/24/half-the-jobs-in-america-pay-under-18-an-hour-can-trump-help/?utm_term=.1cf1bff8cc12).

Looking into raising the minimum wage, the question becomes if wages are raised will price of goods and services jump as well, leaving us in the same exact position? And will skilled labor wages increase as well, or will employers freeze these wages in order to compensate for the higher minimum wage - putting more people into the lower middle class bracket? This remains an open ended question.

Education

According to History.net the US was #1 in education in the World in the early 1980s (<http://www.historynet.com/was-the-usa-ever-no-1-in-education.htm> and backed up by CBS). We now rank 17th overall (<http://www.ibtimes.com/us-17th-global-education-ranking-finland-south-korea-claim-top-spots-901538> but can be found all over the Internet) with some stats ranking us under 35 other nations in math (<http://hechingerreport.org/u-s-now-ranks-near-bottom-among-35-industrialized-nations-math/>).

Why have we dropped in education while spending more than any other country (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-education-spending-tops-global-list-study-shows/>)?

Why is our country's economy stagnant?

Why are more jobs coming with low wages instead of cost of living compensation?

Why do raises seem to be a thing of the past?

Why are people unhappy with their government and through the last 2 presidents have had historically low confidence in the government?

A look into all of these phenomena and you just might begin to put together the whole picture that is leading to a surge in depression and other mental health issues – the leading factor in many of these mass shootings.

The Children

Another issue that leads to mental health and that plays a role in younger shooters is the growing sense of despondency, disconnect, and a lack of purpose in modern generations.

I have thoughts into why there is a rise in this type of violence, backed by scientific studies and research – but first let's dispense some popularly believed myths...

The first thing I hear when having a conversation about firearms is that today's children are more violent. That they have more access to violent TV, violent video games, and violent media than ever before! THAT IS FALSE! Remember the 70s, 80s, and early 90s – every blockbuster was an action movie, most cartoons included violence or had martial arts as part of the plot. Power Rangers, Ninja Turtles, Superhero shows, Transformers...these were the norm, not the exception. Think that was what led to today's seeming desensitization? Let's look at popular shows from much earlier.

Let's start in the 20s and 30s when home televisions weren't a thing but radio and the movies were the entertainment media giants. Programming was filled with Westerns (mass killing of cowboys and Indians) and gangsters. On the big screen you could watch 50-100 men die by gun or arrow fire in a short film. And in those days a matinee meant hours of viewing pleasure – punctuated by news reels showing footage of dead gangster victims, or during war time – actual war footage. Not violent at all.

Add to that the violence of prohibition, or the horrors of the Depression and Dust Bowl.

The 40s brought more war images, war movies, and Looney Toons (arguably one of the most violent cartoons ever- <http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2029095,00.html>). Cowboy movies continued to be a favorite – only now color became part of those shoot-'um-up scenes.

The 50s and 60s brought Spy Movies, Cop Shows, and more Gangster movies as the 20s became romanticized. It also brought the real violence of desegregation and Civil Rights – live on your television sets.

Before television, children didn't need the media to see violence. They were steeped in it. Look at WWI – how many 14 year old boys signed up? How many children ran off to war?

Before that – we had children working in mines, in factories, in mills. Dismemberment and death were a part of life. Living in urban areas – street gangs, robbery, and organized crime were the norm and every child was well aware. No wonder these were the topics of comic books, Dime store novels, and the first movies – they were trying to romanticize real life.

Go back before 1900 and again we see Cowboys and Indians and Outlaws as the romanticized topics of books and the media (read up on Jesse James). Before that – the Civil War where very few escaped violent horror. And before that....

Public Executions, The Salem Witch Trials, Burning at the Stake, The Inquisition, Gladiators, the list goes on. And yes, children were allowed to be, even expected to be, present because children were expected to be little adults.

Never, in all of American history or world history, has violence NOT been a major part of everyday life!

And amid all of this violence, the majority of people were NOT VIOLENT. In fact, we had consistent growth, innovation, and technological advances from 1850-1980 despite all of the events and media that should have created an unstable society (at least according to modern rhetoric).

So why is it only now that we say violent images, media, etc. are leading to violent humans?

The greater problem in general is screen time!

Scientific studies show that screen time desensitizes children and disconnects them from the reality they live in. Disconnected children are not interested in nature or what happens to it, they are not interested in the things happening outside of themselves and that behavior follows them into adulthood. (<https://childmind.org/article/big-disconnect-how-tech-changes-families-2/>, <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/content/dam/nhmwww/about-us/visitor-research/Disconnect%20with%20nature%20Lit%20review.pdf>;)

There is also research showing that screen time affects the brain in many negative ways including increased aggression, inability to sit still and inability to focus (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/behind-online-behavior/201604/what-screen-time-can-really-do-kids-brains>, <https://wtop.com/parenting/2017/11/researchers-screen-time/>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/mental-wealth/201508/screentime-is-making-kids-moody-crazy-and-lazy>)

And it isn't just kids, adults exhibit negative effects from too much screen time. Couple that with the barrage of media we are introduced to daily, showing us what we should buy, what we should feel bad about, how we should be parenting, how much money we should make, how happy we should be, and how our lives should be better, and we not only disconnecting from our kids but are inwardly self doubting leading to more depressive moods and behaviors.

So back to our children.

The truth of the matter is – many of modern American cultural issues focus on children. American children are raised in a dramatically different way than they were in the 1980s even. And they are being raised differently than their modern peers from different countries.

In the US we have created the term “Helicopter Parent” to describe part of this trend towards dependent children. More and more we see and hear about children who won't

eat certain foods, about children that don't play outside without parental supervision, about young teens that don't walk to the store or ride a bike or babysit. Fewer children have chores than their traditional counterparts (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-children-need-chores-1426262655>).

But we are also breaking away from traditions as a whole, from the large family support networks, and from a firm sense of morals. We are creating a society of less educated, more dependent children than ever before. Then we expect self reliance while undermining the familial and community social support networks

The US trend in creating dependent children is not the world wide norm. And for those countries that do promote familial dependency, it is part of a tradition of community where duty to family is a priority (such as in many Asian countries).

Here are some examples of child rearing habits around the world:

Norwegian parents let their kids sleep in the freezing cold...

The French don't cater to "fussy eaters," instead serving children the same meals they themselves eat...

In the Polynesian Islands, it's not uncommon for "older" children (think toddler and preschool age) to take care of younger ones — even those who are not their siblings...

Japanese parents let 7-year-olds ride the subway by themselves...

Children stay up until 10 p.m. in Spain and Argentina because of the strong emphasis those countries place on the domestic unit. Sending children to bed earlier would mean they couldn't fully participate in family life, something that those societies consider particularly important.

Danish parents leave their kids sleeping in a stroller on the curb while they go inside to shop or eat... (<http://www.tuw.edu/content/health/child-rearing-practices-different-cultures/>)

Whereas Americans are inclined to gush obnoxiously on social media about their perfect little angels, the English find this behavior distasteful. It's not acceptable in [England](#) to brag—or even talk about one's accomplishments. This tight-lipped-ness extends to children, as well. In America, you may hear a parent say, "My little Cheyenne seems to have a real gift for the ukulele." In England, parents would say, "We're managing to endure little Alastair's efforts at learning the piccolo." These deprecating remarks are made in front of children—to teach their how to get along with people in society. In other words, to teach them to never brag.

(<http://thenextfamily.com/2015/05/20-ways-that-parenting-styles-differ-around-the-world/>)

Many of these ideas were once part of American child rearing as well – but no longer.

This is not to say that there is any right way to raise a child as long as needs are being met and the child is being raised to be a functioning adult. But the last part of that equation is becoming the problem. Wendy Mogel, a clinical psychologist said, "We're supposed to be raising our children to leave us... They must develop self-reliance and

resourcefulness and resilience, which is a challenge, because we must allow our children to make mistakes.” This is something American parents are unable to do. “Parents are genuinely anxious about really big things like the melting ice caps and collapsing economy and the unending stories about violence and predators and college admissions,” says Mogel. “They displace all of these fears of things they can’t control onto the one thing they believe they can control, which is children.”

Another thing different about Americans in recent years is our expectations. Somewhere along the line we decided that being happy all of the time was how life should be, and we dug in in order to make that possible.

“What is unique to us is the desire to be happy all the time and experience no discomfort *and* achieve,” says Mogel. “These are competing values.” And the confusion created from this way of trying to live is showing through (<https://ideas.ted.com/how-cultures-around-the-world-think-about-parenting/>).

Trying to be happy, trying to be successful, trying to live social constructs that didn’t exist much beyond 25 years ago, all while parenting to “modern standards”, working a full time job, being the “soccer parent”, fitting into or breaking the social gender norms/political norms/racial norms; and making sure the newest trends in education are being taught... these are all things that are fighting for attention in the modern American adult and through it all children are becoming our soundboards. Instead of getting parents that are the calm moral leaders they need in order to learn about the world around them, proper ways to deal with conflict and stress, life and love, and even loss - they are getting parents that are in upheaval that are also unable to deal with those emotions, and it is creating an unstable society as a whole.

In all of this there starts to emerge a pattern: Lost children, lost parents, economic depression, rise in mental health issues, and a feeling of helplessness to change any of it – and all the while incidents of mass violence increase.

Another piece of the puzzle is human aggression – there is a natural biological disposition towards aggression in humans and it is one we want to ignore. I want to mention it here as it is an important thought to consider in this bigger picture of mental health, violence, and gun deaths though in this particular argument I can’t give it the attention it deserves. Humans are animals to an extent, and we evolved through the strongest surviving. Though we now live in “civilized times” we are not far removed from the evolutionary period of aggressive behavior equaling survival.

PART 5: The Second Amendment:

The most important point in the US discussion.

So what is the point of all of this discussion? We’ve gone from gun death statistics, to violence rates, to child rearing and mental health. Why?

Because how can we have a conversation about guns without it?

In America, the homicide rate caused by firearms is less than 1% of all total deaths in the country. And while guns are the tool used in the majority of US homicides, there is little to suggest that removing or restricting firearms will lower the overall homicide rate.

Again, most studies say that more restrictive gun laws lower the number of GUN DEATHS but that doesn't mean the number of total homicide changes. Other countries have seen a rise in knife killings and people being beat to death since changing their gun laws.

There is a reason there are so many guns in America – They are a part of our culture, from the very beginning!

The original colonies only ratified the Constitution with the understanding that a bill of rights would be added – these became the first 10 amendments and there were arguments specifically about the Second Amendment. Why?

Because, the point of the amendment was for civilian armament.

See, the right to bear arms and have a militia was meant as an alternative to a standing army, which many founding fathers believed was the first step toward government tyranny.

During a debate on the purpose of the second amendment **Rep. Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts** said, "What, Sir, is the use of a militia? It is to prevent the establishment of a standing army, the bane of liberty... Whenever Governments mean to invade the rights and liberties of the people, they always attempt to destroy the militia, in order to raise an army upon their ruins." (*spoken during floor debate over the Second Amendment, 1 Annals of Congress at 750, August 17, 1789*).

They had just fought a war against a government that they felt had oppressed them. They had seen what de-arming a population could do. The first years of the war were so difficult to the Continental army because they had few gun, no gun powder, and little money. It was the individual arms of citizens that allowed the fight to be maintained until ground could be made in securing weapons. And they fought a standing army with little interest in what was right, only in what the orders were and their paycheck. The first long winter saw many deserters as the pay (or food) didn't come.

The framers of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were very aware that Government would one day try to undo the system being created and the only way to stop that from happening was to have an armed people. Here are direct quotes from letters and documents discussing this exact topic.

"It is the duty of the patriot to protect its country from its government." – Thomas Paine

"What country can preserve its liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms," - Thomas Jefferson, letter to James Madison, December 20, 1787.

"The Constitution of most of our states (and of the United States) assert that all power is inherent in the people; that they may exercise it by themselves; that it is their right and duty to be at all times armed," - Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Cartwright, 5 June 1824.

"Before a standing army can rule, the people must be disarmed, as they are in almost every country in Europe. The supreme power in America cannot enforce unjust laws by

the sword; because the whole body of the people are armed, and constitute a force superior to any band of regular troops," - Noah Webster, *An Examination of the Leading Principles of the Federal Constitution*, October 10, 1787.

"As civil rulers, not having their duty to the people before them, may attempt to tyrannize, and as the military forces which must be occasionally raised to defend our country, might pervert their power to the injury of their fellow citizens, the people are confirmed by the article in their right to keep and bear their private arms,"- Tench Coxe, *Philadelphia Federal Gazette*, June 18, 1789.

Beyond just arming the populace so that they could become a militia if needed, or stop a tyrannical government if needed, the framers discussed what would happen if that government should try to disarm the populace.

"The laws that forbid the carrying of arms are laws of such a nature. They disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes.... Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man," - Thomas Jefferson, *Commonplace Book* (quoting 18th century criminologist Cesare Beccaria), 1774-1776.

"To disarm the people...[i]s the most effectual way to enslave them," - George Mason, referencing advice given to the British Parliament by Pennsylvania governor Sir William Keith, *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution*, June 14, 1788.

"Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are ruined.... The great object is that every man be armed. Everyone who is able might have a gun," - Patrick Henry, Speech to the Virginia Ratifying Convention, June 5, 1778.

"O sir, we should have fine times, indeed, if, to punish tyrants, it were only sufficient to assemble the people! Your arms, wherewith you could defend yourselves, are gone ..." - **Patrick Henry**, *Elliot p. 3:50-53, in Virginia Ratifying Convention demanding a guarantee of the right to bear arms.*

The next argument that inevitably comes up when discussing the second amendment is that the founding fathers could never have imagined semi-automatic weapons. That is simple not the truth either.

Examples of semi-automatic technology (the Belton Flintlock allowed you to fire once but would then shoot multiple rounds in succession) and repeating rifles (not as we know them, but early tech versions) were available – just too expensive for the fledgling army or just weren't in local circulation but the ideas and the tech were there (<http://dailycaller.com/2016/06/29/these-guns-dispel-the-notion-the-founding-fathers-could-never-have-imagined-modern-assault-rifles/>).

There were also cannons of varying sizes and blunderbuss guns – both which were often loaded with scatter shot sending shrapnel everywhere. The idea was that any

weapon an army soldier would have, the people would have as well – in order to stop a government from being tyrannical or a standing army from being used against the common people...

"Who are the militia? Are they not ourselves? Is it feared, then, that we shall turn our arms each man against his own bosom. Congress have no power to disarm the militia. Their swords, and every other terrible implement of the soldier, are the birthright of an American...[T]he unlimited power of the sword is not in the hands of either the federal or state governments, but, where I trust in God it will ever remain, in the hands of the people," --**Tenche Coxe**, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Feb. 20, 1788.

The right to bear arms shall not be infringed upon was to be the Constitutional protection for the ages so that the people of the United States would always be in control of their government. This does mean the right to own assault rifles and clips, to have no restriction on the number of guns one can own or the amount of ammunition. As how can people defend themselves against their government's standing army without that right? Without those tools?

Part 6: Why we need to think hard before passing new gun laws

When a government decides to target a certain group for extraction or extinction it typically starts by removing the right to own firearms. See Germany's laws against the Jews and against conquered enemies; see Stalin's confiscation from his political enemies and later the common populace; see Mau Ze Dong's confiscation of firearms, see the Kamar Rouge's gun policies; see the Turkish laws against Armenians.

Some of these governments (such as Germany) even used gun registries to seek out weapons owned by law abiding citizens for confiscations (this is the reason so many second amendment protectors stand against registering their guns).

Many people shrug off the idea that this could happen in the US– saying “our Government would never do that, conspiracy theorists are whack jobs”. But remember – media propaganda was the main form of control in Nazi Germany, to make the populace afraid so they easily accepted the government's constraints. Media control and limiting access happens today, it is what China does; it is what North Korea does.

If you say “Not the US Government” you are forgetting who gave us LSD. This is the same government that tested a mind altering drug on citizens to see if it would allow for better interrogation tactics and body control (<http://healthland.time.com/2012/03/23/the-legacy-of-the-cias-secret-isd-experiments-on-america/> and <http://www.history.com/mkultra-operation-midnight-climax-cia-isd-experiments>) <https://www.gannett-cdn.com/GDCContent/mass-killings/index.html#title>

This is the same government that rounded up Japanese Americans and held them in prison camps for years with most losing all they ever owned.

This is the same government that both sides have accused of tyranny or tyrannical behavior over the last 20 years.

This is the same government that has supported military coups all over the world.

Recently, Time Magazine stated “We might imagine that the American system must somehow always sustain itself. But a broader look at the history of democratic republics established since our own revolution reveals that most of them have failed. Politicians who emerge from democratic practices can then work to undo democratic institutions. This was true in the rise of [fascism](#) in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as during the spread of communism in the 1940s, and indeed in the new wave of authoritarian regime changes of the 21st century. Indeed, absent a truly decisive revolution, which is a rare event, a regime change depends upon such people — regime changers — emerging in one system and transforming it into another.”

The article goes on to call out the Trump administration as tyrannical and fascist (<http://time.com/4690676/donald-trump-tyranny/>).

This is the rhetoric of the larger Democratic party on one hand while they call for disarmament with the other...

My final question to you as an American is – if we truly have a fascist government or the beginnings of one is it wise or responsible to give up the one protection built into our constitution to prevent this tyranny when democracy fails or is subverted – Your Firearms?

Appendix 1

Year	Total US Population	Number of Deaths	Number of firearm deaths	Percent of Deaths Caused by Firearms (rounded to nearest hundredth)	Number of suicides by firearm	Percent of Firearm Deaths that are Suicides	Number of firearm deaths by homicide, accident, or in the line of military or police duty	Percent of firearm deaths by homicide, accident, or in the line of military or police duty	Chance of getting shot by someone else for any reason
1979	225,100,000	1,913,841	33,019	0.0173	15,543	47.0729	17,476	0.9131	0.0078
1980	227,220,000	1,989,841	33,780	1.6976	15,396	45.5773	18,384	0.9239	0.0081
1981	229,470,000	1,977,981	34,050	1.7214	16,139	47.3979	17,911	0.9055	0.0078
1982	231,660,000	1,974,797	32,957	1.6689	16,560	50.2473	16,397	0.8303	0.0071
1983	233,790,000	2,019,201	31,099	1.5407	16,600	53.3779	14,499	0.7181	0.0062
1984	235,820,000	2,039,369	31,331	1.5363	17,113	54.6200	14,218	0.6972	0.0060
1985	237,920,000	2,086,440	31,566	1.5129	17,363	55.0054	14,203	0.6807	0.0060
1986	240,130,000	2,105,361	33,373	1.5851	18,153	54.3943	15,220	0.7229	0.0063
1987	242,290,000	2,123,323	32,895	1.5692	18,136	55.1330	14,759	0.6950	0.0060
1988	244,500,000	2,167,999	33,989	1.5678	18,169	53.4555	15,820	0.7297	0.0065
1989	246,820,000	2,150,466	34,776	1.6171	18,178	52.2717	16,598	0.7718	0.0067
1990	249,620,000	2,148,463	37,155	1.7294	18,885	50.8276	18,270	0.8504	0.0073
1991	252,980,000	2,169,518	38,317	1.7662	18,526	48.3493	19,791	0.9122	0.0078
1992	256,510,000	2,175,613	37,776	1.7363	18,169	48.0967	19,607	0.9012	0.0076
1993	259,920,000	2,268,553	39,595	1.7454	18,940	47.8343	20,655	0.9105	0.0079
1994	263,130,000	2,278,994	38,504	1.6895	18,762	48.7274	19,742	0.8662	0.0075
1995	266,280,000	2,312,132	35,957	1.5551	18,503	51.4587	17,454	0.7549	0.0066
1996	269,390,000	2,314,690	34,040	1.4706	18,166	53.3666	15,874	0.6858	0.0059
1997	272,650,000	2,314,245	32,436	1.4015	17,566	54.1559	14,870	0.6425	0.0055
1998	275,850,000	2,337,256	30,708	1.3138	17,424	56.7409	13,284	0.5684	0.0048
1999	279,040,000	2,391,399	28,874	1.2074	16,599	57.4877	12,275	0.5133	0.0044
2000	282,160,000	2,403,351	28,663	1.1926	16,586	57.8655	12,077	0.5025	0.0043
2001	284,970,000	2,416,425	29,573	1.2238	16,869	57.0418	12,704	0.5257	0.0045
2002	287,630,000	2,443,387	30,242	1.2377	17,108	56.5703	13,124	0.5375	0.0046
2003	290,110,000	2,448,288	30,136	1.2309	16,907	56.1023	13,229	0.5403	0.0046
2004	292,810,000	2,397,615	31,228	1.3024	16,750	53.6377	14,478	0.6038	0.0049
2005	295,520,000	2,448,017	30,694	1.2538	17,002	55.3919	13,692	0.5593	0.0046
2006	298,380,000	2,426,244	30,896	1.2730	16,883	54.6446	14,013	0.5775	0.0047
2007	301,230,000	2,423,712	31,224	1.2882	17,352	55.5760	13,872	0.5723	0.0047
2008	304,090,000	2,471,984	31,651	1.2803	18,223	57.5748	13,428	0.5432	0.0044
2009	306,770,000	2,437,163	31,347	1.2862	18,735	59.7664	12,612	0.5174	0.0041
2010	309,350,000	2,468,435	31,672	1.2830	19,392	61.2275	12,280	0.4974	0.0039
2011	311,720,000	2,515,458	32,351	1.2860	19,990	61.7909	12,361	0.4914	0.0039
2012	314,110,000	2,543,279	33,563	1.3196	20,666	61.5737	12,897	0.5071	0.0041
2013	316,500,000	2,596,993	33,636	1.2951	21,175	62.9533	12,461	0.4798	0.0039

Appendix 2

US Homicides

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012
population	306,770,000	309,350,000	311,720,000	314,110,000
total deaths	2,437,163	2,468,435	2,515,458	2,543,279
total homicides	15,399	14,722	14,661	14,827
Homicide % of all deaths	0.632%	0.596%	0.583%	0.583%
Homicides by Gun	9,199	8,874	8,583	8,855
% of Homicides	59.738%	60.277%	58.543%	59.722%
% of all deaths	0.377%	0.359%	0.341%	0.348%

Homicides by knife	1,836	1,732	1,694	1,589
% of Homicides	11.923%	11.765%	11.554%	10.717%
% of all deaths	0.075%	0.070%	0.067%	0.062%
Homicides by Blunt Force	623	549	496	518
% of Homicides	4.046%	3.729%	3.383%	3.494%
% of all deaths	0.026%	0.022%	0.020%	0.020%
Homicides by Beating	817	769	728	678
% of Homicides	5.306%	5.223%	4.966%	4.573%
% of all deaths	0.034%	0.031%	0.029%	0.027%
Homicides by Arson	NA	NA	NA	NA
% of Homicides	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
% of all deaths	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Homicides by Stangulation	89	122	122	89
% of Homicides	0.578%	0.829%	0.832%	0.600%
% of all deaths	0.004%	0.005%	0.005%	0.003%

info from www.cdc.com and www.fbi.gov

UK and Wales Homicides

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012
population	52,196,000	52,642,000	53,012,456	53,493,000
total deaths	499,331	484,361	493,242	491,348
total homicides	668	626	648	550

Homicide % of all deaths	0.134%	0.129%	0.131%	0.112%
Homicides by Gun	39	41	60	40
% of Homicides	5.838%	6.550%	9.259%	7.273%
% of all deaths	0.008%	0.008%	0.012%	0.008%
Homicides by knife	256	210	236	209
% of Homicides	38.323%	33.546%	36.420%	38.000%
% of all deaths	0.051%	0.043%	0.048%	0.043%
Homicides by Blunt Force	59	49	61	51
% of Homicides	8.832%	7.827%	9.414%	9.273%
% of all deaths	0.012%	0.010%	0.012%	0.010%
Homicides by Beating	148	126	118	89
% of Homicides	22.156%	20.128%	18.210%	16.182%
% of all deaths	0.030%	0.026%	0.024%	0.018%
Homicides by Arson	21	21	17	26
% of Homicides	3.144%	3.355%	2.623%	4.727%
% of all deaths	0.004%	0.004%	0.003%	0.005%
Homicides by Strangulation	45	53	60	60
% of Homicides	6.737%	8.466%	9.259%	10.909%
% of all deaths	0.009%	0.011%	0.012%	0.012%

info at
<https://www.ons.gov.uk>

UK and Wales Homicides

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012
population	52,196,000	52,642,000	53,012,456	53,493,000
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% of all deaths	0.004%	0.004%	0.003%	0.005%
Homicides by Strangulation	45	53	60	60
% of Homicides	6.737%	8.466%	9.259%	10.909%

% of all deaths	0.009%	0.011%	0.012%	0.012%
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info at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk>

Canada Homicides

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012
population	336,300,00	34,010,000	34,340,000	34,750,000
total deaths	238,418	240,075	242,074	251,656
total homicides	610	554	598	543
Homicide % of all deaths	0.256%	0.231%	0.247%	0.216%
Homicides by Gun	182	171	153	172
% of Homicides	29.836%	30.866%	25.585%	31.676%
% of all deaths	0.076%	0.071%	0.063%	0.068%
Homicides by knife	210	165	204	164
% of Homicides	34.426%	29.783%	34.114%	30.203%
% of all deaths	0.088%	0.069%	0.084%	0.065%
Homicides by Blunt Force	NA	NA	NA	NA
% of Homicides	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
% of all deaths	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Homicides by Beating	118	116	125	NA
% of Homicides	19.344%	20.939%	20.903%	#VALUE!
% of all deaths	0.049%	0.048%	0.052%	#VALUE!
Homicides by Arson	NA	NA	NA	NA

% of Homicides	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
% of all deaths	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Homicides by Stangulation	46	41	40	89
% of Homicides	7.541%	7.401%	6.689%	16.390%
% of all deaths	0.019%	0.017%	0.017%	0.035%

info from www.statcan.gc.ca

Australia Homicides: (their info for individual homicieds was given in 2 year intervals so I split them in half to get averaged %)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012
population	21,691,653	22,031,750	22,340,024	22,710,352
total deaths	140,760	143,473	146,932	147,098
total homicides	253	257	236	243
Homicide % of all deaths	0.180%	0.179%	0.161%	0.165%
Homicides by Gun	35	35	35	35
% of Homicides	13.834%	13.619%	14.831%	14.403%
% of all deaths	0.025%	0.024%	0.024%	0.024%
Homicides by knife	104	104	93	93
% of Homicides	41.107%	40.467%	39.407%	38.272%
% of all deaths	0.074%	0.072%	0.063%	0.063%
Homicides by Blunt Force	NA	NA	NA	NA
% of Homicides	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
% of all deaths	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!

Homicides by Beating	67	67	64	64
% of Homicides	26.482%	26.070%	27.119%	26.337%
% of all deaths	0.048%	0.047%	0.044%	0.044%
Homicides by Arson	NA	NA	NA	NA
% of Homicides	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
% of all deaths	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Homicides by Stangulation	14	14	7	7
% of Homicides	5.534%	5.447%	2.966%	2.881%
% of all deaths	0.010%	0.010%	0.005%	0.005%
Real Numbers	Homicides by Gun	Homicides by knife	Homicides by Beating	Homicides by Stangulation
2009-2010	71	208	135	28
2011-2012	69	187	125	34

www.abs.gov