

Mass Shootings Run Amok?

Unless you've been hiding under a rock or took a vacation in one of the rare places where you couldn't get a signal for your phone, you've heard that the country has once again been rocked by mass shootings.

This wasn't just one mass shooting; but two separate events that happened the same day.

As we've grown to expect, the mainstream media jumped on one of their favorite hobby horses and started talking about gun control, before the guns used in these crimes could cool off from the heat of being fired. As per usual, the rhetoric and proposed solutions have little to do with the actual crime and have no hope of preventing it from happening again.



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One of the interesting “statistics” that’s being thrown around this time is that there have supposedly been 252 “mass shootings” this year. That number puts it at more than one per day, a number that should be shocking to anyone. I’m probably being cynical to say that’s the only reason that number has been used at all.

But is that number correct? That’s a lot harder question to answer.

To start with, it’s important to note that there is no “official” mass shooting statistic. The official statistic

that the FBI publishes is of “mass killings” not “mass shootings.” To qualify as a mass killing, there must be three or more people killed in the same incident. That number is much lower than the 252 events that are being highly publicized.

So, just where did that number come from?

The number being quoted comes from the Gun Violence Archive. While they have the data online to back up their claims, it has to be taken in context, in order to understand what is really being said. Not even all left-leaning sources agree with this figure. ABC News reported that there have been “At Least 17 Deadly Mass Shootings” so far this year. The real number is somewhere around 30.

What causes differences in these numbers, as well as a lot of misunderstandings, is that different people define “mass shootings” in different ways. The Gun Violence Archive defines it as four or more people being killed or injured. A quick look through their archive shows that there are a lot of shootings where nobody is killed. There are also a lot which can be attributed to violence between criminal gangs, something that the FBI and other law-enforcement agencies categorizes separately.

But the 252 figure makes for good news headlines, especially since it is presented in such a way that makes it sound like these are all the kinds of mass killing events that we all hate, where a crazed gunman tries to rack up the highest score of kills they can, before meeting their own end. Those events are actually much less common than the media would like to make us think.

Even so, one murder is one too many. There is no “acceptable” threshold of how many people are killed, before we say there is something wrong and that something needs to be done about it. But the measures that are promulgated by our lawmakers

have to provide some real solutions, not just fit their own brand of political rhetoric.

It's Not Just Guns



Those on the political left would have us believe that all of this violence is because there are too

many privately owned guns in the country. But it's not about the guns. We humans have been killing each other since Cain busted open Abel's head with a rock. Rocks are much easier to use than guns and much more prolific, yet I don't see anyone trying to pass laws against owning and carrying rocks.

Just a few short days after those two shootings over the weekend, a man in Orange County, California went on a killing rampage using a knife. By the time the police took him into custody, he had killed four people and sent two others to the emergency room.

This is, by far, not the first time mass murder has been committed with a knife. Just after the Sandy Hook massacre, a man in China killed over 30 people with a knife. Knives are becoming the weapon of choice amongst criminals in London, England as well, with more violence being perpetrated using knives in that supposedly peaceful city (supposedly peaceful

because they can't own guns), than gun violence in New York City.

The sad thing about the Orange County stabbings is that they never should have happened. The perpetrator of those crimes was a known gang member and convicted felon. Yet, thanks to leftist policies, he was released from prison after serving only 16 months on a list of 14 convictions. According to law enforcement officials, the only reason why that man wasn't behind bars was the passage of California Assembly Bill 109, signed into law by Democrat Governor Jerry Brown.

It's interesting to note that this mass murder was hardly reported in the national news. Maybe that's because it didn't help to push the gun control narrative. For that matter, of the two mass murders committed over the weekend, only one has been widely publicized, because the other makes the liberal left look bad.

All murder is bad; but the sad reality is that people who want to commit violence on their fellow man will always find a way to do it. Baseball bats, hammers and vehicles have been used as weapons of murder as well. Guns are only used because that's the "style" right now. As we can see from London, if guns are taken away, criminals will merely turn to some other weapon.

What to Do

According to those on the left, the answer to all this killing is to eliminate guns through more gun laws. But the last I checked, murder was still illegal, regardless of the weapon used. These killers are already breaking the law, actually multiple laws, in order to commit murder. No matter how many more laws are passed, it won't solve the problem.

Typically, the AR-15 and other supposed "assault rifles" are the ones vilified by the mainstream media and Democrat

lawmakers. But the AR-15 has been in production for over 50 years. If the gun was the problem, why has it only been in the last 20 years that we've seen an increase in mass killings? Shouldn't it have started as soon as that supposed "weapon of war" was made available to the public?

This alone proves that the problem isn't the weapons being used. Yes, some of these demented people have used variants of the AR-15 and AK-47 to commit murder; but that doesn't mean a thing. If they didn't have those firearms available to them, they would just use something else. There are much more deadly firearms readily available on the civilian market.

Yet the left keeps vilifying the guns, the NRA (and all its members) and all 100 million plus law-abiding gun owners in the country. Sharon Watts, the founder of Moms Demand Action, has been quoted as saying, "The NRA wants us to believe only good guys with guns stop bad guys with guns. But when the bad guys have semiautomatic rifles, bulk ammo, and a death wish, the only thing that will stop them are stronger gun laws."

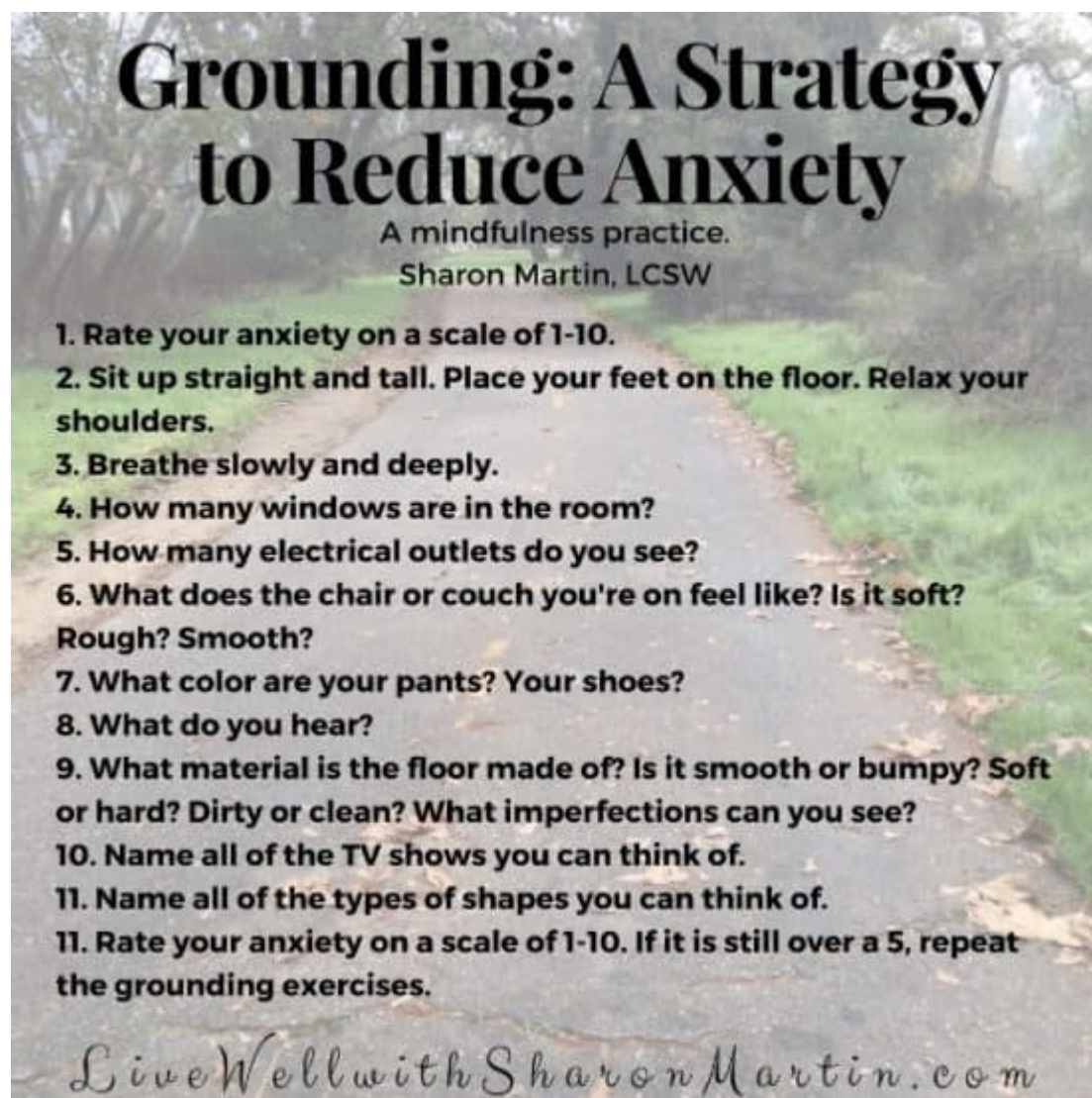
The laws we have aren't working, because the criminals are breaking them, so we need stronger laws. Uh, how does that work? I know of no gun law that carries as severe a penalty as murder does, yet these people are still committing murder. In fact, most of them expect to die, even killing themselves, as part of their murder spree.

How were the two incidents over the weekend put to an end? In one case, the shooter ended his spree and turned himself in to the police. In the other, armed police officers, otherwise known as "good guys with guns" took down the shooter, firing a total of 58 shots to put him down.

There is ample evidence to show that good guys with guns are the solution to bad guys with guns, to those who want to see the truth. But those who want to push the gun control narrative don't want to see that evidence, because it doesn't

match their preconceived notions. Sadly, all they care about is using these situations to further their political goals, not solving the problem.

Mental Health



There is also ample evidence to show that many of the people who perpetrate these horrific crimes are mentally unstable. In a high percentage of cases, they are

either being treated or had been treated with psychotropic drugs. Those drugs have been shown to cause violent tendencies. Yet we ignore the risk that these people pose to society, because nobody has figured out how to deal with them effectively.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that eliminating psychotropic drugs will eliminate the problem or that keeping guns out of the hands of those who have been prescribed those drugs will. However, it appears that keeping guns out of their

hands will greatly reduce the number of these incidents.

Legal mechanisms already exist to do this. There have been laws on the books for years, which allow for the suspension of people's Second Amendment rights, if they have a criminal record or have been judged to be mentally unstable. Perhaps if those laws were used, we might be able to keep firearms out of the hands of some of these potential murderers.

“Red Flag” Laws

Please note that these laws are not the same as the Red Flag laws that are being pushed so hard today. The existing law requires a hearing before a judge, where evidence has to be presented, proving that the individual should not be allowed access to firearms. They are allowed to defend themselves. If insufficient evidence is provided, they are assumed to be innocent until proven guilty, following a bedrock of American law. This is called “due process.”

Red Flag laws are different in that there is no presumption of innocence until proven guilty. Nor is there any due process of law. Rather, the judge makes a ruling based on nothing more than the testimony of the person making the accusation and any follow-up investigation by the police. There is no due process. The accused isn't even allowed to face their accuser. They are assumed to be guilty, until they prove themselves to be innocent; and that's not allowed to even start until at least two weeks later.

What this means is that a disgruntled spouse, former spouse, family member, neighbor, co-worker, customer or boss can make a complaint that you or I are a danger to society and our guns are taken away from us, without due process. That's totally against the constitution.

I know someone who recently went through a divorce. The now ex-wife declared that the man was violent and that she was in

fear for her life. Based upon that alone, a restraining order was filed with the court, which included that his Second Amendment rights be stripped from him. He was a concealed carry licensee and had never committed a felony in his life. Yet his rights were stripped from him and it took him 10 months to get his guns back.

Not only that, but the ex-wife reported him to the FBI, accusing him of fabricating firearms in their garage and trafficking them into Mexico. He was investigated by the Joint Terrorist Task Force (JTTF), and while they dropped the investigation, deciding that he was not doing what she accused him of, he is forever in the FBI computers as being a "person of interest" who had been investigated. In any future dealings he might have with federal law enforcement, even one where he was the aggravated party, that stigma would be hanging over his head.

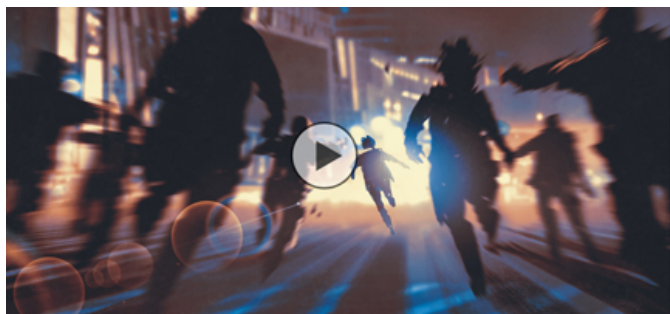
Where is the justice in this? Some would say, "It's worth it if it saves even one life," but they aren't the ones who will lose their rights. They aren't the ones who will have their reputation destroyed. They aren't the ones who will have to spend thousands of dollars in legal fees to get back their own property.

If we can find those who are likely to perpetrate these crimes, then yes, take their guns away. But do it properly, following existing law and respecting their rights. Make sure that due process is followed and that they are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Only take guns away from those who have been honestly and fairly shown to be a potential public menace.

That's a lot different than Red Flag laws which can be easily manipulated and misused and the laws which are on the books today. If our lawmakers actually pass these laws, we're going to see a whole lot of people falsely charged, some of whom will be gunned down in the process of confiscating their guns.

That has already happened once, due to Red Flag laws, isn't that once too many?

Please don't take it as if I'm trashing the Gun Violence Archive. While they are a slightly left of center organization, it appears that they are trying to be an honest purveyor of information. Their website has a lot of useful information on it, including the use of guns for self-defense.



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