

The Grouse House Gazette

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Weekly Thoughts on Music, Nature, and **Politics**, from the Catskill Mountains

CAN WE FINALLY TALK ABOUT GUNS NOW?

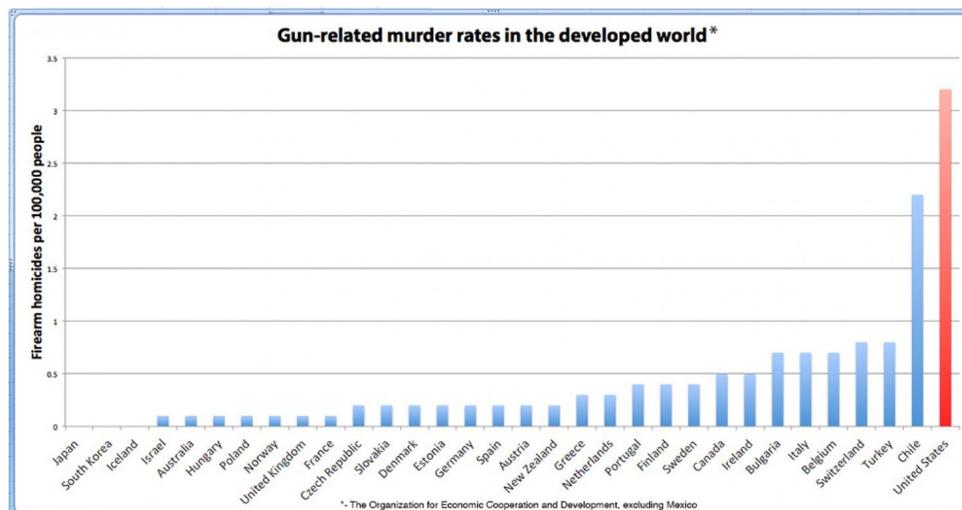
Immediately following the Las Vegas gun slaughter... Fox News issued their standard “pundit prep” directives to their commentators to assure that they would all stand as a unified front to proclaim that it really *wasn't the time* to discuss gun laws in the wake of such a tragedy... as emotions were obviously running high and people couldn't be expected to make rational decisions at such a time. But with a mass shooting now happening almost every day in America... when exactly *is* the time to discuss this?

After the recent three devastating American hurricanes... was it *not* the time to discuss improving hurricane protection? After all... weren't people too emotionally connected to the disaster to make rational decisions about their future? Shouldn't we all just “chill out”?

If we followed *that* reasoning... nothing would ever be done about anything.

Mass shootings are defined as “four or more dead” in America and using that criteria for 2017 it shows that we have had [270 mass shootings in 276 days](#). So we are six short for having one every day this year. But with three months of the year left... there is plenty of time to catch up!

No other country on the planet comes close to our rate of gun ownership or violence.



GUNS & DEATHS IN MAJOR INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES - From U.N. Study

COUNTRY	TOTAL CIVILIAN GUNS	GUNS PER 100 PEOPLE	HOMICIDES BY GUNS	GUN HOMICIDES PER 100K PEOPLE	% OF HOMICIDES BY GUNS
United States	270,000,000	88.8	9,960	3.2	67.5
India	46,000,000	4.2	3,093	0.26	7.6
China	40,000,000	4.9	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Germany	25,000,000	30.3	158	0.19	26.3
France	19,000,000	31.2	35	0.06	9.6
Canada	9,950,000	30.8	173	0.51	32
Italy	7,000,000	11.9	417	0.71	66.7
Spain	4,500,000	10.4	90	0.2	21.8
England	3,400,000	6.2	41	0.07	6.6
Switzerland	3,400,000	45.7	57	0.77	72.2
Australia	3,050,000	15	30	0.14	11.5
Sweden	2,800,000	31.6	37	0.41	33.9
Austria	2,500,000	30.4	18	0.22	29.5
Greece	2,500,000	22.5	29	0.26	34.9
Finland	2,400,000	45.3	24	0.45	19.8
Belgium	1,800,000	17.2	70	0.68	39.5
Norway	1,400,000	31.3	2	0.05	8.1
New Zealand	925,000	22.6	7	0.16	13.5
Portugal	900,000	8.5	44	0.41	33.8
Taiwan	725,000	4.4	128	0.56	15.9
Japan	710,000	0.6	11	0.01	1.8
Denmark	650,000	12	15	0.27	31.9
Netherlands	510,000	3.9	55	0.33	30.7
South Korea	510,000	1.1	14	0.03	1.7
Ireland	360,000	8.6	21	0.48	42

People who claim that gun control doesn't work should look toward Australia, where in 1996 a mass shooting in Tasmania killed 35 people and laws were drastically changed with great results which can read about [through this link](#). Their mass shootings fell to ZERO!

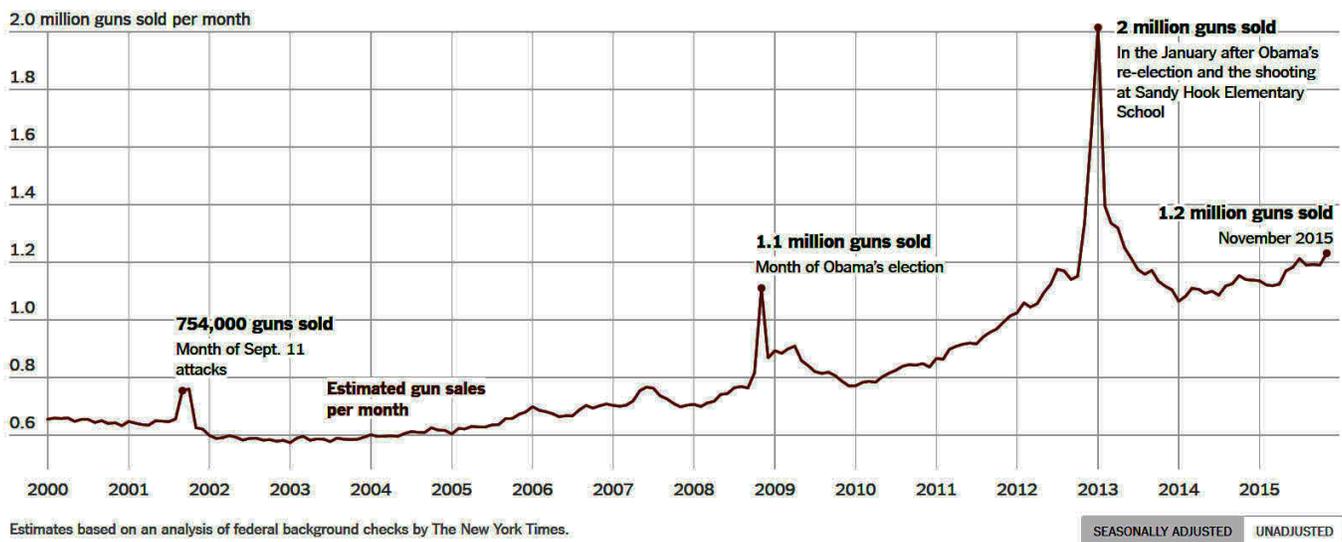
This time, with the *extreme* Las Vegas shootings the NRA are staying very silent. Even though ISIS immediately claimed credit no one is taking them seriously other than some extreme alt-right web sites, which included another [amazing pronouncement from Alex Jones](#). And this time it was white country music fans killed by what appears to be a crazy old white guy. And a "good guy with a gun" could have in no way stopped this tragedy. The NRA can say *nothing*.

Most people only know the NRA as their current political lobbying group... but they haven't always been that way. [Click on here to see how much they pay your Congress Person!](#)

And *NOW* some NRA History...

Originally the NRA was founded as an organization to promote sportsmanship and responsible gun ownership. They taught boy scouts about hunting and gun safety and were generally not political at all. It was considered a “sportsmen’s” organization.

But all of this changed in May of 1977 when a group of gun rights radicals took over their national NRA meeting in Cincinnati. The “old guard” of the NRA were cast aside as absolutist interpreters of the second amendment took over the organization and sent it forever cascading down a reckless path of political involvement that has resulted in a major relaxing of gun laws and our growing history of horrific carnage. Oh... and massively increasing gun sales.



One of the more ridiculous incidents of the 2012 presidential election was the NRA's endorsement of Mitt Romney... a man who had previously passed the most stringent assault weapons ban in the country when he was governor of Massachusetts... over President Obama... who not only had done *nothing* about guns in his first four years but who also actually signed into law more pro-gun legislation than George W. Bush ([including a law allowing people to carry concealed weapons in our national parks](#)).

How times have changed...

When President Clinton was able to pass the assault weapons ban in 1993 he did so with the support of both former Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush. And George W. Bush actually ran for president in 2000 on a platform of *extending* the ban, as it was due to lapse in his first term in 2003.

So who killed the Assault Weapons Ban in 2003 despite the fact that 68% of the public and 57% of gun owners wanted it extended at the time?

[None other than convicted felon and House Majority leader Tom Delay.](#)

It is very ironic that the contemporary debate about gun rights first began in 1967 when Don Mulford... a conservative Republican state assemblyman in California... presented a law that would *prohibit* the carrying of loaded weapons in the cities of California. And he also had the full support of then Governor Ronald Reagan who was quoted as saying that there was [“no reason why on the street today a citizen should be carrying loaded weapons.”](#)

So why did conservative Republicans support such a law?

[It all grew out of their fear of African- Americans carrying firearms.](#) GOP = racism again!

The first group to actively protest gun regulations was none other than the Black Panthers in 1967 (who had formed their organization in Oakland only a few months prior to the new California legislation). The Panthers... led by Bobby Seale... knew that it was totally legal to carry a loaded weapon in public in California as long as the weapon was not concealed.

After being pulled over by the police in Oakland... Seale got out of the car openly carrying a shotgun. The police could do nothing about it... And this led to Mulford's legislation.

After the police incident... Seale knew that Mulford would be speaking in the state legislature... and as a protest several black panthers entered the California State House carrying loaded shotguns and pistols and proceeded to intimidate the state representatives by sitting in the balcony openly displaying their weapons.

It was all totally legal and nothing could be done about it.

Then a year later... after the assassinations of RFK and MLK... the tables turned and the stage was set for a national debate that led to the first sweeping gun regulations to be passed nationally by congress.

NRA Myth #1

“Guns don’t kill people... people kill people”.

In the same month that children were being slaughtered by military weapons in Connecticut... [on the other side of the world in China](#)... an obviously deranged man went into a village primary school and stabbed twenty-two children. Although many of the kids were disfigured... none of them died. The man was obviously intent upon killing them if possible. But in China... where you can imagine that gun laws are *very* strict... the only weapon at his disposal was a knife. So the children are all alive today.

So yes.... “people kill people”... but assault weapons sure make it a lot easier.

NRA Myth #2

The NRA claims to represent the gun owners of America... when in fact they primarily represent the interests of the gun manufacturers. It’s all about the money.

President Obama was great for manufacturer’s profits... as have been our ongoing mass murders. (see earlier chart above)

And now that gun manufacturers have sold guns to practically everyone in America...

The NRA and their manufacturer allies have raised their “sights” on the entire world.

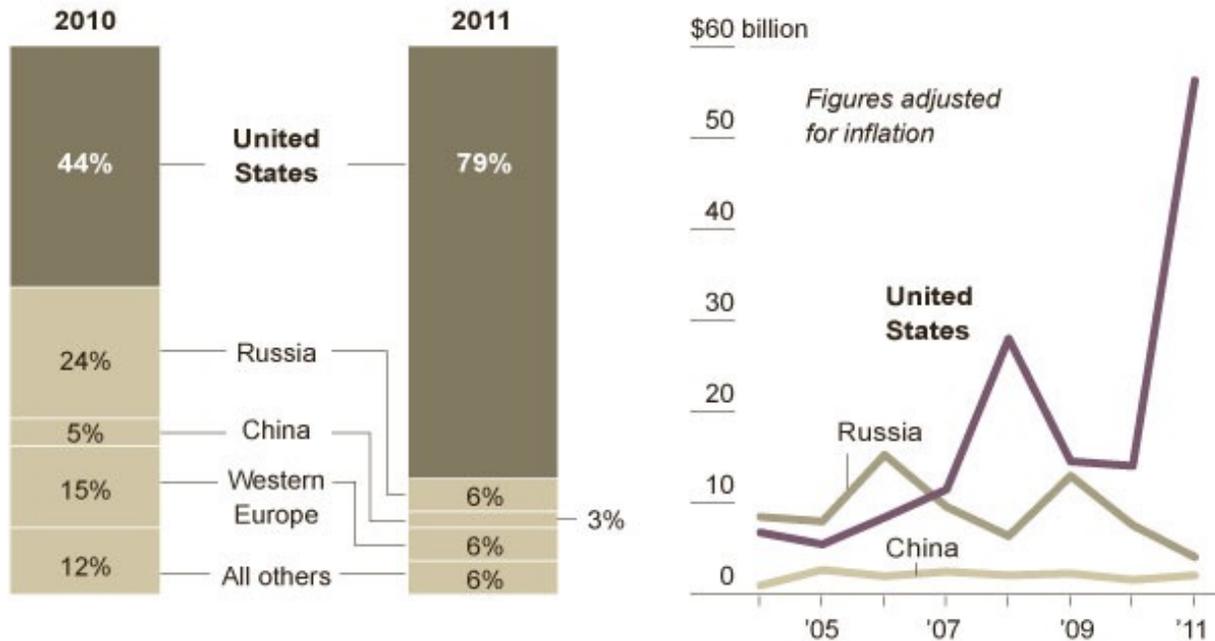
During the 2012 presidential campaign a super PAC funded by the gun manufacturers and the NRA ran national ads proclaiming that the United Nations was going to be taking our guns away if Obama was re-elected. This was based on their fears of a United Nations international treaty being proposed that would have restricted the international trade and shipment of arms.

The rate at which American gun manufacturers were exporting weapons was rapidly escalating and countries around the world were asking the United Nations to do something about our country’s irresponsible shipping of guns into their countries. Mexico was naturally a strong advocate of the treaty as their country has been flooded with guns profitably sold to the drug cartels by dealers in the United States. Maybe we should build a wall?

Pressure from the NRA killed the international gun treaty... so the guns continue to flow from America to other countries as international sales by gun manufacturers have surged.

HERE IS A CHART SHOWING THE HUGE AMOUNT OF EXPORTS AT THAT TIME.

Arms transfer agreements with developing nations



The NRA is now attempting to arm the entire world. And they are doing it quickly!

NRA Myth #3

We should arm the teachers and personnel in our schools for the protection of our children.

There were armed guards at Columbine... and future guards in our schools would probably be retired police officers carrying hand guns. Easily disposed of and shredded by kids carrying assault weapons.

It is also ironic that at a time when conservatives are demonizing teachers and embracing massive cuts to education that they are somehow willing to spend more money on guns and guards in our schools. But for the NRA's gun manufacturers... this could prove to be yet another bonanza of corporate profits as they sell *more* weapons into all of our nation's schools (for "the kids" protection).

When one Congressman was asked about the cost to the taxpayers of such a program they simply suggested that the teachers could buy their own weapons. So... how many people want to send their kids to a school where teachers are all “packing heat” of their own personal choice? A gun that will probably be sitting in a handbag or desk drawer just waiting to be discovered by an unstable student. And are the teachers all stable? Do they have training?

NRA Myth #4

It's all about our second amendment rights and what our “founding fathers” intended.

First of all... our “founding fathers” were talking about *militias*.

All males at the time were required by law to own a military type of firearm as the defense of the country was in the hands of local militias. There was no national army. Similar to Switzerland today which is why their gun statistics are so high on the earlier chart. More guns always equals more death.

And our “founding fathers” specifically called for a “well *regulated* militia”.

The key word being “*regulated*”... as representatives of the government at the time called on individuals at their homes to inspect their weapons and insure that all of the guns were **REGISTERED** with the government. Yes... all of our early citizen's guns were originally registered with the government. Which at the time meant single shot muskets... Not AR-15s!

And despite the second amendment... it is certainly illegal today to own hand grenades or surface-to-air missiles. So why do we draw the line *after* assault weapons?

Americans today should be allowed all of the muskets they desire... or shot guns... or hand guns. *No one* is talking about taking those away. But we do not need military style weapons.

And if we really want to follow the actions of our “founding fathers” then we should also reinstate slavery and take away the right to vote for women. Even after the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation... African- Americans were still not allowed to own firearms.

White men ruled the world... It was a modern day Republican Party / Alt-Right dream!

NRA Myth #5

Their insincere “concern” about the mentally unstable having access to guns.

If the NRA really believes this... why did they pressure Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid to insert a provision into the Obamacare law that [forbids doctors from discussing firearms](#) with patients? So if a young man tells his doctor or psychiatrist that he has violent or suicidal desires... under Obamacare... his doctor cannot ask him if he owns a gun. This is insane!

And more recently [Donald Trump signed a bill into law](#) reversing an earlier Obama regulation making it harder for the mentally ill to purchase guns. Why is this not being covered? Even today Paul Ryan was on the floor of the house stating that mental health reform is the [“critical ingredient” in stopping mass shootings](#). So why did he vote for the bill that Trump signed?

NRA Myth #6

The *real* culprits are our video games and violent films...

Don't you know? It's all the elitist liberal Hollywood types causing the problems!

As the NRA fights to shred the first amendment in favor of the second!

This one is easy. The very same violent video games and films that flood the American market are also popular and easily available around the world. Even liberals are talking about the evils of violent films and games. And it's all bullshit. [There is NO connection](#). (check link).

And if the NRA and the gun manufactures are so concerned about the violent video games...

Then why did the McMillan Group (the manufacturer of a high powered sniper rifle) and the Magput company (the manufacturer of high capacity magazines and accessories for assault weapons) actually [cross promote](#) (with links) their “products” with Electronic Arts? (The maker of the highly violent Medal of Honor series of games).

In a statement, Electronic Arts said video game makers (like film producers) “frequently license the images of people, sports franchises, buildings, cars and military equipment.”

So if you were playing the game... you could quickly find out how you could “graduate” up to the “real thing”! The company added that it did not receive payments for using branded images in Medal of Honor (After the Newtown shootings the links were taken down).

But then... in a move that gets the “bad timing” award... on the one-month anniversary of the Newtown shootings... the NRA released their own [NRA branded iPad “AP”](#) (a game of sorts) that simulated the firing of weapons... including sniper rifles.

NRA BACKGROUND CHECK #1

Wayne LaPierre – Executive Vice President of the NRA.

Wayne LaPierre entered the NRA within the “radical fringe” of extremists that took over the organization in 1977. He rose to national prominence when he wrote a fundraising letter shortly before the Oklahoma City terrorist bombing in which he described federal agents as “jack-booted government thugs who wear Nazi bucket helmets and black storm trooper uniforms”. Lifetime [NRA member George H. W. Bush](#) was so upset by the letter that he resigned from the organization at the time.

LaPierre also believes that the “Fast and Furious” gun running program begun under George W. Bush was a government plot to increase gun restrictions.

A bit paranoid perhaps?

NRA BACKGROUND CHECK #2

David Keene – President of the NRA

For crystal clear evidence that the NRA has moved from being a “sportsmen” organization to a political one simply consider the background of President David Keene.

While in college in the 1960s Keene was the national chairman of the conservative “Young Americans for Freedom” and then later became a political assistant to disgraced Vice President Spiro Agnew in the Nixon Administration. He has spent his entire life before the NRA working in Republican politics rather than having anything to do with “sporting interests”.

As one of the supposed objectives of the NRA is to promote “responsible gun ownership” it should be noted that [President Keene’s own son David Michael Keene](#) was sentenced to ten years in prison for “using, brandishing, and discharging a firearm in a crime of violence” after a “road rage” incident resulted in his firing a handgun at another motorist in Washington D.C.

How can anyone take this guy seriously when he obviously can’t influence the actions of his own family?

But maybe it *IS* the media after all?

Not the film industry or the gaming industry... but rather the radical right wing media outlets of AM talk radio, Fox News, and the endless regurgitations from the deepest darkest regions of the internet where facts fly loosely and the truth is buried under waves of paranoid delusion. As it is from these sources that fears fester into insane beliefs of an evil foreboding government... complete with “black helicopters”... and the “jack booted thugs” about which David Keene so ominously warned NRA members after the radicalization of the organization.

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(Some of this information was from a previous Gazette written at the time of Newtown.)

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And for a romantic or relaxing weekend in the Catskills go to www.GROUSEHOUSE.net

And you can also check out my music at www.HETHERWICK-MUSIC.com

