

# BEST QUOTES ON GUN VIOLENCE

With guns you can kill terrorists. With education, you can kill terrorism.

—Malala Yousafzai

More Americans have died from gunshots in the last 50 years than in all of the wars in American history.

Since 1968, more than 1.5 million Americans have died in gun-related incidents, according to data from the *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. By comparison, approximately 1.2 million service members have been killed in every war in U.S. history, according to estimates from the *Department of Veterans Affairs* and *iCasualties.org*, a website that maintains an ongoing database of casualties from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

—Chelsea Bailey

After every mass shooting, we hear non-stop talk about gun rights. Loud voices cite the Second Amendment as the right to have a gun. What isn't talked about is the rights of all those dead people who were assaulted by the one with the gun. And there are many; we suffer around 30,000 deaths per year from guns. But the ones gunned down also have constitutional rights, the right to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' When will this country honor those rights?

—Lee Knohl

Compared to 22 other high-income nations, the U.S. gun-related murder rate is 25 times higher. Although it has half the population of the other 22 nations combined, the U.S. had 82 percent of all gun deaths, 90 percent of all women killed by guns, 91 percent of children under 14 and 92 percent of young people between ages 15 and 24 killed by guns. In 2010, gun violence cost U.S. taxpayers approximately \$516 million in direct hospital costs.

—Wikipedia

We look to statistics for reassurance in these types of situations. Here is one: 100% of mass shootings have been enabled by access to guns. I can guarantee that even if there were a genotype shared by the mass shooters, which there will not be, none of the killings would have happened if they didn't have guns.

--Adam Rutherford

A remarkable 75 percent of children killed with guns this year have been under the age of 12. Since the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, three years ago, an American child under 12 has died by intentional or accidental gunfire every other day, according to analysis by NBC News. And those children are far more likely to die from guns held by family members and acquaintances than strangers, according to an NBC News analysis of FBI data.

On August 18, 9-year-old Jamyla Bolden was killed by a bullet fired into her Ferguson, Missouri, home as she did her homework on her bed. 'Usually when we hear the gunshots, she's the first one who yells 'Mom, they're shooting!' her mother told KMOV.com, a local news station. 'I noticed Jamyla wasn't saying anything. That's the main thing I remember: her not moving.'

—Jennifer Mascia

The best evidence on how to prevent mass shootings comes from Australia. In 1996, after 35 people were killed in a massacre in Tasmania, Australia banned a range of weapons including semi-automatic and pump-action rifles and shotguns. Income tax was hiked so the government would have the money to buy back the now-illegal weapons, and the results were striking: There had been 13 mass shootings in 18 years before the new controls, but no similar incident in the decade that followed.

—Peter Aldhous

We lose eight children and teenagers to gun violence every day. If a mysterious virus suddenly started killing eight of our children every day, America would mobilize teams of doctors and public health officials. We would move heaven and earth until we found a way to protect our children. But not with gun violence.

—Senator Elizabeth  
Warren

Isn't it strange how mental illness hardly massacres anyone in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom?

—Internet Meme

We in Europe ... do not consider the freedom to buy weapons a human right.

— Gisela Kallenbach

The regularity of mass killings breeds familiarity. The rhythms of grief and outrage that accompany them become — for those not directly affected by tragedy — ritualised and then blend into the background noise. That normalisation makes it ever less likely that America’s political system will groan into action to take steps to reduce their frequency or deadliness.

Those who live in America, or visit it, might do best to regard them the way one regards air pollution in China: an endemic local health hazard which, for deep-rooted cultural, social, economic and political reasons, the country is incapable of addressing.

This may, however, be a bit unfair. China seems to be making progress on pollution.

—*The Economist*

Moments ago, the U.S. Senate decided to do the unthinkable about gun violence — nothing at all. Over two years ago, when I was shot point-blank in the head, the U.S. Senate chose to do nothing. Four months ago, 20 first-graders lost their lives in a brutal attack on their school, and the U.S. Senate chose to do nothing. It’s clear to me that if members of the U.S. Senate refuse to change the laws to reduce gun violence, then we need to change the members of the U.S. Senate.

—Congresswoman  
Gabrielle Giffords

Donning guerrilla fatigues and camouflage to complete his ‘mission,’ the former Army man ambushed **Keiba** in the parking lot of their apartment complex. She was his fiancée and the mother of his son. He had never acted violently toward her prior to this incident.

**Martha**, a student at the University of South Carolina, was paralyzed when a gang member fired his gun as she and her friends were waiting for a taxi.

**Jasbir** was cooking for the congregation at a Sikh temple when a white supremacist and Army veteran entered the temple and opened fire. Six people were killed and four were injured. The shooter killed himself after shooting at a police officer on the scene.

**Antonius** was struck by a random bullet as he walked down a crowded Brooklyn street. The intended target was the ex-girlfriend of the shooter.

**Megan** was shot through the pelvis with an AK-47. Stopping to drop someone off, the car she was riding in was besieged by a hail of bullets. She lay on top of a toddler, who was also in the car, to protect the child. Megan now walks with a limp. A gang initiation is believed to be the motive.

—Sarah Jacobs

### **EVERY DAY ON AVERAGE (AGES 0-19)**

Every day, 46 children and teens are shot in murders, assaults, suicides & suicide attempts, unintentional shootings, and police intervention.

Every day, 7 children and teens die from gun violence:

- 4 are murdered
- 2 die from suicide

Every day, 40 children and teens are shot and survive:

- 31 injured in an attack
- 1 survives a suicide attempt
- 8 shot unintentionally

—*bradycampaign.org*  
(2016)

### **IN ONE YEAR ON AVERAGE (AGES 0-19)**

17,012 American children and teens are shot in murders, assaults, suicides & suicide attempts, unintentional shootings, or by police intervention.

2,647 kids die from gun violence:

- 1,565 murdered
- 907 die from suicide
- 116 killed unintentionally
- 27 killed by legal intervention
- 32 die but intent was unknown

14,365 kids survive gun injuries:

- 11,321 injured in an attack
- 232 survive a suicide attempt
- 2,747 shot unintentionally
- 65 shot in a legal intervention

—*bradycampaign.org*  
(2016)

### **EVERY DAY ON AVERAGE (ALL AGES)**

Every day, 315 people in America are shot in murders, assaults, suicides & suicide attempts, unintentional shootings, and police intervention.

Every day, 93 people die from gun violence:

- 32 are murdered
- 58 die from suicide
- 1 killed unintentionally
- 1 killed by legal intervention
- 1 died but was intent unknown

Every day, 222 people are shot and survive:

- 164 injured in an attack
- 10 survive a suicide attempt
- 45 shot unintentionally
- 3 are shot in a legal intervention

—*bradycampaign.org*  
(2016)

### **IN ONE YEAR ON AVERAGE (ALL AGES)**

114,994 people in America are shot in murders, assaults, suicides & suicide attempts, unintentional shootings, or by police intervention.

33,880 people die from gun violence:

- 11,564 murdered
- 21,037 die from suicide
- 544 killed unintentionally
- 468 killed by legal intervention
- 267 die but intent was unknown

81,114 people survive gun injuries:

- 60,041 injured in an attack
- 3,700 survive a suicide attempt
- 16,428 shot unintentionally
- 945 people are shot by legal intervention

—*bradycampaign.org*  
(2016)

If you look at the number of Americans killed since 9/11 by terrorism, it's less than 100. If you look at the number that have been killed by gun violence, it's in the tens of thousands. For us not to be able to resolve that issue has been something that is distressing.

--Barack Obama

The terrifying fact is that no one is safe so long as Congress chooses to do absolutely nothing in the face of this epidemic. As my colleagues go to sleep tonight, they need to think about whether the political support of the gun industry is worth the blood that flows endlessly onto the floors of American churches, elementary schools, movie theaters, and city streets. Ask yourself – how can you claim that you respect human life while choosing fealty to weapons-makers over support for measures favored by the vast majority of your constituents.

—Senator Chris Murphy

According to experts from around the world, policies restricting firearms correlate with a reduction in firearm deaths. But no matter how many researchers, scientists, and policy experts discuss the need for new gun laws and restrictions, our representatives in Washington insist: A tragedy's aftermath is not the time to talk about gun control. Instead, they lean on 'thoughts and their prayers' to get America through the current gun-related tragedy before the next incident occurs.

While they're sharing their usual thoughts and prayers, they should consider what exactly they are sending. Simple sympathy isn't enough, and it never will be when there are concrete steps that can be made to save actual lives. Politicians' prayers need to be aimed at their fellow lawmakers to enact change. Their thoughts need to be about meaningful policy changes that could prevent another murder, another death, another heartbreaking act of violence. Their tweets, public statements, and news sound bites offering their condolences must be the beginning, not the end, of the conversation.

There is nothing wrong with offering sympathy, showing your empathy, and sending thoughts and prayers to victims of violence. That is, if you're actually going to do something to make sure you never have to think those thoughts or say those prayers again.

—Sadie L. Trombetta

1967—Jayne Mansfield is killed when her car runs under the rear end of a tractor trailer. Since then, all trailers have a DOT bar at the rear to keep cars from going under them.

1982—Seven people die when Tylenol packaging was tampered with. Since then, it takes a PhD, channel locks, and a sharp object to get into a bottle of pills.

1995—A bombing using a certain kind of fertilizer, solution grade ammonium nitrate, killed 168 people, so the government imposed severe restrictions on the purchase of that fertilizer.

2001—One person attempts to blow up a plane with a shoe bomb. Since then, all air travelers have to take off their shoes for scanning before being allowed to board.

Since 1968—1,516,863 people have died from guns on American soil. Gun violence kills an average of 168 people every two days! Now, the problem apparently can't be solved except with thoughts and prayers.

—Internet Meme

In 1990, when we started the *Black Community Crusade for Children*, we were always talking about all children, but we paid particular attention to children who were not white, who were poor, who were disabled, and who were the most vulnerable. I thought I knew what the black community wanted and needed, but thank goodness we decided to hold focus groups and do it multigenerational. We were floored when we found the top issue of concern in all generations of black folk was gun violence.

Parents didn't think their children would live to adulthood, and the children didn't think they were going to live to adulthood. That's when we started our first gun-violence campaign. We've lost 17 times more young black people to gun violence since 1968 than we lost in all the lynching in slavery.

Guns are the only unregulated consumer product. We regulate toy guns and pajamas and toasters, but we don't regulate something that kills 30,000-plus people a year. It's obscene, and it's a money business. It's not just the NRA. It's also because of the gun manufacturers. We're a violent nation, and we need to confront it. This gun plague has to stop.

—Marian Wright  
Edelman

Nowadays, as I write and speak on a wide variety of topics, this one subject – Jesus' way of nonviolence – always generates the most controversy, and blisteringly so. Why is this? It is because we believe that violence can somehow save us; we believe that killing will prevent future killing; we simply trust the way of the gun more than we trust the words and way of Jesus.

--Ronnie McBrayer

My parents won't let me have a motorcycle, but they give me all the guns I want. I asked them for a motorcycle last Christmas and they told me I'd only kill myself. They got me this twelve-gauge instead.

--Scott Thompson

So long as you have a society with a lot of guns—and America has more guns per capita than any other county in the world—children will be at risk of being shot. The questions are how much risk, and what, if anything, is being done to minimize it? If one thinks of various ways in which commonplace items, from car seats to medicine bottle tops, have been childproofed, it's clear that society's general desire has been to eliminate as many potential dangers from children as possible, even when the number of those who might be harmed is relatively small. If one child's death is preventable, then the proper question isn't 'Why should we do this' but rather 'Why shouldn't we?' It would be strange for that principle to apply to everything but guns.

--Gary Younge

I remember a time when all I wanted was a gun and to learn how to use it. I thought a gun would make me feel safe. I thought a gun would make me feel powerful. But right now I just feel . . . heavy. Like I live in this world of death and destruction and I'll never escape alive.

--Paula Stokes

## **GUN CONTROL PROPOSAL**

As over 90 percent of gun violence is committed by men, in order for a man to purchase a gun, he must first get a waiver from his current wife, plus his most recent ex-wife, or any woman with whom he is currently in a relationship (if he's gay, he must get the waiver from his male spouse/partner). This law has greatly reduced most spousal/domestic gun murders in Canada.

All automatic and semi-automatic guns are banned. No gun or clip can hold more than six bullets.

To activate a gun for it to be used, the trigger must recognize the fingerprint of its registered owner, which would eliminate crimes with stolen guns.

Guns must be stored at a licensed gun club or a government-regulated facility. Only four-tenths of one percent of people die from home invasion gun murders, while a third of them are killed by their own weapon (sometimes because a criminal has wrestled it away from them). This would also address accidental shootings of children in the home.

Every gun owner must have a license which can be obtained only after completion of a gun training and safety course and a thorough background check.

As nearly half of all gun deaths are suicides, mental health care must become a top national health priority and must be properly funded.

'Current restrictions placed on the *Centers for Disease Control* (CDC), due to successful lobbying by the NRA, have prohibited them from studying the gun violence epidemic in the U.S....Science will then be free to find out why we are ALONE among nations in killing each other at such a massive rate (hint: It's not just the guns—it's us as Americans).

—Michael Moore

When weapons of war, or a manipulation of an existing weapon with a bump stock are used to kill or maim people at concerts, nightclubs, theaters or schools, something has to change and it's the existing laws. When's our right to be out in public without the threat of being killed in a mass shooting going to be as important as gun rights?

—Deb Locos

Clearly there are common sense things we can do to help children to have better lives and keep them from becoming so despondent that their only perceived solution is to kill themselves or others. How oblivious do we have to be to the inner turmoil of our own children to not see what they're going through, and then suggest when they completely snap with homicidal violence, it must've been the video games?

--Edward M. Wolfe

When has a civilian ever stopped a mass shooting with an AR-15? An AR-15 is a perfect weapon for mass murderers -- not so much for self-defense. Would you bring an AR-15 along on a date? To your place of work? To the movies? If not, how can owning an AR-15 save your life in the event of a mass shooting? Why does the NRA keep telling us we need semi-automatic rifles for self-defense? Whose side are they really on?

--Quentin R. Bufogle

America: Land of the free and home of the gun.

We are not brave, we are cowards, or we would have done something, anything after Newtown. Instead we did Nothing.

--Jonathan Heatt

I'd just bought a pistol and a silencer without even having to tell the guy my name. What a damned country.

--Scott Pratt

When the NSSF fights against legislation designed to prevent mass shootings because it 'won't work and is a violation of rights,' we understand that many people agree with that argument. But that's not, at all, even a little bit why the organization lobbies so hard. It works hand in hand with the NRA and certain senators, and spends millions of dollars per year for one reason and one reason only: to make more money. And every time a shooting happens, it makes even more money.

Yes. For real. When a mass shooting makes national headlines, the gun lobby purposefully stokes up fear and paranoia over proposed new gun laws so that scared citizens get out their checkbooks and buy a new AR-15 (or sporting rifle). So why would the NSSF have any interest in stopping mass shootings? Why would it engage politically and invest in compromise, a reform plan that attempts to make all Americans safer, or any sort of reckoning of the role guns play in gun violence? It won't.

However you feel about guns and their place in America—whether we're talking about rifles for hunting or assault rifles, or anything in between—it's undeniable that the gun lobby has refused to acknowledge or entertain any sort of regulation or reform aimed at making us a safer and saner nation. The reason why: because that does not make it more money. A customer base kept terrified at all times that this will be 'the last chance before the government bans' whatever gun manufacturers are peddling is much more valuable. A customer base absolutely convinced that the just-about-anyone-can-buy culture we have is politically necessary without seeing that it serves those companies is what they're after. They have achieved it.

--Trae Crowder

One only wishes Wayne LaPierre and his NRA board of directors could be drafted to some of these scenes, where they would be required to put on booties and rubber gloves and help clean up the blood, the brains, and the chunks of intestine still containing the poor wads of half-digested food that were some innocent bystander's last meal.

--Stephen King

In more than half of American homes where there are both children and firearms, according to a 2000 study, the weapons are in an unlocked place, and in more than 40 percent of homes, guns without a trigger lock are in an unlocked place. Almost three-quarters of children under the age of ten who live in homes with guns say they know where the guns are. A 2005 study showed that more than 1.69 million children and youth under eighteen live in homes with weapons that are loaded and unlocked. According to a *Department of Education* study, 65% of school shootings between 1974 and 2000 were carried out with a gun from the attacker's home or the home of a relative. And the laws, it seems, are effective. One study indicated that in the twelve states where child-access prevention laws were on the books for at least one year, unintentional gun deaths fell by 23 percent.

--Gary Younge

When I was twelve, I went hunting with my father and we shot a bird. He was laying there and something struck me. Why do we call this fun to kill this creature who was as happy as I was when I woke up this morning.

—Marv Levy

April 16, 2007, a gunman armed with automatic weapons kills 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech University. When the American public called for stricter gun control laws, Republican lawmakers responded 'Now is not the time to talk about gun control.'

Dec. 14, 2012, a gunman armed with automatic weapons kills 28 people including 20 children in Newtown Connecticut. When the American public called for stricter gun control laws, Republican lawmakers responded 'Now is not the time to talk about gun control.'

Oct. 1, 2017, a gunman armed with automatic weapons kills 59 people at a Las Vegas concert. When the American public called for stricter gun control laws, Republican lawmakers responded 'Now is not the time to talk about gun control.'  
When is it time?

—Roberta Null

We always knew how to honor fallen soldiers. They were killed for our sake, they went out on our mission. But how are we to mourn a random man killed in a terrorist attack while sitting in a cafe? How do you mourn a housewife who got on a bus and never returned?

--A. B. Yehoshua

Sixty-two percent of gun fatalities every day (53 out of 85) are suicides. Our large surplus of guns makes us not more likely to commit crimes, or even to prevent them; it makes us most likely to kill ourselves.

--Adam Miller

The fatality rate for suicide attempts overall is around 9%; but where a firearm is used, that rises to 85%.

—Peter Aldhous

You've never seen a Columbine done by a black child. Never. They always say, 'We can't believe it happened here. We can't believe it's these suburban white kids.' It's only them!

—Van Jones

Here is a sobering fact: The number of Americans who died from gunshot wounds in the last decade — more than 300,000 — exceeds the nation's total combat fatalities in World War II.

Gun deaths in the U.S. today are almost as frequent as deaths from traffic accidents. Yet the United States isn't an especially violent country, judged by statistics on general assaults. It's the rate of gun deaths, specifically, that outstrips that of any other developed nation.

—Peter Aldhous

A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history—with the possible exceptions of handguns and tequila.

—Mitch Ratcliffe

If I could uninvent anything, I would uninvent Hitler's mum, guns and broccoli.

—Dominic Monaghan

These boys on the street, they have nothing, no one to look up to. When we have men who will help our young males make the rite of passage into manhood, they will feel like men—and they will feel good. They won't have to search out for manhood among their peers who hand them guns.

--Edward James Olmos

A vast number of black and Latino youths in the inner cities are trying desperately to make some sense of their lives. But they are caught in a crossfire between a small group of the sociopaths in their midst and the larger society that ignores their potential and has written them out of the future.

Every time a delivery man is murdered, a drama teacher shot off his bike in the park, public opinion hardens against taking steps to remedy the desperate condition of urban youth including those who carry dreams instead of guns...

Trapped between the shooters in their neighborhood and a society that fears and quarantines them, a generation of city teen-agers is turning inward, away from counsel from the old heads in their community and communication with the larger society.

--Greg Donaldson

FBI agents are looking for the man who pulled the trigger and surely they will find him. But it doesn't matter if they do or they don't. They can't catch everybody, and Martin Luther King was executed by a firing squad that numbered in the millions.

--Mike Royko

Children growing up poor and black in the city are more likely to witness gun violence and street drug sales than their middle-class peers are. Once teens, they are more likely to attract the suspicion of the police, to be arrested if they break the law, to spend their lives behind bars, and to die young. If they make a mistake—fall in with the wrong crowd, antagonize the wrong adults, drop out of school—they are less likely to get a second chance. One study found, for instance, that marijuana use among whites is slightly higher than among blacks, yet blacks are arrested for it nearly four times as often.

—Sarah Carr

Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love.

—Martin Luther  
King, Jr.

Arms in the hands of citizens may be used at individual discretion... in private self-defense.

—John Adams

To be black in the Baltimore of my youth was to be naked before the elements of the world, before all the guns, fists, knives, crack, rape, and disease. The law did not protect us.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

You are a black boy, and you must be responsible for your body in a way that other boys cannot know. Indeed, you must be responsible for the worst actions of other black bodies, which, somehow, will always be assigned to you. And you must be responsible for the bodies of the powerful—the policeman who cracks you with a nightstick will quickly find his excuse in your furtive movements. You have to make your peace with the chaos, but you cannot lie. You cannot forget how much they took from us and how they transfigured our very bodies into sugar, tobacco, cotton, and gold.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction...The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.

--Martin Luther  
King, Jr.

In a word, most Negro youth are in danger of being caught up in the tangle of pathology that affects their world, and probably a majority are so entrapped. Many of those who escape do so for one generation only: as things now are, their children may have to run the gauntlet all over again. That is not the least vicious aspect of the world that white America has made for the Negro.

—Daniel Moynihan in  
*The Negro Family:  
The Case for  
National Action,*  
[1965]

It is not enough for ninety-five out of every hundred Negroes to be lawful. The ninety-five must band themselves together to restrain or suppress the vicious five.

—Kelly Miller, [1899]

No Negro can saunter down a street with any real certainty that violence will not visit him on his walk...[He knows] in the cells of his existence that life [is] war, nothing but war.

—Norman Mailer

If black people kill black people every day, why not have a week and kill white people? You understand what I'm saying? In other words, white people, this government and that Mayor were well aware of the fact that black people were dying every day in Los Angeles under gang violence. So if you're a gang member and you would normally be killing somebody, why not a white person?

—Sister Souljah

I can say anecdotally that every kid I knew who was chronically truant came from a home in chaos. I had a student last year who was absent about half the time because his father had been shot and his mother, who had lost her job, cried every night because she didn't know how she would pay the rent. My student walked the streets day after day looking for a job, even though no one would hire him because he was only 15. His mother begged him to stay in school and graduate, assuring him she would figure something out. Our counselor referred the family to public services, but because my student's mother was undocumented, she was afraid to seek them. And my student continued to be absent about half the time.

—Ellie Herman, Teacher

Among the gun violence experts consulted by BuzzFeed News, the most popular policy was the introduction of universal background checks, intended to keep guns out of the hands of people disqualified through their criminal records or mental health issues. (A comprehensive review of gun violence studies, published in January 2017, confirmed that background checks and laws that require a permit to purchase firearms seem to be the most effective policies.)

—Peter Aldhous

Recognize when people's behaviour indicates that they are at immediate risk of harming themselves or others, and temporarily restrict their access to guns until they have recovered.

Some states have introduced laws that try to do this. In California, people who are deemed to pose a risk to themselves or others can be held in a mental health facility for 72 hours, and since 1990 this has triggered a five-year ban on possessing guns — which can be curtailed earlier through a court petition.

—Peter Aldhous

It was times like these when I thought my father, who hated guns and had never been to any wars, was the bravest man who ever lived.

—Harper Lee

Like so many issues in American politics, this debate is ultimately driven by fear — of losing life, or losing a way of life. And until those on each side can honestly face what they're afraid of, neither will feel safe.

--Anne Helen Petersen

So long as governments set the example of killing their enemies, private individuals will occasionally kill theirs.

--Elbert G. Hubbard

## **BULLET**

Somebody shot a bullet, and my  
brother died.

Somebody shot a bullet, and for a day  
my momma cried.

Somebody shot a bullet, and my  
brother's not here anymore.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and I  
never will know why.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and my  
brother had to die.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and I  
won't forget that bang.

Somebody pulled a trigger, to be  
accepted by a gang.

Somebody changed my world that  
night, and I'm still asking why.

Somebody changed my world that  
night when my brother had to die.

Somebody changed my world, and if  
I could, I know what I'd do,

But I don't want to be like them—

So God, I'll leave it up to you.

—Anonymous Teen

Discussions of gun control don't really address the deeper, seemingly intractable difference between the two sides — one that has everything to do with the way that each conceives of individual agency. Simply put, one side believes in the responsibility of the group to put controls in place that protect its individual members. The other believes, above all else, in the rights of the individual. What we're not talking about when we talk about gun control is just how difficult it is to for these viewpoints to meet in conversation.

--Anne Helen Petersen

The fundamental difference at the heart of the two positions and, by extension, two Americas: One believes in the ability of the government to create safety, even if it entails sacrifices, small and large, on the part of the individual. The other believes those sacrifices, and the incremental increases in safety they cannot even guarantee to provide, are simply not worth the compromise of their liberty.

--Anne Helen Petersen

In even a single murder, the victims are multiple. Not one but at least two whole families die, that of the victim, and that of the perpetrator, and...the damage is exponential to mothers, fathers, brothers, sons, daughters.

—Sally Jenkins

When the line of violence has been crossed once, it's easier to cross again. Homicide and suicide differ greatly; but they are both forms of killing.

--Dr. David Spiegel

Dear Mom and Dad,

From the people I've talked to over here I've come up with some new ideas on the war here. For the most part, nobody is particularly wild with patriotic feeling for the war. There are, of course, those who just get a real charge out of killing people. One lieutenant I talked to said what a kick it had been to roll a gook 100 yards down the beach with his machine gun. But most people generate their enthusiasm for two reasons: One is self-preservation—if I don't shoot him, he'll eventually shoot me—and the other is revenge. It's apparently quite something to see a good friend blown apart by a VC booby trap and you want to retaliate in kind.

--Robert Ransom, Jr.

*Letters from a  
Dead GI, March  
27, 1968*

Dear Mom and Dad,

I lost my first man last week. He was killed by accident by another man in the platoon. I had sent a squad out on night ambush. They had been set up in position for a few hours when the flank man crawled away to take a leak or something and as he was crawling back to position another man mistook him for a dink and shot him. He died in the chopper that dusted him off. Of course it really tears me up to lose a man, especially like that, but I must not show any emotion over it. I've got to press on, keep doing my job. Even among my men this is universal. They are saddened by the death of a buddy, but he is gone. The concern among the team (for that is what we are) is how it will affect the man who shot him. Will he fall to pieces over this and be unable to perform his function? This is what we're worried about first and foremost.

--Robert Ransom, Jr.  
*Letters from a  
Dead GI*, April  
3, 1968

I wanted to know what were the experiences soldiers brought back from war that they couldn't share with society. As a journalist I have a mandate to talk about these things. But the soldiers, they don't. While killing is essential to the job, the conventional wisdom is that you don't speak about it.

--Kevin Sites

I do like to see the arms and legs fly.

--Colonel George S.  
Patton

In the early 1930s, with gangsters like John Dillinger mowing down his enemies with machine guns on the streets, Congress held hearings on a sweeping proposal to severely restrict firearm sales.

The testimony of one man—now totally forgotten—stood out.

'I have never believed in the general practice of carrying weapons,' said Karl T. Frederick, according to a transcript of the hearings. 'I do not believe in the general promiscuous toting of guns. I think it should be sharply restricted and only under licenses.'

Frederick's words were notable then, and especially now, because of who he was: the president of the National Rifle Association.

—Michael S. Rosenwald

The NRA was founded in 1871 by Civil War veterans George Wood Wingate, a lawyer, and William Conant Church, a former New York Times reporter....Their primary concern was not gun rights or the Second Amendment. What was it? 'Their personal disgust for the average soldier's marksmanship skills during the war drove them to create an organization that promoted rifle shooting on a scientific basis,' according to a thesis written by a Naval Postgraduate School student. 'The NRA started their charter with the promotion of marksmanship and organized shooting matches for training the New York National Guard.'

—Michael S. Rosenwald

Teens who spend three hours a day or more on electronic devices are 35 percent more likely to have a risk factor for suicide, such as making a suicide plan. (That's much more than the risk related to, say, watching TV.) One piece of data that indirectly but stunningly captures kids' growing isolation, for good and for bad: since 2007, the homicide rate among teens has declined, but the suicide rate has increased. As teens have started spending less time together, they have become less likely to kill one another, and more likely to kill themselves. In 2011, for the first time in 24 years, the teen suicide rate was higher than the teen homicide rate.

—Jean M. Twenge

Girls have borne the brunt of the rise in depressive symptoms among today's teens. Boys' depressive symptoms increased by 21 percent from 2012 to 2015, while the girls' increased by 50 percent — more than twice as much. The rise in suicide, too, is more pronounced among girls. Although the rate increased for both sexes, three times as many 12-to-14 year old girls killed themselves in 2015 as in 2007, compared with twice as many boys. The suicide rate is still higher for boys, in part because they use more-lethal methods, but girls are beginning to close the gap.

—Jean M. Twenge

Every conversation about gun deaths should begin by recognizing one blindingly clear fact about this problem—the United States is on its own planet. The gun death rate in the U.S. is 10 times that of other advanced industrial countries. Places such as Japan and South Korea have close to zero gun-related deaths in a year. The United States has around 30,000.

—Fareed Zakaria

States that have some of the highest percentages of gun ownership have some of the highest gun-related death rates (Alaska, Wyoming, Montana, Arkansas), and those with some of the lowest rates of gun ownership generally have the lowest gun-related death rates (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island).

—Fareed Zakaria

Connecticut passed a law in 1995 that made it harder to buy guns. In the following decade, the gun-related homicide rate was 40 percent lower than projected had the law not been passed, according to Johns Hopkins researchers. On the other hand, Missouri in 2007 made it much easier to buy a gun. Over the next five years, the gun-related homicide rate was 25 percent higher than projected.

—Fareed Zakaria

One of the main government agencies that sponsors research on public health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has been virtually forbidden by law from doing any research on gun violence and public policy for two decades. Buried in a 1996 law is a provision, championed by the National Rifle Association, that prohibits the CDC from funding research that might advocate or promote gun control. In America, in 2017, we essentially have a ban on scientific research that might lead to inconvenient conclusions.

—Fareed Zakaria

Birth Control?

BAN IT!

Abortion?

BAN IT!

Gay marriage?

BAN IT!

Guns?

Look, banning things never works.

People will find ways to get them.

—Internet Meme

When we protect guns more than we protect children, we become an uncivilized society.

—Internet Meme

‘Can I get 2 boxes of Sudafed?’

‘Sorry, by law you can only buy one at a time.’

‘Okay then, just the one box of Sudafed and these 7 guns.’

—Internet Meme

One failed attempt at a shoe bomb, and we all have to take our shoes off at the airport. 31 school shootings since Columbine and no change in the regulation of guns.

—John Oliver

I want any young men who buy a gun to be treated like young women who seek an abortion. Think about it: a mandatory 48-hours waiting period, written permission from a parent or a judge, a note from a doctor proving that he understands what he is about to do, time spent watching a video on individual and mass murders, traveling hundreds of miles at his own expense to the nearest gun shop, and walking through protestors holding photos of loved ones killed by guns, protestor who call him a murderer. After all, it makes more sense to do this for young men seeking guns than for young women seeking an abortion. No young woman needing reproductive freedom has ever murdered a roomful of strangers.

—Unknown

The 2nd Amendment was written 226 years ago.

Imagine trying to write laws today that govern weapons in the year 2243.

—Internet Meme

I don't believe gun owners have rights.

—Sarah Brady

Roughly 9 million people carried loaded handguns at least once a month, including 3 million who carried them every day. People who carry handguns at least once a month were disproportionately likely to be conservative men between the ages of 18 and 29 residing in Southern states.

—*American Journal of  
Public Health*

The animals prey upon each other because it is their nature to do so and because their lives depend upon it. Savages hunt because they must have food. We do not need to hunt, but, because of our higher intelligence, our hunting methods are far more destructive than are those of either animals or savages.

--Harold W. Fairbanks

When a man wantonly destroys a work of man we call him a vandal; when a man destroys one of the works of God, we call him a sportsman.

--Joseph Wood Krutch

How anyone can profess to find animal life interesting and yet take delight in reducing the wonder of any animal to a bloody mass of fur or feathers is beyond my comprehension.

--Joseph Wood Krutch

Were a miracle to produce in our woods some astounding orchid, a thousand hands would stretch out to tear it up, to destroy it. If the bluebird happens to fly past, every gun is sighted; and then people are amazed that it is rare!

--Andre Gide

The creatures that want to live a life of their own, we call wild. If wild, then no matter how harmless, we treat them as outlaws, and those of us who are specially well brought up shoot them for fun.

--Clarence Day

A sportsman is a man who, every now and then, simply has to get out and kill something. Not that he's cruel. He wouldn't hurt a fly. It's not big enough.

--Stephen Leacock

There can be no double standard. We cannot have peace among men whose hearts find delight in killing any living creature.

--Rachel Carson

I ask people why they have deer heads on their walls, and they say, 'Because it's such a beautiful animal.' There you go. Well, I think my mother's attractive, but I have photographs of her.

--Ellen DeGeneres

The fact of killing animals is not as frightening as our human tendency to justify it—to kill and not even be aware that we are taking life. It is sobering to realize that when you misuse one of the least of Nature's creatures, like the chicken, you are sowing the seeds for misusing the highest of Nature's creatures, man.

--Dick Gregory

People can't concentrate properly on blowing other people to pieces if their minds are poisoned by thoughts suitable to the twenty-fifth of December.

—Ogden Nash

There is nothing sane, merciful, heroic, devout, redemptive, wise, holy, loving, peaceful, joyous, righteous, gracious, remotely spiritual, or worthy of praise where mass murder is concerned. We have been in this world long enough to know that by now and to understand that nonviolent conflict resolution informed by mutual compassion is the far better option.

--Aberjhani

The amount of educational programming on television today is simply desensitizing. The only reason left to go to school is to see gun violence.

--Bauvard

To all the kids from the 'special' reading class back in high school (the one where you tried to form words using wooden blocks) -- PLEASE stop telling me that I can't blame an 'inanimate object' for the off-the-hook gun violence in this country. YES! ... I CAN!!! I blame all the 'inanimate objects' in Congress who refuse to pass sensible gun legislation because they're too chicken-shit to take on Wayne LaPierre and the gun lobby.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

Just a thought for all you God-fearin', gun-lovin', Bible-thumpin' 2nd Amendment patriots. If it turns out Heaven's a gun-free zone, what's plan B???

--Quentin R. Bufogle

I think we may have reached the point where guns need to be confiscated from police officers.

--Steven Magee

Universe, God, Higher Power, whatever you call it—let's all say something right now for every single innocent victim of gun violence.

--Rowan Blanchard

I can't be light about [gun violence] anymore because it's terrifying to see my friends too scared to leave the house because of all the shootings.

--Rowan Blanchard

Take a bunch of teenage boys from the whitest, safest suburb in America and plunk them down in a place where their friends are murdered and they are constantly attacked and threatened....Signal that no one cares, and fail to solve murders. Limit their options for escape. Then see what happens.

--Gary Younge

Forget 'pray the gay away.' I you're more turned on by an AR-15 than a pair of tits, time for some serious therapy. Time for all you gun-humpers to come out of the closet. Is this really about the 2nd Amendment and self-defense -- or just a pathetic fetish for guys with tiny pee-pees?"

--Quentin R. Bufogle

I had the vague notion that bearing arms was in poor taste. Unless you were terribly wealthy, hunting was for the brutish lower class, uncivilized country folk, primitive types, people who were dumb and callous and ugly. Violence was just another function of the body, no less unusual than sweating or vomiting. It sat on the same shelf as sexual intercourse. The two got mixed up quite often, it seemed.

--Ottessa Moshfegh

Surrender is no guarantee that an armed police officer will not shoot you.

--Steven Magee

The most dangerous thing in life is an incompetent that has been given a gun and a law enforcement badge.

--Steven Magee

Violence isn't a Democrat or Republican problem. It's an American problem, requiring an American solution.

--DaShanne Stokes

To be an American is to be accosted by bigotry and enmity for the rights that you were told to appreciate.

--Tennessee West

I reiterate my dedication to advocating for effective preventive strategies to end gun violence once and for all. In the face of the rising tensions and the widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons, we call on everyone to join us to build conditions that will make world peace more likely. We all know that the road to building peace goes through ending conflicts and silencing the guns.

--Widad Akreyi

Why ban guns? Let's give everyone rocket launchers! What could possibly go wrong?

--Oliver Markus Malloy

'Let them have guns' is as much a solution to mass murder and gun violence as 'Let them have drugs' is a solution to drug addiction.

--DaShanne Stokes

Before you're allowed to own a .44, your IQ should be higher than .44.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

The thought of just how inadequate the body's natural defenses —skull, bone, brain—were in the face of the advanced physics—lead, gun-powder, momentum—of invented death. It all seemed so absurd to him: that a life comprising so many accumulated years could be interrupted with such indifferent swiftness.

--Adam Sternbergh

Our love affair with guns has nothing to do with tyranny, or militias, or self-preservation. Just ask any NRA member the following: If Jesus Christ himself were to come down off the cross and grant you one wish, would you opt for a world without guns -- or the one we live in now? If every gun owner truly feared for their life and liberty, the answer would be obvious. But it's not about life and liberty. It's all about the sheer hard-on of owning a gun.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

To all my fellow Americans who simply insist on hangin' on to those guns ... Two things: 1) Enjoy 'em! 2) Please keep them hidden in a safe, secure place where the young 'uns can't get at 'em (I'd suggest the same place you keep the textbooks on evolution and global warming).

--Quentin R. Bufogle

Wanna know what a bullet feels like, Warren? A real one? It's not like in the comics...I think you need to. Feel it...It's not going to make a neat little hole. First - it'll obliterate your internal organs. Your lung will collapse, feels like drowning... When it finally hits your spine, it'll blow your central nervous system-...I'm talking. The pain will be unbearable, but you won't be able to move... A bullet usually travels faster than this, of course. But the dying? It seems like it takes forever. Something, isn't it? One tiny piece of metal destroys everything. It ripped her insides out... It took her light away. From me. From the world... And now the one person who should be here is gone - and a waste like you gets to live. A tiny piece of metal. Can you feel it now?

--Joss Whedon

If you're one of those delusional 2nd Amendment types who believes you and your trailer park 'militia' might need to take on the Army, the Navy, the 101st Airborne and SEAL Team 6; not only should you be denied the right to bear arms -- but the right to your belt & shoelaces as well ... 'cause you're stark, ravin' batshit!!!

--Quentin R. Bufogle

Firearms, if you think about it, are power tools. They drill holes in things and chew things up. That's their purpose. The purpose of the user is, quite simply, to puncture and destroy the right things and not the wrong things.

--Massad Ayoob

Guns kill far more quickly and efficiently than knives, or crossbows, or toenail clip-pers; and, unlike bombs, you don't need to build one in your basement -- they come ready-made! There's a reason why guns are the overwhelming weapon of choice among mass murderers.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

Every day in America is a day with a shooting.

--Bill Maher

The 2nd Amendment was written at the same convention where they decided slaves were only 3/5ths of a person, so maybe it's worth reexamining.

—Internet Meme

I remember a time when all I wanted was a gun and to learn how to use it. I thought a gun would make me feel safe. I thought a gun would make me feel powerful. But right now I just feel . . . heavy. Like I live in this world of death and destruction and I'll never escape alive.

--Paula Stokes

It takes a good guy with a gun, to stop a bad guy with a gun (unless the bad guy's a much better shot).

--Quentin R. Bufogle

A lot of the people who keep a gun at home for safety are the same ones who refuse to wear a seat belt.

—George Carlin

We don't have a gun problem; we have a math problem: ZERO GUNS = ZERO GUN-RELATED DEATHS.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

Guns give Evil a means to expression.

--Jonathan Heatt

Personally, I think we should remove the word 'shooting' from the vernacular. It's an ugly, biased word that somehow creates the assumption that a gun was involved. Let's go with 'Interpersonal Ballistic Event' (IBE).

--Quentin R. Bufogle

And then there's the gun itself. No man in his right mind will play with a gun. I've seen show-offs doing fancy spins and all that. No real gun-fighter ever did. With a hair-trigger, he'd be likely to blow a hole in his belly. The gun-fighter knows enough of guns to be wary of them. He treats them with respect. A pistol was never made for anything except killing, and a gunfighter never draws a gun unless to shoot, and he shoots to kill.

—Louis L'Amour

There is no more contemptible sound than a gunshot.

--Jonathan Heatt

You don't need no gun control, you know what you need? We need some bullet control. Men, we need to control the bullets, that's right. I think all bullets should cost five thousand dollars... five thousand dollars per bullet... You know why? Cause if a bullet cost five thousand dollars there would be no more innocent bystanders.

Yeah! Every time somebody get shot we'd say, 'Damn, he must have done something ... Shit, he's got fifty thousand dollars worth of bullets in his ass.' And people would think before they killed somebody if a bullet cost five thousand dollars. 'Man I would blow your fucking head off...if I could afford it.' 'I'm gonna get me another job, I'm going to start saving some money, and you're a dead man. You'd better hope I can't get no bullets on layaway.'

So even if you get shot by a stray bullet, you wouldn't have to go to no doctor to get it taken out. Whoever shot you would take their bullet back, like 'I believe you got my property.'

--Chris Rock

The rifle itself has no moral stature, since it has no will of its own. Naturally, it may be used by evil men for evil purposes, but there are more good men than evil, and while the latter cannot be persuaded to the path of righteousness by propaganda, they can certainly be corrected by good men with rifles.

--Jeff Cooper

If a responsible, mentally sound American wants to own an AR-15, that's their right. Besides, when the zombies come...okay, you don't like the zombie thing. When the Chinese invade our country, who do you want to depend on? The over-extended police force and the National Guard? Or the next door neighbor who's a former Marine and has enough guns and ammunition for your entire block?

--Aaron B. Powell

Guns are not the problem. The species is the problem.

--Forrest Carr

In my world, you don't get to call yourself 'pro-life' and be against common-sense gun control — like banning public access to the kind of semiautomatic assault rifle, designed for warfare, that was used recently in a Colorado theater. You don't get to call yourself 'pro-life' and want to shut down the Environmental Protection Agency, which ensures clean air and clean water, prevents childhood asthma, preserves biodiversity and combats climate change that could disrupt every life on the planet. You don't get to call yourself 'pro-life' and oppose programs like Head Start that provide basic education, health and nutrition for the most disadvantaged children...The term 'pro-life' should be a shorthand for respect for the sanctity of life. But I will not let that label apply to people for whom sanctity for life begins at conception and ends at birth. What about the rest of life? Respect for the sanctity of life, if you believe that it begins at conception, cannot end at birth.

--Thomas L. Friedman

He'd only ever seen a gun once, a smaller one on the hip of that old deputy, a gun he'd always figured was more for show. He stuffed a fistful of deadly rounds in his pocket, thinking how each one could end an individual life, and understanding why such things were forbidden. Killing a man should be harder than waving a length of pipe in their direction. It should take long enough for one's conscience to get in the way.

--Hugh Howey

1. So, disturbed kids are taking guns to school and killing teachers and classmates. We better make sure kids can't get guns.
2. So, disturbed kids are taking guns to school and killing teachers and classmates. We better find out what's making these kids want to kill, fix that, and then they won't want to use guns to kill teachers and classmates.

See what I did there? Which statement makes more sense? Don't bring up politics. Don't refer to statistical data. Don't nervously look at your cell phone. Just read the two statements and be honest with yourself. We can do better. We're smarter than this. WAKE UP.

--Aaron B. Powell

Guns make small men feel big.

--Oliver Gaspirtz

Dwayne's bad chemicals made him take a loaded thirty-eight caliber revolver from under his pillow and stick it in his mouth. This was a tool whose only purpose was to make holes in human beings. It looked like this:

In Dwayne's part of the planet, anybody who wanted one could get one down at his local hardware store. Policemen all had them. So did the criminals. So did the people caught in between.

Criminals would point guns at people and say, 'Give me all your money,' and the people usually would. And policemen would point their guns at criminals and say, 'Stop' or whatever the situation called for, and the criminals usually would. Sometimes they wouldn't. Sometimes a wife would get so mad at her husband that she would put a hole in him with a gun. Sometimes a husband would get so mad at his wife that he would put a hole in her. And so on.

In the same week Dwayne Hoover ran amok, a fourteen-year-old Midland City boy put holes in his mother and father because he didn't want to show them the bad report card he had brought home. His lawyer planned to enter a plea of temporary insanity, which meant that at the time of the shooting the boy was unable to distinguish the difference between right and wrong.

Sometimes people would put holes in famous people so they could be at least fairly famous, too. Sometimes people would get on airplanes which were supposed to fly to someplace, and they would offer to put holes in the pilot and co-pilot unless they flew the airplane to someplace else.

--Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

I reiterate my dedication to advocating for effective preventive strategies to end gun violence once and for all. In the face of the rising tensions and the widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons, we call on everyone to join us to build conditions that will make world peace more likely. We all know that the road to building peace goes through ending conflicts and silencing the guns.

--Widad Akreyi

## **SECOND AMENDMENT**

A 'well-regulated militia' means regulated by the government. We need prudent regulation for guns. Let's all accept that. We don't need anyone to have machine guns. We can wait a little while on a background check (but if you're white with a bowl cut, then you have to go to the back of the line, Preston). Support prudent legislation designed to keep other guns away from the mentally ill and criminal elements. If you're paranoid that all these laws are designed to take away your gun, then we're going to assume you're mentally ill or criminal. But now let's be clear: guns rock. Hunting is awesome. Keep your guns. But, like, we gotta regulate 'em, y'all. We have to.

--Trae Crowder

The more money you spend on guns, the less money you spend on people! More weapons, less happiness; more guns, more misery!

--Mehmet Murat ildan

When unspeakable violence is enacted upon innocents, say, in a school or movie theatre, and the survivors and the families of the victims, in the throes of pain and anguish, want to ask, 'Why did this happen?,' 'How did this happen?,' and 'What can we do to prevent this from happening again?,' and one of the areas they (still we) focus their scrutiny is that of the highly efficient weapons of warfare that are casually available to us citizens of the United States, then we frightened gun owners have the chance to be human and say, 'Okay, this is a horrible tragedy. Let's open up a conversation here.' Instead, I'm surmising, out of fear, we throw up our defenses and behave in a very confrontational way toward such a conversation, citing the Second Amendment as the ultimate protection of our rights, no matter how ridiculously murderous the firearm, which, unfortunately, makes us look like dicks.

--Nick Offerman

He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword. (Unless the other guy has a gun!)

--Quentin R. Bufogle

Guns kill far more quickly and efficiently than knives, or crossbows, or toenail clippers; and, unlike bombs, you don't need to build one in your basement—they come ready-made! There's a reason why guns are the overwhelming weapon of choice among mass murderers.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

The Constitution gives you the right, as a white man, to have a rifle in your home. The Constitution gives you the right to protect yourself. Why is it 'ominous' when black people even talk of having rifles? Why don't we have the right to self-defense? Is it because maybe you know we're going to have to defend ourselves against you?

--James Baldwin

Why do we still cling to the intellectually retarded notion that liberty can be obtained, maintained, or lost at the end of a gun barrel? When you're working 3 minimum wage jobs to make the minimum payment on a pair of socks you bought 12 years ago because your credit card company slapped you with an interest rate that would make a loan shark holler WTF! ... well, no one needs to hold a gun to your head. Your ass has already been sold down the river.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

Remember: Guns don't kill! -- The dimwits who insist EVERYONE should have the right to own 'em do!

--Quentin R. Bufogle

You can tell a lot about a woman's mood by just looking at her hands... for instance, if she's holding a gun, she's probably angry.

--Roney Ngala

GUNS ARE NOT THE ISSUE. WE ARE.

--Aaron B. Powell

Our love affair with guns has nothing to do with tyranny, or militias, or self-preservation. Just ask any NRA member the following: If Jesus Christ himself were to come down off the cross and grant you one wish, would you opt for a world without guns -- or the one we live in now? If every gun owner truly feared for their life and liberty, the answer would be obvious. But it's not about life and liberty. It's all about the sheer hard-on of owning a gun.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

We need to take a harder look at what's really going on. Stop trying to treat the symptoms and treat the cause of the problem. Maybe we should try a little harder to help these kids before they feel so cornered that they turn into monsters.

--Aaron B. Powell

These kids spend a majority of their time in school, and if they're not having a positive experience, they can become depressed. In some cases, they lash out, grabbing whatever weapon is available to them. It can be an assault rifle, a knife, a Molotov cocktail, poison, Indian burns or MMA. But if you take one weapon away, these kids are just going to grab the next thing available to them. Maybe they will use a gun with a smaller clip, limiting the amount of lives they can take. Or maybe they'll get more creative, and think of something far more terrible. So taking a weapon away won't really solve anything, and this is my point here.

--Aaron B. Powell

New Rule: Gun-control people have to stop pressuring Starbucks to ban guns. I want my gun nuts overcaffeinated, twitchy, and accident-prone. That way, the problem will take care of itself. Plus, if just one gun nut kills just one pseudo-intellectual writing a screenplay-slash-graphic-novel on his iPad, natural selection is doing its job.

--Bill Maher

Speaking personally, you can have my gun, but you'll take my book when you pry my cold, dead fingers off of the binding.

--Stephen King

The fascination of shooting as a sport depends almost wholly on whether you are at the right or wrong end of the gun.

—P. G. Wodehouse

It's very dramatic when two people come together to work something out. It's easy to take a gun and annihilate your opposition, but what is really exciting to me is to see people with differing views come together and finally respect each other.

--Fred Rogers

I'll carry on, carry over, carry forward, Cary Grant, cash and carry, carry me back to Old Virginia, I'll even 'hari-kari' if you show me how, but I will not carry a gun!

--Alan Alda

I used to think it was possible for an artist to alter the inner life of the culture. Now bomb-makers and gunmen have taken that territory.

--Don DeLillo

We will never eliminate all murder—that's been with us since Cain killed Abel. But we CAN join the community of enlightened nations where gun violence is that rare occurrence—as opposed to the daily tragedy we now suffer from here in the United States of America.

—Michael Moore

We are not a country of gun nuts. 77 percent of all Americans do NOT own a gun! So that majority can also decide they have no need for an archaic amendment that allows retired accountants to own 47 assault weapons. LET'S ORGANIZE THE 77 PERCENT!

—Michael Moore

Semi-automatics have only two purposes. One is so owners can take them to the shooting range once in awhile, yell yeehaw, and get all horny at the rapid fire and the burning vapor spurting from the end of the barrel. Their other use – their only other use – is to kill people.

--Stephen King

Take a little thought experiment. Imagine all the rampage school shooters in Littleton, Colorado; Pearl, Mississippi; Paducah, Kentucky; Springfield, Oregon; and Jonesboro, Arkansas; now imagine they were black girls from poor families who lived instead in Chicago, New Haven, Newark, Philadelphia, or Providence. Can you picture the national debate, the headlines, the hand-wringing? There is no doubt we'd be having a national debate about inner-city poor black girls. The entire focus would be on race, class, and gender. The media would doubtless invent a new term for their behavior, as with wilding two decades ago. We'd hear about the culture of poverty, about how living in the city breeds crime and violence. We'd hear some pundits proclaim some putative natural tendency among blacks toward violence. Someone would likely even blame feminism for causing girls to become violent in a vain imitation of boys.

Yet the obvious fact that virtually all the rampage school shooters were middle-class white boys barely broke a ripple in the torrent of public discussion. This uniformity cut across all other differences among the shooters: some came from intact families, others from single-parent homes; some boys had acted violently in the past, and others were quiet and unassuming; some boys also expressed rage at their parents (two killed their parents the same morning), and others seemed to live in happy families.

--Michael S. Kimmel

While you may be able to keep your son Jimmy from owning [a gun], if you try to talk him out of wanting one, you are up against a pretty strong argument: You mean I shouldn't want a device that grants me power and identity, makes me feel dangerous and safe at the same time, instantly makes me the dominant male, and connects me to my evolutionary essence? Come on, Mom, get real!

--Gavin de Becker

When a lady accessorizes in here in Texas, she's selecting caliber, not color.

--Ron Brackin

Too many of us treat guns with genial familiarity. Guns should give us the heebie-jeebies. They are killing machines. That is all they are. We should dread them the way we dread cancer and cyanide and electric chairs.

--Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

Under Florida's 'stand your ground' law, it is legal to shoot anybody for any reason as long as you are standing on the ground.

--Dave Barry

I wasn't aware that when people are showing you guns, they're not threatening you, it's like they're showing you their art collection.

—John Lydon

Only a few days after my encounter with the police, two patrolmen tackled Alton Sterling onto a car, then pinned him down on the ground and shot him in the chest while he was selling CDs in front of a convenience store, seventy-five miles up the road in Baton Rouge. A day after that, Philando Castile was shot in the passenger seat of his car during a police traffic stop in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, as his girlfriend recorded the aftermath via Facebook Live.

Then, the day after Castile was killed, five policemen were shot dead by a sniper in Dallas. It felt as if the world was subsumed by cascades of unceasing despair. I mourned for the family and friends of Sterling and Castille. I felt deep sympathy for the families of the policemen who died. I also felt a real fear that, as a result of what took place in Dallas, law enforcement would become more deeply entrenched in their biases against black men, leading to the possibility of even more violence.

The stream of names of those who have been killed at the hands of the police feels endless, and I become overwhelmed when I consider all the names we do not know—all of those who lost their lives and had no camera there to capture it, nothing to corroborate police reports that named them as threats. Closed cases. I watch the collective mourning transpire across my social-media feeds. I watch as people declare that they cannot get out of bed, cannot bear to go to work, cannot function as a human being is meant to function. This sense of anxiety is something I have become unsettlingly accustomed to. The familiar knot in my stomach. The tightness in my chest. But becoming accustomed to something does not mean that it does not take a toll. Systemic racism always takes a toll, whether it be by bullet or by blood clot.

--Clint Smith

The very worst strategy is to try to hide a gun. Children are remarkably adept at finding things that Mom and Dad don't want them to find, and burglars make their living by doing so. No matter how well hidden you think it is, a gun that's not secured is an accident or crime waiting to happen. If they're not on you, lock 'em up.

--Grant Cunningham

Be careful out there. There are things that go bump in the night. Actually, there are things that go 'Give me your wallet or I'll kill you' in the night.

—John Larroquette

The people most reluctant to use weapons are the ones who can best be trusted with them.

--Christopher L. Bennett

If you need a gun to do it with, you aren't doing it right.

--James Hickey

I am not anti-gun. I'm pro-knife. Consider the merits of the knife. In the first place, you have to catch up with someone in order to stab him. A general substitution of knives for guns would promote physical fitness. We'd turn into a whole nation of great runners. Plus, knives don't ricochet. And people are seldom killed while cleaning their knives.

--Molly Ivins

A coward's gun is emptied when fear pulls the trigger, and hate is the ammunition of choice.

—T. F. Hodge

Let us have it plain: my society is comprised of metal-worshipers. They pray to metal, are owned by metal, and metal uses them; it shoots them, it stabs them. I witness its sycophants, grave zombies, moved about humorlessly as its agents. My minions are spiritually rapt as the ages climax in gunpowder. One notes that, upon first being handed a rifle—by Burton or Speke?—a chieftain blithely shot one of his own lackeys, expressing radiant joy as the man tumbled dead. Do not stop there, happy Klansman, but watch with me early in the morning as I come in from work: across the street here in the clean 'burbs' your white policeman goes reverently to his car with a deer rifle coddled in his right arm like a precocious, beautiful child. This man lives with a pistol on his hip all week, but that is not enough, no, he is devout and it is the Christmas season. His own cowardice, affirmed by the use of guns, would not occur to him any more than the cowardice of God. The gun lobby, oh my peaceful friends, you may hate, but first you had better understand that it is a religion, only secondarily connected to the *Bill of Rights*. The thick-headed, sometimes even close to tearful, gaze you get when chatting with one of its partisans emanates from the view that they're holding a piece of God. There is no persuading them otherwise, even by a genius, because a life without guns implies the end of the known world to them. Any connection they make to our 'pioneer past' is also a fraud, a wistful apology. Folks love a gun for what it can do. A murderer always thinks it was an accident, he says, as if a religious episode had passed over him.

--Barry Hannah

‘Guns don’t kill people. People kill people.’  
‘But guns make it so much easier.’

— Jonathan L. Howard

A country which prefers guns to flowers will live the beauty of the flowers only in its graveyards!

--Mehmet Murat ildan

It’s a cruel fact of war that it takes little more than applying pressure to one finger to end another person’s life. More than that, it’s a cruel fact of life that we are hardwired to follow the crowd in a moment of panic.

--Trevor D. Richardson

There is no sound in nature that makes men move along faster than the pumping of a shotgun.

—C. J. Box

Guns are like thermometers, only instead of measuring body temperatures they measure our fear.

--Jean Zimmerman

I never bought into the whole ‘second amendment’ argument as it relates to the 21st century. Originally, it was put into place for the simple reason that our forefathers were fighting or had just fought off a government that threatened them with weapons. If those in the revolution had no weapons, there would be no United States of America, but rather New England of the New World. So, I understood why they thought it was so important.

--Martin Manley

You can’t sit down in a bachelor’s house without getting sick with cooties from the dirt and built-up grime, but you can eat off the barrel of his gun.

--Deb Baker

I keep hearing this fucking thing that guns don’t kill people, but people kill people. If that’s the case, why do we give people guns when they go to war? Why not just send the people?

--Ozzy Osbourne

In light of all the gun violence in the USA, I’d prefer my democracy unleaded.

--Jayseth Guberman

I don't think there is any mystery to understanding the passionate feelings people have for guns. Nobody really believes it's about maintaining a militia. It's about having possession of a tool that makes a person feel powerful nearly to the point of exaltation.

--Alec Wilkinson

Why do these dumb fucks keep guns around the house? They make the world as ruinous as they imagine it is.

--Esmé Raji Codell

One of the arguments that authoritarian governments use to ward off the call for greater political freedom is to argue that American-style democracy is no guarantee of good policy.... Over the years, I've grown used to these arguments, and my response has rarely wavered: Sure, we might make dumb choices sometimes, but we will defend, to the end, the right to make choices at all, because we believe that our collective conscience, freely expressed, will eventually lead us in the right direction. When it comes to guns, it is getting harder to muster that argument abroad. Every new shooting, every new failure of will and citizenship, slashes another hole in our credibility as a way of life.

--Evan Osnos

To end the crisis [of gun violence], we have to regulate -or, in the case of handguns and assault weapons, completely ban -the product. We are far past the [point] where registration, licensing, safety training, background checks, or waiting periods will have much effect on firearms violence.

--Josh Sugarmann

Homicide through gun violence is the leading cause of death among young African American males in the United States. If people look a certain way, they have a higher tendency of dying, of having their lives taken away.

--Ryan Coogler

Fear, physical pain, and death are just part of the price Americans pay for the easy access of handguns. It is estimated that the total costs to Americans of gun violence (the vast majority of which involves handguns) is measured in tens of billions of dollars. In comparison, the wholesale value of the 1.3 million handguns manufactured in American in 1998 totaled only \$370 million.

--Josh Sugarmann

Gun violence is real. People don't come back.

--Stevie Wonder

As a former District Attorney and Attorney General, I know the urgency of providing safe homes, schools and neighborhoods for all. This remarkable tour-de-force is a powerful study of one promising solution: a data-rich, eminently readable demonstration of why we should treat gun violence as an American epidemic.

--Scott Harshbarger

[T]he enshrinement of constitutional rights necessarily takes certain policy choices off the table.... Undoubtedly some think that the Second Amendment is outmoded in a society where our standing army is the pride of our Nation, where well-trained police forces provide personal security, and where gun violence is a serious problem. That is perhaps debatable, but what is not debatable is that it is not the role of this Court to pronounce the Second Amendment extinct.

--Antonin Scalia

We have to go to war against the people who enable the gun violence, the people who stop us from keeping guns out of the hands of mentally unstable people, of felons, and that means the NRA leadership.

--Jerrold Nadler

Only with gun violence do we respond to repeated tragedies by saying that mourning is acceptable but discussing how to prevent more tragedies is not. But that's unacceptable. As others have observed, talking about how to stop mass shootings in the aftermath of a string of mass shootings isn't 'too soon.' It's much too late.

--Ezra Klein

Making improvements to our background check system and cracking down on illegal gun trafficking are common-sense ways to prevent violence without punishing law abiding gun owners. We owe it to the American people to take real action to reduce gun violence in our communities.

--Martin Heinrich

I do not accept that we cannot find a common sense way to preserve our traditions, including our basic second amendment freedoms and the rights of law abiding gun owners, while at the same time reducing the gun violence that unleashes so much mayhem on a regular basis.

--Barack Obama

When you carry a gun, you mean to harm somebody, kill somebody.

—Bill Cosby

It's hard for me to imagine why Congress wasn't inspired into action in the face of 20 first graders lying dead in their classrooms in Sandy Hook. But I think the anti-gun violence movement was essentially asleep from 1994 to 2012, and during that time, the gun groups built a political juggernaut.

—Senator Chris Murphy

Terrifying mass shooting and high-profile officer-involved incidents have dominated the national conversation on gun violence in recent years. But most deaths by gun are not headline-grabbing massacres. They're more private, more intimate, and perhaps in that way, even more horrifying. Domestic violence, make no mistake, domestic violence is a gun issue.

--Melissa Harris-Perry

There are no free and democratic and wealthy countries in the world that have our rate of gun violence. We have to worry about loners and alienated people. We have to do better on mental health.

--David Brooks

We will not make inroads into the gun-violence problem until we acknowledge the underlying causes of youth behavior today, compared to yesterday. We must come to the realization that laws and regulations alone cannot produce a civilized society. It's morality that is society's first line of defense against uncivilized behavior.

--Walter E. Williams

Gun violence is not something that appears just in a bad neighborhood or in another part of the world. It appears right here, right outside your door.

--Stephen Young

Citizenship means standing up for the lives that gun violence steals from us each day. I have seen the courage of parents, students, pastors, and police officers all over this country who say 'we are not afraid,' and I intend to keep trying, with or without Congress, to help stop more tragedies from visiting innocent Americans in our movie theaters, shopping malls, or schools like Sandy Hook.

--Barack Obama

The guns and the bombs, the rockets and the warships, are all symbols of human failure.

—Lyndon B. Johnson

The problem is not the availability of guns, it is the availability of morons.

—Antonio Meloni

Yes, people pull the trigger but guns are the instrument of death. Gun control is necessary, and delay means more death and horror.

—Eliot Spitzer

When a person has a gun, sometimes their mind clicks that this thing will win arguments and straighten people out.

—Bill Cosby

That rifle on the wall of the labourer's cottage or working class flat is the symbol of democracy. It is our job to see that it stays there.

—George Orwell

We're a nation that believes in the Second Amendment, and I believe in the Second Amendment. We've got a long tradition of hunting and sportsmen and people who want to make sure they can protect themselves. My belief is that we have to enforce the laws we've already got, make sure that we're keeping guns out of the hands of criminals, those who are mentally ill. We've done a much better job in terms of background checks, but we've got more to do when it comes to enforcement. But weapons that were designed for soldiers in war theaters don't belong on our streets. Part of it is seeing if we can get an assault weapons ban reintroduced. But part of it is also looking at other sources of the violence. Because frankly, in my home town of Chicago, there's an awful lot of violence and they're not using AK-47s. They're using cheap hand guns.

—Barack Obama

It has been two months since Newtown. This is not the first time this country has debated how to reduce gun violence. But this time is different. Overwhelming majorities of Americans — Americans who believe in the Second Amendment — have come together around common-sense reform -- like background checks that will make it harder for criminals to get their hands on a gun. Senators of both parties are working together on tough new laws to prevent anyone from buying guns for resale to criminals. Police chiefs are asking our help to get weapons of war and massive ammunition magazines off our streets. Each of these proposals deserves a vote in Congress. If you want to vote no, that's your choice. But these proposals deserve a vote. Because in the two months since Newtown, more than a thousand birthdays, graduations, and anniversaries have been stolen from our lives by a bullet from a gun. Gabby Giffords deserves a vote. The families of Newtown deserve a vote. The families of Aurora deserve a vote.

—Barack Obama

We can provide common-sense approaches to the issue of illegal guns that are ending up on the streets. We can make sure that criminals don't have guns in their hands. We can make certain that those who are mentally deranged are not getting a hold of handguns. We can trace guns that have been used in crimes to unscrupulous gun dealers that may be selling to straw purchasers and dumping them on the streets.

—Barack Obama

My biggest frustration so far is the fact that this society has not been willing to take some basic steps to keep guns out of the hands of people who can do just unbelievable damage. We're the only developed country on Earth where this happens. ... And it happens once a week. And it's a one-day story. ... The country has to do some soul-searching on this.

—Barack Obama

The United States does not have a monopoly on crazy people. It's not the only country that has psychosis. And yet we kill each other in these mass shootings at rates that are exponentially higher than anyone else. Well, what's the difference? The difference is that these guys can stack up a bunch of ammunition in their houses, and that's sort of par for the course.

—Barack Obama

Honestly, this is not going to change unless the people who want to prevent these kinds of mass shootings from taking place feel at least as passionate, at least as mobilized and well-funded as the NRA and the gun manufacturers are because the politics in Congress are such where even members of Congress who know better are fearful if they vote their conscience and support common sense measures like background checks, they're worried they're going to lose.

—Barack Obama

[Handguns] For target shooting, that's okay. Get a license and go to the range. For defense of the home, that's why we have police.

— Jim Brady

I read a jaw-dropping online defense of these weapons from a California woman recently. Guns, she said, are just tools. Like spoons, she said. Would you outlaw spoons simply because some people use them to eat too much?

Lady let's see you try to kill twenty school kids with a spoon.

—Stephen King

The Second Amendment has no place in modern society.

— Alan M. Dershowitz

The paralysis you feel right now – the impotent helplessness that washes over you as news of another mass slaughter scrolls across the television screen – isn't real. It's a fiction created and methodically cultivated by the gun lobby, designed to assure that no laws are passed to make America safer, because those laws would cut into their profits.

—Senator Chris Murphy

The world is a harrowing place and sometimes you just don't know what to say about it. You want to do something, but nothing gets done. No one does anything. And that seems insane. And it can make you feel hopeless. Now, I don't know what to do, but I know that hopelessness is not the answer. You cannot give up in the face of evil.

Now, this hopelessness, this powerlessness you feel when nothing gets done is something, as I said, we can't give into 'cause I actually think that there are some people out there — some truly evil people out there — who want you to feel powerless, just for a buck. Because if you feel powerless enough, you know what might make you feel more powerful? Going to buy a gun.

It's a vicious cycle. Violence happens, nothing gets done to get rid of the guns, and people buy more guns to protect themselves and now there are just more guns out on the street.

Get the power back. You can go vote. Vote for someone who will do something.

—Stephen Colbert

According to the *Gun Violence Archive* (GVA), a nonprofit website that scours more than 1,200 sources to track gun deaths and injuries in the United States, there have been more than 50,000 incidents of gun violence in 2015.

The numbers include everything from homicides and multiple-victim gang assaults to incidents of self-defense and accidental shootings. The organization's records show that more than 12,000 people have been killed with guns this year, but what its numbers do not record — because of government reporting practices — is a massive hole in the data: the nearly 20,000 Americans who end their lives with a gun each year. Nor does its already high injury tally capture the full extent of the victims who continue life with debilitating wounds and crushing medical bills.

When the federal statistics for 2015 are released two years from now, the government's models will show tens of thousands more gun-related injuries.

—Jennifer Mascia

‘No way to prevent this!’—Says the only nation where this happens.

—Internet Meme

Children younger than 3 have gotten their hands on guns and shot someone at least 59 times this year, a disturbing trend first reported by Christopher Ingraham in the *Washington Post* in October. Most often, these toddlers wound or kill themselves, but more than a dozen have shot other people, sometimes fatally. Gun violence prevention advocates say that gun storage requirements and the adoption of smart guns that only fire for their owners could reduce these deaths, but the gun lobby vehemently opposes such suggestions. In November, after the *Post’s* report, 20 Democrats in the U.S. Senate asked the *Government Accountability Office* to issue a report on the safe storage of guns in American homes.

—Jennifer Mascia

This enduring statistic from a decade-old report issued by California’s attorney general emphasizes just how dangerous it is to introduce firearms into a turbulent relationship. In no state is that more pronounced than in South Carolina, which ranks first in the rate of women killed by men — a rate that is more than twice the national average. After several frustrated starts, South Carolina passed legislation this year limiting firearms access for domestic abusers — along with Alabama, Delaware, Maine, Oregon, and Vermont. But 17 states still do not have their own equivalent of a federal law banning criminal domestic misdemeanants from possessing guns, according to the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. In one of those states, Georgia, Vanessa Soyer was gunned down in front of her 13-year-old son in their Lawrenceville apartment on November 16. A mother of four, the Harlem-bred Soyer, 47, authored a book about domestic violence. Her husband of 15 years, from whom she was separating, was arrested for the killing. ‘Nobody would’ve ever thought that the words from the pages of her books would become her reality,’ her GoFundMe page reads.

—Jennifer Mascia

An assassin is just a serial killer who takes requests.

—Internet Meme

A ProPublica article in November noted that half of American gun death victims are men of color in ‘poor, segregated neighborhoods that have little political clout.’ Timothy Heaphy, a former U.S. Attorney in Virginia, says this is precisely why such killings don’t capture the public’s attention. ‘I don’t think we care about African-American lives as much as we care about white lives,’ he said.

—Burt Constable

It's always 'too soon' to talk about gun violence in the United States, but it's not too soon to mix guns and Christmas. Walmart sells Christmas tree lights made to look like red and green shotgun shells. Online shoppers can buy Christmas ornaments made from real bullet casings. Maybe that was funny a generation ago, but incorporating guns into the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth seems in poor taste for a nation mourning 26 Christians shot to death while peacefully worshipping with their thoughts and prayers at a Texas church.

In this season of peace and love, one online gift suggestion is a T-shirt sold on Amazon that features the image of a pistol and the words, 'If Jesus had a gun, he'd be alive today.' Another sports a 'Guns don't kill people. I kill people' message....A 'Freeze!' ice-cube tray produces cubes in the shape of a gun and urges users to 'pop a cap in your glass.' A mold lets you cook an egg in the shape of an AK-47. The cylinder from a six-shooter can be bought as a pencil holder to store a 'bolt-action' pen. You can get your kid's name on a plaque where each letter is made from guns and ammunition belts, or buy that wooden puzzle game popular at Cracker Barrel, but with bullet casings replacing golf tees.

Plenty of places sell alarm clocks that shut off when you shoot them with a laser gun. If you don't love the smell of napalm in the morning, you can buy candles that smell like gunpowder. You can gaze out the window at a garden gnome brandishing an AK-47 as you drink coffee from a gun-shaped mug that makes it look as if you are holding a gun to your head every time you take a sip.

—Burt Constable

Even though I am sort of A Tough Guy, I am crying because All the Senseless Violence.

—Mr. T

The number of Americans injured with firearms dwarfs the number who are killed, although data to measure non-fatal shootings are less reliable. The CDC's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System estimates the number of annual non-fatal firearm injuries based on reports from a sample of hospital emergency departments: over the last five years, there were more than 200 non-fatal firearm injuries each day.

—*everytownresearch.org*.  
(2015)

In an average month, 50 women are shot to death by intimate partners in the U.S. And more than half of all women killed by intimate partners in the U.S. are killed with guns.

—*everytownresearch.org.*  
(2015)

Gun violence in the United States is a major national concern that results in tens of thousands of deaths and injuries annually. In 2013, there were 73,505 nonfatal firearm injuries (23.2 injuries per 100,000 U.S. citizens), and 33,636 deaths due to ‘injury by firearms’ (10.6 deaths per 100,000 U.S. citizens). These deaths consisted of 11,208 homicides, 21,175 suicides, 505 deaths due to accidental or negligent discharge of a firearm, and 281 deaths due to firearms use with ‘undetermined intent’. Of the 2,596,993 total deaths in the US in 2013, 1.3% were related to firearms. The ownership and control of guns are among the most widely debated issues in the country.

In 2010, 67% of all homicides in the U.S. were committed using a firearm. In 2012, there were 8,855 total firearm-related homicides in the US, with 6,371 of those attributed to handguns. In 2012, 64% of all gun-related deaths in the U.S. were suicides. In 2010, there were 19,392 firearm-related suicides, and 11,078 firearm-related homicides in the U.S. In 2010, 358 murders were reported involving a rifle while 6,009 were reported involving a handgun; another 1,939 were reported with an unspecified type of firearm.

Firearms were used to kill 13,286 people in the U.S. in 2015, excluding suicide. Approximately 1.4 million people have been killed using firearms in the U.S. between 1968 and 2011, equivalent to a top 10 largest U.S. city in 2016, falling between the populations of San Antonio and Dallas, Texas.

—*Wikipedia*

Black men are 14 times more likely than non-hispanic white men to be shot and killed with guns.

Black Americans make up 14 percent of the U.S. population but are victims of more than half of all gun homicides.

—*everytownresearch.org.*  
(2015)

Mass shootings: There were 372 mass shootings in the US in 2015, killing 475 people and wounding 1,870, according to the *Mass Shooting Tracker*, which catalogues such incidents. A mass shooting is defined as a single shooting incident which kills or injures four or more people, including the assailant.

--*Mass Shooting Tracker*

School shootings: There were 64 school shootings in 2015, according to a dedicated campaign group set up in the wake of the Sandy Hook elementary school massacre in Connecticut in 2012. Those figures include occasions when a gun was fired but no-one was hurt.

—*everytownresearch.org*.  
(2015)

**Daniel Mauser, 15.**

April 20, 1999 started off like any regular school day at Columbine High School in a small town in Colorado.

Students attended classes, talked with each other in the hallways and went about their usual business, including Daniel, an active member on the school's debate team.

That all changed when two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, walked into the library and opened fire into a crowd of their peers. The scene in library could be described as nothing short of a war zone with students climbing under and over desks and tables to avoid the bullets. Students cried out in fear for their lives as the killers moved through the room taunting and shooting at them.

When the shooting spree ended, Daniel and 12 other people were dead, and 24 were injured.

The killers bought three of the four weapons they used through a straw purchaser at a gun show where background checks are not required prior to purchase. The straw purchaser, Robyn Anderson, purchased guns from an unlicensed seller. The three weapons Anderson bought included a semiautomatic assault rifle and two shotguns.

The killers also had an assault pistol, also purchased at a gun show. Anderson later testified that she would not have bought the weapons if the unlicensed seller had required she go through a background check.

—*bradycampaign.org*

**Jitka Vesel, 36.**

On the evening of April 13, 2011, Jitka was volunteering at a small museum in a quiet Chicago suburb. She loved being part of the museum's close community, and the community adored her.

Jitka was alone in the museum parking lot when Dmitry Smirnov, a man who was obsessed with her, ambushed her with a .40-caliber handgun.

Dmitry lived in Vancouver, British Columbia. Unbeknownst to Jitka, he had been in town for two weeks and was stalking her. He had come to kill her.

Smirnov couldn't legally buy a handgun, so he exploited a gaping hole in our gun laws that allowed him to go online and buy gun without first having to pass a background check. He logged on to *Armslist.com*, found a .40-caliber Smith & Wesson,

and arranged a meeting in a casino parking lot with Benedict Ladera, an unlicensed seller who had posted over 20 guns for sale on *Armslist*.

As Ladera was not a licensed gun seller, he did not conduct a Brady background check on his customers. If one had been performed, it would have probably taken less than 60 seconds. And Smirnov—a Canadian national—would not have been able to purchase the gun.

Benedict Ladera knew it was illegal to sell his gun to Jitka's killer. But for an extra \$200 cash, he agreed to look the other way. During sentencing, he would later tell the court, 'I didn't mean for it to happen. My mistake was the reason a life was lost.'

—*bradycampaign.org*

### **Ricky Byrdsong, 43.**

Friday, July 2, 1999 began what promised to be a beautiful holiday weekend in the idyllic town of Skokie, Illinois. Unfortunately, that was the day 21-year-old white supremacist Benjamin Nathaniel Smith began a three-day, two-state killing spree, targeting African-Americans, Jews and Asians—who he viewed as 'Mud People,' according to the demented, racist 'Church' that he followed.

Smith's carefully planned acts of violence all depended on his access to weaponry. At first, he didn't have much luck. He tried to buy two handguns and a shotgun from a licensed dealer but through the Brady law-mandated background check, it was discovered that he was prohibited, as Smith's ex-girlfriend had taken out a protection order on him. The dealer turned Smith away without a gun.

But Smith was able to turn to classified ads in the local paper, where he found Donald R. Fiessinger, an unlicensed seller in central Illinois who was willing to sell him two pistols with no background check.

Armed with two guns and fueled by racial hatred, Smith began his rampage by wounding nine Orthodox Jews in drive-by shootings in the West Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago. He then drove to the Byrdsong family's Skokie neighborhood.

'About a block from our house, I saw a blue car turn,' remembers Kelley Byrdsong, then only ten years old. Kelley was on her bicycle . . . her brother, Ricky Jr., was on his skateboard. Her father—an athletic man who was the former head basketball coach at Northwestern University—was jogging alongside.

Then Benjamin Nathaniel Smith began shooting from the window of his Ford Taurus.

Just three blocks from his home, Byrdsong fell to the ground—shot in the back in front of his children. He died four hours later on the operating table at Evanston Hospital.

His assassin was just getting started. He shot an African-American minister, an Asian-American graduate student, and killed Won-Joon Yoon, a 26 year-old Korean doctoral student walking to church on his Indiana University campus. By the end of

a weekend that would culminate in his own suicide, Smith left two dead—along with eight wounded.

‘Why do we continue to allow this to go on?’ asked Ricky’s widow, Sherialyn Byrdsong, Ricky’s widow, who now speaks out regularly against gun violence and for background checks on all gun sales. ‘If the powers that be really wanted to stop the access to guns that are out there for anyone to get, they could.’

—*bradycampaign.org*

### **Markie, 3**

One June day, I left work a little later than expected. This made me a few minutes late to pick up my 3-year-old son from his regular babysitter’s house outside St. Louis.

It was during those minutes that the babysitter’s 11-year-old child found a gun in a closet. Markie, my son, entered the room, surprising the boy with the gun. The gun went off. He never meant to shoot Markie.

Today, I tell all parents to ask a simple question that can help prevent unintentional shootings like the one that has changed my life:

‘Is there an unlocked gun in the homes where my child plays?’

There’s no way to describe the pain of losing a child and the effects of Markie’s death – not just on my family, but also on the family of the boy who shot my son.

My hope is to prevent other families from feeling the same pain and heartache.

That is why I support the ASKing Saves Kids Campaign. The campaign encourages parents to ask about guns in the home before sending their children over to play.

Parenting is a constant juggling act, and we can always share extra tips and information to help keep our children safe.

And while I know many parents might find it hard to start this conversation, it’s a conversation that can save lives.

I encourage you to pledge to ASK, and to make sure your friends and neighbors do too.

—*bradycampaign.org*

### **Emily, 21**

**Emily Elizabeth Marks.** That was my youngest child’s name. You can read it silently or say it out loud, but please do not forget her name.

Emily was born on August 23rd, 1991. She had her father’s brown eyes and his bright, optimistic smile. From me she got her quirky sense of humor and a total inability to understand cruelty of any kind.

I, like most mothers, believed that all three of my children were special. They were gifted and bright—never average. In each of their own ways they were just that, special.

We made the move out to the suburbs when Emily was two. I found a house on a nice, quiet street. It had a big yard, separate bedrooms for each child, and good schools. Most of all though, it was safe. An idyllic home set far away from the dangers of the big city, or so I thought.

For many years that house was a happy place. My children seemed to thrive there. During Christmas the entire street glowed and Halloween was always an event. Countless costumed kids crossed our door step each year.

Emily, bright and beautiful, danced and laughed through her childhood. She was my happy, silly little sprite.

Like most, her teenage years were a roller coaster. She made friends and lost them. She was disorganized, messy, silly, kind and always smiling. She gained weight and she lost it. Her hair went from blond, to black, to pink, to green and back to blond again. She was a nonconformist—listening to different music and wearing different clothes than everyone else.

I was proud of her. But slowly the darkness began to creep in. She spent more time in her room with her computer, reading. When Emily emerged she was sometimes solemn one minute, then giggling the next. I chalked it up to adolescence. This too would pass.

She went to college, made friends, got a new boyfriend, told us how great life was, and flunked all of her classes.

Emily soon moved to Philadelphia with her beloved boyfriend, Ben. It was there that she tried to take her life for the first time. When we arrived at the hospital she was a mess—unkempt, quiet, and distant. She told the doctors that she didn't mean it, that she was embarrassed and would never do it again. She was released and came home.

Back in Pittsburgh she saw a psychiatrist and a therapist whilst on medication. It seemed to work. The darkness rolled back and turned to twilight. Emily was safe at home.

I never knew where my husband kept his guns. We never talked about them. He is a kind and gentle man who would sometimes go target shooting with his buddies. It was a guy thing.

The morning of April 27th, 2012 was like any other; I awoke for work early and got ready for the day. Emily came downstairs to see me off. She was finishing her first semester at a local college and cramming for finals. We were in the midst of planning a trip to Philadelphia to visit my older daughter and, of course, Ben.

Emily scooped up our new puppy and, with a crooked, introspective smile, wished me goodbye.

When I returned home from work I found her in that big backyard. She looked like a pile of rags. She was wearing one shoe, her favorite jeans, and an old sweater. I remember the stillness and the smell of the blood. I called 911, knowing it was too late.

The police found the gun beside her. When they told me Emily had shot herself I could not believe it; there had to be a mistake.

She didn't even know how to use a gun—her father's was always locked away. This was a nice house in the suburbs. We did not use guns here.

In her room we found her books laid out on her bed, along with her neat class notes and laptop.

The search history on Emily's computer revealed that at three in the morning she had been researching how to use a gun for suicide. There on the web she found step by step instructions. The sites told her how to fire the gun and where to place it to ensure a fatal shot. They even showed her what someone looks like after they have shot themselves in the head.

She had left no suicide note. There was no message of how horrible her life had been or that the world would be better off with out her.

Instead I found, on the last page of a notebook and in Emily's neat handwriting, these words:

'A star is born, it grows and when it dies it becomes energy pure white light'.

This was my bright Emily, who could find beauty in the depths of darkness. Please do not forget her name.

—*bradycampaign.org*

Nothing stops a bullet like a job.

—Duncan Campbell

### **HOW TO GET A GUN IN JAPAN:**

To get a gun in Japan, you first have to attend an all-day class and pass a written test, which are held only once per month. You also must take and pass the shooting range class. Then, head over to a hospital for a mental test and drug test (Japan is unusual in that potential gun owners must affirmatively prove their mental fitness), which you'll file with the police. Finally, pass a rigorous background check for any criminal record or association with criminal or extremist groups, and you will be the proud new owner of your shotgun or air rifle. Just don't forget to provide police with documentation on the specific location of the gun in your home, as well as the ammo, both of which must be locked and stored separately. And remember to have the police inspect the gun once per year and to re-take the class and exam every three years.

Japan had 11 gun deaths in 2008; the U.S. had 12,000.

—Internet Meme

## IN THE SUMMER OF HIS YEARS

A young man rode with his head held high  
Under the Texas sun,  
And no one guessed that man so blessed  
Would perish by the gun.

A shot rang out like a sudden shout  
And heaven held its breath,  
For the dreams of a multitude of men  
Rode with him to his death,  
Lord, rode with him to his death.

Yes, the heart of the world weighs heavy  
With the helplessness of tears,  
For the man cut down in a Texas Town  
In the summer of his years....

—Herbert Kretzner

We must invest in our communities to prevent crime and violence by fully funding schools and creating jobs.

—Daniel Biss

Opportunity is the enemy of violence, and violence won't be stemmed unless we transform our most affected neighborhoods from places where people are merely trying to survive to communities where they can thrive.

- Treat violence as a public health issue by providing community-based services like mental health and trauma treatment.
- Advance gun safety legislation like requiring gun dealers to be licensed and adopt a statewide gun tracing program.
- Revitalize communities most impacted by gun violence by reinvesting in schools, local economic development, and community policing.
- Adopt criminal justice reforms and expand restorative justice.

Our prisons should not simply be about punishment. They should be about redemption as well.

—Chris Kennedy

The gun violence problem in Chicago is a black community problem more than a police problem. The police can only do so much to reduce gun violence in Chicago and throughout Illinois.

Over 85 percent of all killings in Chicago occur in the African-American community. It's incumbent upon black leadership to deal with this issue and bring the young people to the table of peace.

—Tio Hardiman

Gun violence is a crisis in the United States, especially for children, and a huge number — one that needs no exaggeration — have been affected by school shootings. An ongoing Washington Post analysis has found that more than 150,000 students attending at least 170 primary or secondary schools have experienced a shooting on campus since the Columbine High School massacre in 1999. That figure, which comes from a review of online archives, state and federal enrollment figures and news stories, is a conservative calculation and does not include dozens of suicides, accidents and afterschool assaults that have also exposed youths to gunfire.

—John Woodrow Cox  
and Steven Rich

'If we ban guns they will just find another way.' Then let them find another way. Let them try to kill dozens in a matter of minutes with a god damn butter knife. Let them hurl stones. Let's force mass murderers to get creative as hell. Because I'm tired of it being easy for them.

—Internet Meme

1967 – Jayne Mansfield is killed when her car runs under the rear end of a tractor trailer. Since then, all trailers have a DOT bar at the rear to keep cars from going under them.

1982 – Seven people die when Tylenol packaging was tampered with. Since then, it takes a PhD, channel locks, and a sharp object to get into a bottle of pills.

2001 – One person attempts to blow up a plane with a shoe bomb. Since then, all air travelers have to take off their shoes for scanning before being allowed to board.

Since 1968 – 1,516, 863 people die from guns on American soil. Since then, the problem apparently can't be solved except with thoughts and prayers.

—Internet Meme

Remember, 'gun control doesn't work!!'...except in Canada, Japan, England, Spain, Australia, Sweden, Iceland, Italy, Israel, Denmark, Germany...

—Internet Meme

‘Guns don’t kill people, people kill people.’ Well, no shit.  
We want mandatory safety courses for people, not guns.  
We want more thorough background checks of people, not guns.  
We want stricter negligence penalties imposed on people, not guns.  
If you’re stupid enough to think activists are pissed at guns, you’re too stupid to own one.

—Internet Meme

The Gun Lobby’s interpretation of the Second Amendment is one of the greatest pieces of fraud, I repeat the word fraud, on the American People by special interest groups that I have ever seen in my lifetime. The real purpose of the Second Amendment was to ensure that state armies—the militia—would be maintained for the defense of the state. The very language of the Second Amendment refutes any argument that it was intended to guarantee every citizen an unfettered right to any kind of weapon he or she desires.

—Chief Justice Warren  
Burger (1990)

I do not believe in taking away the right of the citizen for sporting, for hunting and so forth, or for home defense. But I do believe that an AK-47, a machine gun, is not a sporting weapon or needed for defense of a home.

—Ronald Reagan

The organization has existed in its present threatening form only since 1977, when at the ‘Revolt in Cincinnati,’ as they call it, a rump caucus of gun rights radicals took over the NRA. Until then the NRA had taken pride in outdoorsy things like teaching Boy Scouts how to shoot safely,

—Georgie Anne Geyer

I believe everybody in the world should have guns. Citizens should have bazookas and rocket launchers too. I believe that all citizens should have their weapons of choice. However, I also believe that only I should have the ammunition. Because frankly, I wouldn’t trust the rest of the goobers with anything more dangerous than string.

--Scott Adams

I know I’m not mentally qualified to own a gun, because at least five times a day I think, ‘I wish I had a gun right now.’

—Jim Norton

On the question of gun ownership, it is simply time to start over.

According to the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the right of the people to keep and bear arms cannot be infringed because a well-regulated militia is necessary. In the absence of a well-regulated militia, unregulated gun ownership cannot be justified.

Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that the framers of the Constitution would approve today's weapons. In Samuel Johnson's dictionary (the one available to the Founding Fathers), 'arms' was defined as 'weapons of offence.' The only such weapons available to individual soldiers of the Revolutionary War were for smooth-bore flintlock muskets with the bayonets, long guns, pistols and sabers.

To a strict constructionist, therefore, the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms is limited to those weapons defined by the word 'arms' at the time the framers wrote the word.

With, or without, a well-regulated militia, using the language of the framers to justify individual ownership of weapons that fire not one, but hundreds of rounds per minute is a leap too far.

—Donald G. Westlake

If we look back to our Founding Fathers' reason for enacting the Second Amendment, we will learn that the right to keep and bear arms is very limited and is not even applicable today.

At that time, the members of the militia each resided in their own family homes, and we did not have forts and armories in which their weapons could be stored. So each member of the militia had to keep his own weapon in his own home, and then when the members of the militia were summoned to join together for combat, each member took his own weapon with him as he left his home.

Thus, the purpose of the Second Amendment was to ensure that each member of the militia had the right to keep his weapon in his home, and that right was not to be infringed. And it would be better had political scientists and teachers called the the Second Amendment the 'Arms Storage Amendment.'

We should recognize the reasoning for the amendment, and we should not use it today to justify the carrying of armed weapons. Rather, our legislatures are completely free today to regulate and impose restrictions on the carrying of arms. And let us also remember that the so-called 'right to self-defense' simply was not the purpose for the Second Amendment when it was an enacted. The Second Amendment was an Arms Storage Amendment, and that's all the Founding Fathers of our country intended with that amendment.

—Theodore M. Utchen

Is the world a dangerous place? Children certainly think so when TV news cameras expose them to scenes of mass killings of children at a school in Scotland and a day care center in Oklahoma City, not to mention disastrous plane crashes, car accidents, and gun violence. A recent list of the top ten children's fears includes gangs, drive-by shootings, drugs, death, nuclear war, guns, knives, and AIDS. And that's not counting young children's fears of thunder and lightning, monsters under the bed, or ghosts in the attic. Child psychologists take children's fears seriously and they have done a number of studies to find out their causes and effects. They discovered that it is difficult to distinguish fear from anxiety in children. As a general rule, fear is a response to a situation, like being afraid of an animal, while anxiety is defined as being worried about something that hasn't happened, such as an upcoming test.

—*National Association of  
Elementary School  
Principals*

The first order of government is to preserve the public order and safety.

—Bob Wise

When National Guardsmen shot four unarmed students at Kent State, virtually the entire system of higher education shuddered and stopped.

—Nancy Gibbs

Machine-guns themselves have become lighter, and their operating principles both more secure and more efficient; the ammunition they use has shrunk to a quarter of its original size and become almost 100 percent reliable. The one important thing which has not changed dramatically is the human component; the attitude with which man faces the prospect of death in battle, and how he prepares himself to face that possibility quite deliberately, for it was the original invention of the machine-gun which reformed that. More than any other single 'advance' in weapons technology, the machine-gun allowed an individual (or actually, a small team of men) to dominate a sector of the battlefield. They had an inhuman advantage which simply had to be exploited if they were to be on the winning side, whether their opponents were Zulus, Sioux, or Dervishes, or other industrialized nations to be beaten into last place in the race toward economic supremacy. Whether the machine-gun has been as important, in any sense at all of the word, as its near-contemporary, the internal combustion engine—or even, date one say it, the bicycle or sewing machine—is still to be decided, but there is one clear, irrefutable fact connected with its short history: it has killed tens of millions of men, women and children and blighted the lives of tens of millions more.

--Roger Ford

Women have mental illness, too. Yet 98% of mass shootings are committed by men. This isn't about mental illness. This is about violent men and their easy access to killing machines.

—Internet Meme

The safety of the people shall be the highest law.

—Marcus Tullius Cicero

Take a little thought experiment. Imagine all the rampage school shooters in Littleton, Colorado; Pearl, Mississippi; Paducah, Kentucky; Springfield, Oregon; and Jonesboro, Arkansas; now imagine they were black girls from poor families who lived instead in Chicago, New Haven, Newark, Philadelphia, or Providence. Can you picture the national debate, the headlines, the hand-wringing? There is no doubt we'd be having a national debate about inner-city poor black girls. The entire focus would be on race, class, and gender. The media would doubtless invent a new term for their behavior, as with wilding two decades ago. We'd hear about the culture of poverty, about how living in the city breeds crime and violence. We'd hear some pundits proclaim some putative natural tendency among blacks toward violence. Someone would likely even blame feminism for causing girls to become violent in a vain imitation of boys.

Yet the obvious fact that virtually all the rampage school shooters were middle-class white boys barely broke a ripple in the torrent of public discussion. This uniformity cut across all other differences among the shooters: some came from intact families, others from single-parent homes; some boys had acted violently in the past, and others were quiet and unassuming; some boys also expressed rage at their parents (two killed their parents the same morning), and others seemed to live in happy families.

--Michael S. Kimmel

The numbers are truly staggering. Every year in America, over 30,000 people are killed by gun violence. The gun homicide rate in the U.S. is by far the highest of any developed nation.

—Rep. Bill Foster

I carried an M-4 in the Afghanistan desert for almost a year. If you feel you need this or another weapon of war like it to protect your home, you need to re-evaluate the way you're living your life & make fewer enemies. These have no place in civilian hands.

—#VetsForGunReform

The fascination of shooting as a sport depends almost wholly on whether you are at the right or wrong end of the gun.

—P. G. Wodehouse

If children are slaughtered in their school and your reaction is ‘Don’t you dare think about taking my guns!’ rather than ‘How do we stop this from ever happening again??’ then we don’t have a difference in political opinion. We have a difference in morality.

—Zack Hunt

From all these friends, I could not escape learning some of the statistics that I preferred not to know. Forty-one people at the mall had been wounded. Nineteen had died.

Everyone said it was a miracle that only nineteen perished.

What has gone wrong with our world when nineteen dead can seem like any kind of miracle?

--Dean Koontz

It is suggested that, in domestic violence at least, the presence or absence of a firearm, or of any other type of weapon, is of far less importance to the outcome than the passion generated in the attacker. The man who has lost control will cause serious injuries in many cases, quite irrespective of the weapon he uses and regardless of the certainty of detection and punishment.

—Colin Greenwood

Weapons used in recent mass shootings:

Aurora: AR-15  
Orlando: AR-15  
Parkland: AR-15  
Las Vegas: AR-15  
Sandy Hook: AR-15  
Waffle House: AR-15  
San Bernadino: AR-15  
Colorado Springs: AR-15  
Sutherland Springs: AR-15

If only there was some commonality we could take action.

—Internet Meme (2018)

If you are a gun manufacturer, the product you make is not subject to safety regulation by the *Consumer Product Safety Commission*. Toy guns are subject to safety regulation; water pistols are, but not real guns.

—Michael D. Barnes

If you had my cellphone you couldn't use it, but if you had my gun you could. In this day and age when everything is becoming electronic ... it's just like we're back in the Dark Ages with our guns.

—Sister Judy Byron

We have to help solve the problem that's in front of us. Gun violence is an epidemic that's taking the lives of too many people, including the brightest hope for the future of America—our kids.

—Ed Stack

Companies have a fiduciary responsibility to their investors, but more and more I think companies are seeing ... they have a responsibility to society and to the community wherever their operations are. I think it can't just be about their fiduciary responsibility, but what is their responsibility to society? The costs of gun violence, the loss of life, all the expense to our health care system.

—Sister Judy Byron

90 million Americans own 455 million guns—with another 18 million firearms produced or imported each year. That stockpile, as big as it is, it's still growing at 5% a year. Our population grows at 2%.

—Brian Rafn (2018)

Active shootings in the US have gotten deadlier and more frequent, the product of a vicious cycle in which intense media scrutiny inspires others to also kill for their own moment in the grim spotlight, experts say.

Last year, the US experienced what researchers say was hopefully an anomaly, with the highest number of active shooter incidents in nearly a decade, according to a new FBI report. From 2014 to 2016, the FBI documented 20 active shooter events per year, 175 people killed as a result. That number, while high, had been holding relatively steady until 2017, when the number spiked to 30 incidents. Nearly 140 people died in those attacks, including 58 people in the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history in Las Vegas.

—Brianna Sacks

These shooters get great satisfaction in doing this, and the media attention they get afterwards puts them in a place of history. We are also trying to use normal rational thoughts to define an irrational act...but we will never understand why people like the Las Vegas gunman do what they do.

—Greg Shaffer

A lot of these issues are domestic spillover, where a person comes into a workplace to solve a domestic issue.

—Greg Shaffer

Until lawmakers take substantive action to more tightly control access to guns, experts say the pace of mass shootings is not likely to slow much in a nation that, as [Jaclyn] Schildkraut put it, 'has accepted these events as part of our fabric. Stable is a reflection of our complacency. We are putting a lot of Band-Aids on issues that need tourniquets to make people feel better, but at the end of the day, this will continue to be our reality until we fix and enforce the laws we already have.

—Brianna Sacks

Studies have found a surprisingly clear link between violent media and real-world violence. But it's not the link most people expect—for whatever reason, more people playing violent video games is consistently tied to fewer violent acts. 'What we find is pretty much no matter which way you cut it, there always ends up being this inverse relationship where when people are playing these violent video games or at least consuming them, we actually see dips in homicides and aggravated assaults,' said Villanova University professor Patrick Markey....One of the more striking research findings outlined in Markey's book is that school shooters are less likely to play violent video games than their peers, not more.

In 1998, the *National Threat Assessment Center* studied school shootings to create a profile of the killers. Researchers found only 12% of school shooters showed an interest in violent video games. A more recent analysis of the 10 most violent shootings on school campuses since 1998 by Peter Langman, who studies the psychology of school shooters, found that only 20% of the killers played violent video games with any regularity. This contrasts with about 70% of male high school students who play violent games....There have been studies that showed people who play violent video games experience temporarily elevated feelings of aggression afterward, but that has not been found to lead to an increase in violent acts.

There is also the fact that violent video games are a worldwide phenomenon, yet gun violence, and mass shootings in particular, occur in America at staggeringly high rates not seen in the rest of the world.

—Paul McLeod

## NEVER HELD A GUN

Until noon hour the boy never held a gun  
Though German  
He never held a gun

His mother claims he never held a gun  
His father assures the media he never held a gun

The shrink writes:  
A gun was never mentioned in any conversation.  
When I said the word GUN he seemed not even to understand  
That it is an object, perhaps just a noise  
I made.

The police write:  
From the gun we obtained nine sets of fingerprints; all belong  
To the boy. He must have held the gun  
A long time before deciding to fire.

Perhaps, one conjectures, he did not know how to hold it.  
But he learned, learned quickly.

And would you look at the time?

—Priscila Uppal

Our country is in the grips of a gun violence crisis. It has crept into our neighborhoods, towns, cities, and states. It has created fear in spaces of joy and innocence, like movie theaters and schools. It costs our cities and towns millions of dollars and leaves holes in our communities that can never be filled. It makes our country stand out in the worst of ways.

Neither of us began our lives in public service thinking that gun violence prevention would be our life's work. But gun violence shattered our lives as we knew them, and we won't stop fighting to prevent mass shooting tragedies and the gun violence that occurs on our streets and in our homes every single day.

Survivors, advocates, and allies can change hearts and minds—and move more people to join our fight for solutions— by telling stories about the irreparable damage that gun violence does to families and communities across the country.

—Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and  
Captain Mark Kelly

Who's paying the million bucks? The insurance company. We've been trying for years to get the insurance industry to say to the gun industry, 'We won't insure you unless you have policies that will reduce the likelihood of guns falling into the wrong hands easily.'

—Michael D. Barnes

On December 14, 2012, an armed gunman entered the Sandy Hook School with two pistols, a Bushmaster .223, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, and a shotgun in the car. Rather than turn right, toward my wife's classroom where she pulled two kids into her room from the hallway, he turned to the left, murdered twenty children and six adults, including the principal and the school psychologist, both of whom went into the hallway to stop the gunman, and shot two other teachers, who survived. After that, a lot of other things happened, but it doesn't really matter what.

—Brian Clements

The images we seldom see are the aftermath of violent deaths. Your family newspaper will not print photos of the puddled suicide who jumped from the fourteenth floor. No car wrecks with the body parts unevenly distributed, no murder victim sprawled in his own juices. Despite the endless preaching against violent crime, despite the enormous and avid audience for mayhem, these images are taboo.

--Sean Tejaratchi

Last year, Handguns killed  
48 People in Japan.  
8 in Great Britain.  
34 in Switzerland.  
52 in Canada.  
58 in Israel.  
21 in Sweden.  
42 in West Germany.  
10,728 in the United States.  
God Bless America.  
Stop Handguns Before They Stop You.

—*Handgun Control, Inc.*  
Now (2012)

On behalf of, I dunno, EVERY FAT KID IN the USA, I'ma go ahead and call BS on the whole, bullying creates mass shooters narrative. LGBTQ kids, kids of color, disabled kids, poor kids, girl kids are bullied. Who's doing the shooting? White boys whose parents don't secure their guns.

—Internet Meme

Interesting time to be living in where 'stop shooting our kids' is seen as a 'liberal talking point' by the 'pro-life' crowd.

—Internet Meme

You're afraid we will take away your guns.  
We are afraid your guns will take away our children.  
We haven't taken any of your guns. Your guns have taken too many of our children.  
Whose fears are unfounded?

—Susan Black

There are over 1 billion firearms in the world today, of which 85 percent (857 million) belonged to civilians.

According to the *Small Arms Survey* released Monday, nearly 40 percent of all guns are in hands of United States citizens, which is much more than those held by civilians in the other top 25 countries combined.

Aaron Karp, the report's author said, 'The key to the United States, of course, is its unique gun culture. ... American civilians buy an average of 14 million new firearms every year, and that means the United States is an overwhelming presence on civilian markets.'

'The indications are that U.S. civilians will continue to acquire firearms with acquisition averaging around 14m guns annually during the last five years ... the U.S. contributes disproportionately to the increase of the global firearms stockpile,' Karp added.

The report stated the countries with largest held civilian weapons include U.S. with 393.3 million, followed by India with 71.1 million and China with 49.7 million.

The study also mentioned another important list was the rate of civilian firearms holdings per 100 residents, which was topped by the U.S....while countries such as India, China and Russia ranked much lower in the list and outside the top 25.

—Vaishnavi

Vaidyanatha

(June 19, 2018)

Education is the vaccine for violence.

--Edward James Olmos

We went into their [Mexico] Congress. They call it the Chamber of Deputies, and they wear pistols. They are allowed to wear a Gun the same as an officer. I got a great kick out of that. Can you imagine, if we did that, the damage Jim Reed would have done by now? Jim would have exterminated half—the Republican half—the Senate by now, and would have been shooting most of the Democrats just for practice. Can you picture the late Henry Cabot Lodge directing Republican affairs with a forty-five as a Baton? And if Dawes had a gun, we would have to craft a new Senator every morning. I kinder like it. I never heard one Deputy call another a Liar all the time I watched 'em operate. But up home it has become so common that it's almost a greeting.

—Will Rogers

### **IN ONE YEAR, GUNS MURDERED**

17 people in Finland  
35 in Australia  
39 in England and Wales  
60 in Spain  
194 in Germany  
200 in Canada  
And 9,484 in the United States

### **GOD BLESS AMERICA**

—*www.bradycampaign.org*  
(2018)

Safety isn't always safe. You can find one on every gun.

—Andrea Gibson

the worst  
thing that ever happened  
to  
the world  
was  
the white man coming across gun powder.  
— the end of the world | the beginning of white supremacy.

—Nayyirah Waheed

If people in Tuscaloosa talked about gun violence at all—in the wake of a mass shooting, or after the rare hunting accident—it was as an unfortunate but explicable bit of collateral damage: Occasionally cars hit people, but we still drive.

—Elaina Plott

Getting shot did not end my life. It didn't even upend it, really. The one time I cried, I was sitting in a tufted chair in my parents' bedroom while the local Fox affiliate was on. 'The victim,' the anchor said, 'is still rattled but at home and doing fine, we can exclusively report.' It was disembodiment, listening to this person I had never spoken with speak about me. We can exclusively report.

—Elaina Plott

Kaitlin Bennett—She's the woman who marked her graduation from Kent State this year with a photo of herself shouldering an AR-10 and holding her cap, which she'd decorated with the words COME AND TAKE IT. The photo went viral, and now Bennett is a far-right notable who posts incendiary tweets designed to elicit 'liberal tears.'

—Elaina Plott (2018)

In Alabama, where I grew up, the *Second Amendment* is not so much a right as an inviolable element of culture—lawmakers are not wrong to believe that challenging this, however slightly, could spell political suicide.

—Elaina Plott

'Sport' hunting is a sickness, a perversion and a danger and should be recognized as such. People who get their 'amusement' from hunting and killing defenseless animals can only be suffering from a mental disorder. In a world with boundless opportunities for amusement, it's detestable that anyone would choose to get thrills from killing others who ask for nothing from life but the chance to remain alive.

—Sir Roger Moore

I call on the legislators of this country to take action and stop this from happening. Forget the *NRA*, forget all the political backing. Take a stance. For human lives. For children's lives.

—David Hogg

Imagine highways using traffic laws written in 1791.  
Imagine radio, television, and internet run by 1791 regulations.  
Imagine limiting yourself to the medical care available in 1791.  
The *Second Amendment* was written in 1791.

—Internet Meme

The gun our founding fathers used fired 1 or 2 rounds per minute. The AR-15 used in today's school shootings fires 45 rounds a minute. Times have changed. Guns have changed. Our gun laws should change with them.

—Internet Meme

The prospect of mass murder in a classroom is intolerable, and good-faith proposals for preventing school shootings should be treated with respect. But the current mode of instead preparing kids for such events is likely to be psychologically damaging. See, for instance, the parting letter a 12-year-old boy wrote his parents during a lockdown at a school in Charlotte, North Carolina, following what turned out to be a bogus threat: 'I am so sorry of anything I have done, the trouble I have caused,' he scribbled. 'Right now I'm scared to death. I need a warm soft hug...I hope that you are going to be okay with me gone.'...How misguided to take young brains already bathed in stress hormones and train them to fear low-probability events such as mass shootings—and how little most of us think about what we're doing. Whereas much adultification involves subjecting kids to things we adults do to ourselves (sleep too little, rush too much), we are at some distance from the harms being inflicted in schools. Even though only a quarter of shootings that involve three or more victims take place at schools, we seldom hear about realistic live-shooter drills in nursing homes, places of worship, or most workplaces. They would likely inconvenience if not incense adults, and scare away business. But we readily force them on children.

—Erika Christakis

A 2018 survey by the *Pew Research Foundation* determined that, despite the rarity of such events, 57 percent of American teenagers worry about a shooting at their school. This comes at a time when children are already suffering from sharply rising rates of anxiety, self-mutilation, and suicide. According to a landmark study funded by the *National Institute of Mental Health*, 32 percent of 13-to-18-year-olds have anxiety disorders, and 22 percent suffer from mental disorders that cause severe impairment or distress. Among those suffering from anxiety, the median age of onset is 6.

—Erika Christakis

More children were shot dead in 2017 than on-duty police officers and active duty military combined. We are afraid of all the wrong things. I say this as a cop.

—Mike Walker

Students protesting for gun control would be better served by taking CPR classes.

—Former GOP Senator  
Rick Santorum

As a surgeon, I've operated on gunshot victims who've had bullets tear through their intestines, cut through their spinal cord, and pulverize their kidneys and liver. Rick Santorum telling kids to shut up and take CPR classes is simply unconscionable.

—Eugene Gu, MD

If you're more angry at children for demanding change than the gun violence taking their lives, THEN YOU ARE THE PROBLEM.

—Internet Meme

We've seen an increase in school shootings, with resultant drills and lockdowns in schools. We've seen shootings in public places. There have been terrorist attacks here in the U.S. and around the world taking many lives. From just watching or reading the news, it is reasonable for anyone to feel afraid in public spaces that previously would have felt safe.

—Dr. Claire McCarthy

Guns aren't allowed at the White House, the Republican National Convention or Mar-a-Lago in case you're wondering what these people really think. I will never understand the argument which says guns are too dangerous for places politicians hand out but NOT too dangerous for places children hang out.

—Mikel Jollett

Dad: When I was your age, I had to walk two miles uphill to school in the snow while holding a hot potato...

Son: I had to hide in a closet while a mass shooter killed my teacher and friends.

—[www.facebook.com/Pension-101-Haismans-Pension-Page](http://www.facebook.com/Pension-101-Haismans-Pension-Page)

Bill Clinton banned assault weapons in 1994; mass shootings dropped 43%. GOP let the ban expire in 2004; they went up over 230%.

—Internet Meme

Let me make this absolutely, 100% crystal clear, as a Johns Hopkins-trained scientist and ER doctor: There are ZERO studies linking video games to gun violence. There are MANY, MANY studies linking increased access to guns to gun violence. @GOPLeader, you are a lying coward.

—John Jiao, MD

I was buying Maisy school shoes, and she told me she didn't want a pair of light up shoes. I figured it was because she's going into 5th grade and they felt childish to her.

She said, 'What if there's a lockdown drill or school shooter? Light up shoes would make me stand out.'

We have officially failed, as a country, when a 10 year old doesn't want light up shoes because she's afraid of being a shooting victim.

—Lindsay Van Allen

Let me tell you a story. The day after Columbine, I was interviewed for the Tom Brokaw news program. The reporter had been assigned a theory and was seeking sound bites to support it. 'Wouldn't you say,' she asked, 'that killings like this are influenced by violent movies?' No, I said, I wouldn't say that. 'But what about 'Basketball Diaries'?' she asked. "Doesn't that have a scene of a boy walking into a school with a machine gun?" The obscure 1995 Leonardo Di Caprio movie did indeed have a brief fantasy scene of that nature, I said, but the movie failed at the box office (it grossed only \$2.5 million), and it's unlikely the Columbine killers saw it. The reporter looked disappointed, so I offered her my theory. 'Events like this,' I said, 'if they are influenced by anything, are influenced by news programs like your own. When an unbalanced kid walks into a school and starts shooting, it becomes a major media event. Cable news drops ordinary programming and goes around the clock with it. The story is assigned a logo and a theme song; these two kids were packaged as the Trench Coat Mafia. The message is clear to other disturbed kids around the country: If I shoot up my school, I can be famous. The TV will talk about nothing else but me. Experts will try to figure out what I was thinking. The kids and teachers at school will see they shouldn't have messed with me. I'll go out in a blaze of glory.'

In short, I said, events like Columbine are influenced far less by violent movies than by CNN, the NBC Nightly News and all the other news media, who glorify the killers in the guise of "explaining" them. I commended the policy at the Sun-Times, where our editor said the paper would no longer feature school killings on Page 1. The reporter thanked me and turned off the camera. Of course the interview was never used. They found plenty of talking heads to condemn violent movies, and everybody was happy.

—Roger Ebert

In retrospect Sandy Hook marked the end of the US gun control debate. Once America decided killing children was bearable, it was over.

—Dan Hodges

Birth control?

BAN IT!

Abortion?

BAN IT!

Gay marriage?

BAN IT!

Guns?

Look, banning things never works.

People will find ways to get them.

—Internet Meme

We are seeing anxiety around school safety and gun safety much more frequently. Anxiety disorders such as a generalized anxiety disorder and [obsessive-compulsive disorder] have involved intrusive thoughts and worries about these issues, as undoubtedly influenced by the increased occurrence of and awareness of mass shooting, including those that have taken place in schools and in other public places.

—Marla W. Deibler

Lisa Fitzpatrick, who was a health-care executive in New Orleans...one day was sitting in the passenger seat of a car when she noticed two young boys, 10 or 11, lifting something heavy. It was a gun. They used it to shoot her in the face. It was a gang-initiation ritual. When she recovered, she realized that she was just collateral damage. The real victims were the young boys who had to shoot somebody to get into a family, their gang.

—David Brooks

Most murder victims in the U.S. are male—typically young men of color—but you wouldn't know that from watching TV, where the victims who get the most airtime tend to be young, attractive white women. As a culture, we're not as attuned to young men's vulnerability to violence.

—Rachel Monroe