

It's time to face up to a couple of truths about guns



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It's true that the best defense against a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun. But it's also true that a bad guy with a gun almost always has the advantage over a good guy with a gun. The reason so many well-trained and equipped civilians, law enforcement officers, and military personnel get killed by bad guys with guns is that bad guys usually determine the time and circumstances for confrontation.

ISIS jihadists can pop up anywhere they choose and they will pick an area that is least able to resist them. The main reason all our embassies in foreign countries are vulnerable to attack is that jihadist groups will select the least defended one and make sure they have the firepower to achieve their objective, even if it is a suicidal attack. No matter what the U.S. does to protect its many embassies, bad groups with guns can select one to overcome with superior weapons.

An antiabortion sociopath is also most likely to pick the least defended clinic in an area. Even if the clinic is defended by someone with a gun, an attacker can wear protective gear and make sure he has a better gun than the good guy who is protecting it.

The same kind of confrontation can occur anywhere in our society. Schools, shopping malls, college offices, restaurants, parks, etc. can be selected by any mentally ill and suicidal person who decides to leave this world in a blaze of publicity.

As the NRA has correctly claimed, bad guys always pick the least protected areas to attack. Does that mean all public establishments are now in competition with others to arm themselves better? And after everyone is armed, should we then also wear body armor? If others have AK-47s, should every mother and father also have an AK-47 to protect their family in a public place?

The NRA-controlled Congress was responsible for allowing the U.S. to become awash in guns to the point where those designed for mass killing are available to anyone who wants one. Now that they are so readily available, the NRA-bought Congress persons tell us that we must carry weapons to protect ourselves from the growing number of crackpots who have easy access to one. Essentially, they're telling us that they've transformed the U.S. into a



wild West — the arms manufacturers' dream nation in which every citizen must be constantly alert and develop a quick draw.

Now that we're awash in guns, we've got to figure out a way to make them less accessible to those who shouldn't have them, especially those designed for mass killing. Even under the best circumstances guns are unusually dangerous, and the more available they are, the more likely some will be misused. Responsibility should come with gun ownership, and it's obvious that many unqualified or irresponsible people have bought guns and allowed too many other people to have access to them.

So, if you have no idea how you're going to store a gun, use it safely and keep it out of the hands of unsophisticated or mentally ill others — you have no business buying a gun. And we

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should have laws that say if you do buy a gun, you'd better take care of it.

Another way to put it: if you bought a gun, especially an assault rifle, and sold it for profit to someone who used it to kill someone, you should be open to a manslaughter charge, depending upon your degree of irresponsibility. Even if you bought a gun for personal protection and it gets into the hands of a relative who kills someone, a court should decide the extent to which you should be held responsible.

Let's face it. Those who have a gun and feel they have nothing to live for

will always have a huge advantage over average citizens who live normal lives, even if also armed. If we're ever to improve our chances of living in a civilized society, relatively free of gun violence, gun owners and sellers need to reduce their availability, and government must make sure they do.

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