

## Guns

With all the mass shootings in the news we should consider the topics of guns and gun violence.

First, understand the real reason that we believe we need guns comes from a constitutional perspective. The right to own guns is not in the Constitution for self-defense, or for hunting, or for sport, though those are perfectly legitimate uses for guns as an effective tool.

A gun in and of itself is an inanimate object course and requires a person in the actions of a person to become a positive or negative in society, So when we talk about gun control were really talking about people control, of course.

Control of people is the reason that guns were invented, of course. The gun gives one person the power to forcefully control another man through the threat of deadly force. A handgun is an implement of control of the first order, and by that I mean it is a basic unit of control. Military strategists will tell you that long-range bombardment can do heavy damage to an enemy, however in order to secure any location inhabited by men, men must be sent into that area with their boots on the ground, with guns. That is how the people are controlled when they get out of hand, and that is how the people control the government when it gets out of hand.

If you are of the mind that the United States has transcended revolution for eternity, then you don't see any need for guns for the people. For you it's fine that all of the firearms are concentrated in the hands of law enforcement and the military. You can't imagine any reasonable resistance to the authorities, and you feel safe under their control. In your mind, people keep guns for uses that are impractical, or unnecessary, or just for fun. You weigh those concerns against the deaths in society that are caused by guns and you think it's an obvious trade off to get rid of the guns to prevent those deaths.

Let's break it down.

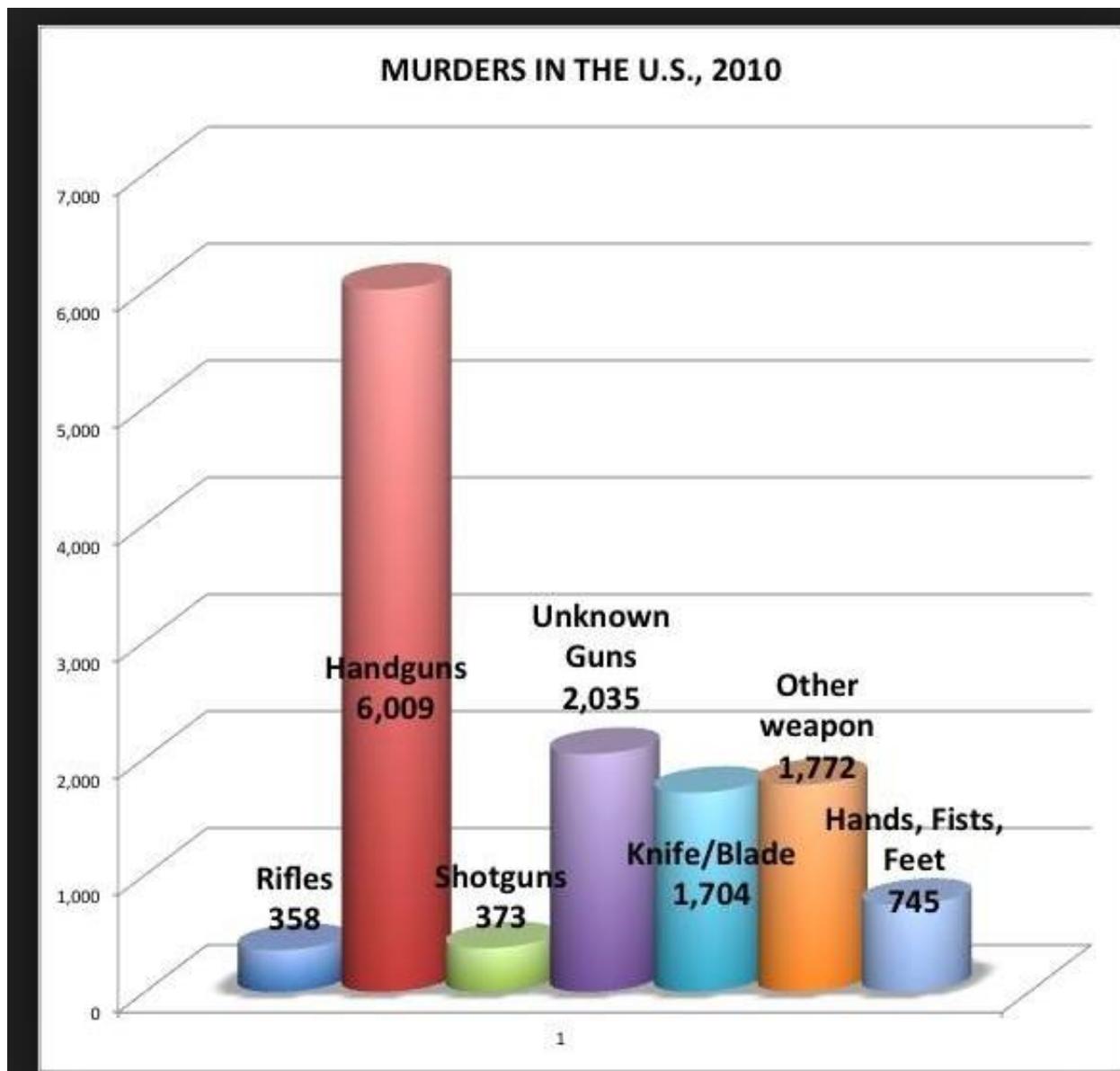
First, let's identify the exact problem or problems that we're dealing with.

There are a total of approximately 30,000 deaths by firearms in the United States each year. We'll limit our discussion to the US, because that's what we can vote to change.

Of those deaths, fully 2/3 are suicides. That's right, 20,000 of those deaths are suicides. Let's address those first since that's the largest number. If there were no guns in existence, it stands to reason that some of those folks would not find any other way that they are comfortable with to kill themselves, but the number would be few in my estimation, because you've not cured the problem which brought the person to suicide, only interdicted one possible method by which they intend to treat themselves. In fact, in the OCED countries the US is normally compared to there are similar incidents of suicide as in the US, but they are carried out without a gun. Also, we can look at a place like Japan, which has far fewer guns, and far many more suicides per capita, and we can conclude that people would find a way in most circumstance, such that a total elimination of all guns everywhere would have very little impact on the 20,000 suicides.

So following the rule of focus on the things we can change, now let's turn to the 10,000 homicides. So of the 10,000 homicides committed in the US each year using firearms, what do we know?

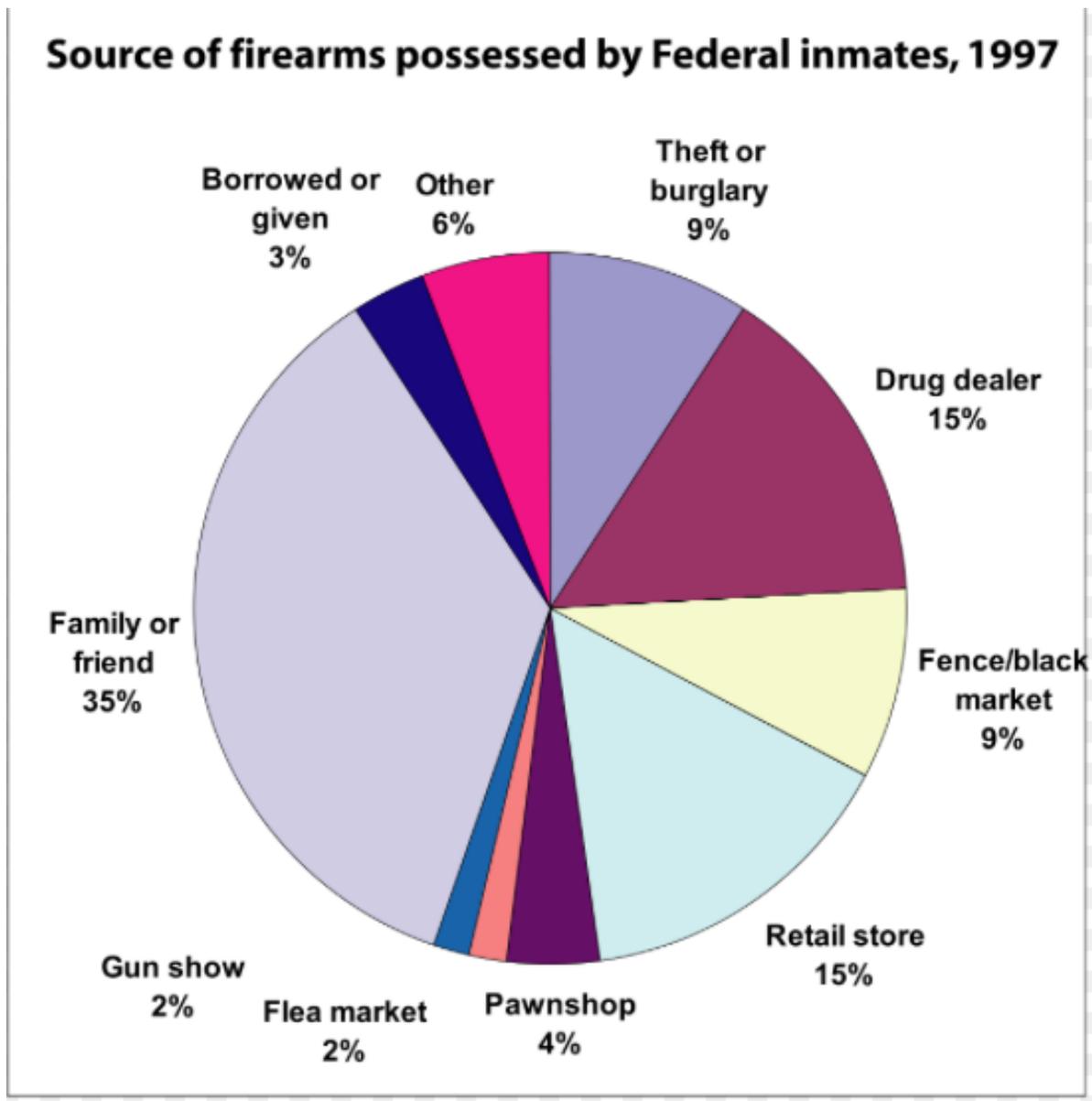
What kinds of guns to they use? Where do they get those guns? Who commits those crimes? Why?



The answers to these questions are easily Googled to reveal charts like these: Which clearly show that Handguns are by far the most deadly weapon used, covering 60-80% of all homicides involving any firearm. And, looking at such a graph, assuming the unknown guns are split along the same ratios as the known guns, we can also clearly see that Rifles and Shotguns are far less of a problem than knives, and even hands and feet. So, it seems we can largely ignore Rifles and Shotguns and focus on handguns if we want to be practical. After all, if even with today's gun availability, people still use knives five times as often as a long gun, it would be of negligible assistance to the situation to even consider long guns before knives.

So, next we Google where the perpetrators get their weapons and we find graphs like these:

## Source of firearms possessed by Federal inmates, 1997



From this we can see that only 20% of the guns are purchased legally, such that even if we eliminated All sales of guns to anyone even remotely suspicious, we could only prevent at most 20% of the 6-8,000 deaths per year, or 1200-1600 deaths per year total. That assumes that zero of the people who purchased their firearm would find another way to get a gun, or another weapon to commit the murder, which I think is a fallacious assumption. I would bet that at least half of them would find another way, probably more like 2/3 or 3/4. If we assume that 2/3 of them would find some other way to commit murder if they couldn't simply purchase a gun, then the number of people we've saved drops to 400-533. Let's just call it 500 people.

So, to review, we enacted legislation that completely eliminated all gun sales to anyone suspicious, we could completely eliminate all gun shows, flea markets, and pawn shop sales in all states, and the total number of people we've saved is 500.

Now, 500 people per year is nothing to scoff at. That's a lot of innocent lives. So, is it worth it?

First let's ask one more thing. Could we do better?

What if we made gun ownership by any non law enforcement or non active military completely illegal. What if we then sent out law enforcement to collect all the guns in society.

Before we get into the legality and reasoning behind that effort, let's just ask ourselves if it could actually happen.

Is it possible to collect all the guns in the USA?

Did they not do it in Australia? Well, they did have a giant forced buyback, but the estimates are that there were only about 5 million guns in Australia before they tried it, and they got a couple million of them so there's a bunch left out there, and presumably they're in the hands of the less compliant.

But let's assume for argument's sake that we could do a much better job. Say, for example, you put out an order requiring everyone to put an RFID in their gun permanently. Then at some point in the future they just went and collected them all. And assume they got them All. Would we not be better off?

First, realize that a gun is not a complicated device and they've been around for a long time, and with today's 3D printing, people could make new ones pretty easily, such that even if we had a way to effectively collect All the guns, there would still be guns out there.

So what about the bullets, you ask? Bullets are made of rare materials that can be tracked, and every bullet can be marked, so couldn't we just eliminate bullets and be done that way? That's probably more practical, but there are so many bullets already in the world, the buyback program on those would have to be massive, with stiff penalties.

Ok, so assume, for arguments sake that we could eliminate almost all the guns and enough of the bullets in society to effectively disarm the people.

By these efforts we've potentially saved up to 10,000 people a year.

Now we must consider if there are any significant negative consequences.

Target shooting may be fun, but if my giving it up meant saving lives, people would do it.

Also, hunting may be traditional, but it's not necessary to eat anymore. Even if you like venison, there's probably a way to get it where it's been killed by some factory, good enough. Now we get to the tricky part, self-defense. Gun control advocates like to point out that you're more likely to get harmed in your own home by your own gun than to prevent a crime, which to me sounds like total b.s. How can it be that it's better for law enforcement to have guns, but not better for people with no badge to have one. Training, they say. But a gun is a super simple item. It's point and shoot. A person literally needs no training to use one. Riding a bicycle is way

harder than shooting a gun. Recently the Lt. Governor of California said that if he were at a banquet and a gunman came in intent on killing people, that he'd rather nobody at his table had a gun, because they might make things worse. That is a ridiculous argument. If a gunman is in the room killing people, you want somebody on your side armed, whether you think they have as much training as law enforcement, or a five year old child, you want someone, anyone, on your side with as big a gun as they can fire, you can't deny it. If you're the one person in a thousand who thinks they're going to stand up and love the killer down, then we don't see eye to eye on this issue.

You can't deny the nightmare scenario happens to some innocent people. You're at home with your family, and some dudes come in to rob you. Using a gun to defend yourself might not be the best idea for a lot of people, but it might be for some. Those who would rather try to negotiate with the attackers or placate them, might do better than if they tried to use a gun and failed, but how can we deny anyone a viable way they can defend their family in scenarios we know will arise, especially someone who is trained and wants to try save their family that way? They would be acting in a way we would be complete comfortable with if they had a badge or insignia.

Now we have to ask another question the answer to which is difficult to see. Does the widespread ownership of guns help to deter crime in any way? It's hard to compare foreign countries because every culture is different in terms of it's law enforcement influences, so we look at some domestic factors.

Criminals report that the presence of a gun is the number one deterrent to them committing a crime. A dog is second. Criminals respect power, and guns are power. If all the guns in the US were outlawed and collected en mass, there could be a substantial increase in violent crimes. For every murder, there are 1000 other violent crimes: rapes, robberies, burglaries, batteries, assaults. If there were no guns, those numbers could double. When considering the 10,000 we're saving, we must weigh that against an additional 10 million violent crimes in the US that could be perpetrated once the criminals knew the citizens were disarmed. Finally, the murder rates themselves would likely stay close to the same, as the people who are most likely to commit the murders are probably also in the group who are most likely to defy the gun laws and keep their guns.

Finally, however, we have to consider the actual reason we have the Second Amendment and guns at all in the first place, and that brings us back to Revolution and where the audience again divides. All of you who believe the USA will never experience any unrest and/or that if it does the people should not resist, will conclude it's totally worth it to outlaw and collect all the guns; however all those of you who believe that there's a possibility that the government could someday again grow to become too powerful and might require at least the threat of reprisals if it continues to go to far.

Remember Jefferson's words "When in the course of human events *it becomes necessary* for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another..." Notice he's using the future progressive tense, that is, he didn't say "When it became necessary", he said "When it becomes", as if it happens from time to time, which is what history clearly indicates. If there's no need for those words anymore in America, then it would be safe to have law enforcement or the military take control of all the guns, at least from a 2nd Amendment perspective.

If, however, there is any chance of the need for any of the people to defend themselves against the government, we'll need guns. History shows us that the people are slaughtered by their governments in those situations. Russia killed tens of millions of its own people in its last revolutions last century. Millions were similarly killed in several other countries by governments in the 20th century. We're talking 10's to 100's of millions of lives here. Whole nations and cultures were wiped out. That's why the Second Amendment exists. It's not for the one night burglary, it's not even for the gangs of marauders patrolling South Central L.A. during the Rodney King riots when law enforcement won't show up. The reason for the second amendment is crystal clear - it's for when the military and/or law enforcement becomes taken over by some corrupt force and the people need to defend themselves.

It seems impossible to imagine, yet it must have seemed that way in Syria not long ago, but there are everyday "rebels" in the streets today, and even Venezuela the people are organizing into militias to barter for basic goods while the presidential opposition candidate is assassinated. It couldn't happen here, could it? I think the odds are very small, but the potential loss of life is huge, so it depends.

Here's the question you have to ask yourself. Is it worth allowing 500 to 10,000 lives a year to be lost to guns, in order to ensure against the loss of millions in a revolution? We could lose 10,000 for 100 years and only lose 1 million people, but we could lose 100 million in a revolution.

Finally, if all the guns and/or bullets are collected and concentrated in the hands of law enforcement and/or the military, what is the probability that those people, or more specifically the people who control them, would be more tempted to use them? Does a power differential corrupt?

Consider, however, the concept of gun collection one final time. In order to collect all the guns, we would have to send people with guns out to the homes of millions of Americans, and many would have to be taken by force. How many people are we willing to kill with guns to collect the guns? Is it not ironic that gun control advocates are pushing for this particular type of gun violence? Isn't it further ironic that such violence from the authorities is precisely why patriotic gun owners own guns to begin with? The two efforts are exactly juxtaposed. To the exact extent that gun control advocates want to take people's guns, those people want to arm up to protect their guns. If we assume that .001% of gun owners would fight it out, that's 3000 people killed not counting law enforcement. Of course if just 1% resisted, that's 3 million people involved in gun fights with law enforcement. And that's not counting any domestic terrorism reprisals, which I think we can all agree would be coming our way. An effort to collect guns could actually be a catalyst for a broader domestic conflict.

Free people have ways of finding solutions to their problems. You may not like the ideas they come up with, like carrying more guns, but you get to choose whether you're ok with Freedom, or whether you want a strong man to come in and impose his will on the people to clean up the mess. Be careful what you wish for, because once the strong man arrives, if he takes all the guns, he may be hard to keep under control.