



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 18, 2012

Ten Liberal Lies People Believe about Guns

In the wake of the tragic Newtown massacre, we're hearing all the usual lies and misconceptions about firearms. And since it's wise to be educated on a topic before advocating policy on it, this is a good time to explode the gun myths being bandied about.



1. The issue is automatic weapons.

Boston mayor Thomas Menino and CNN's Don Lemon both recently repeated the common mantra that we have to get "automatic weapons" off the streets. Automatic weapons, however, are machine guns, which, except for individuals who receive special permission from the federal government, have been [illegal to own since](#) the passage of The National Firearms Act in 1934. In addition, the Firearms Owners' Protection Act of 1986 made it generally illegal for any civilian to own an automatic weapon manufactured after that year.

2. Assault Weapons

"Assault weapon" is certainly a menacing, rhetorically effective term, which is why the media use it so much. In reality, though, the guns in question (such as the AR-15-type rifles and AK-47s available to the public) are not machine guns but simply *semi-automatic* firearms; this means that *one* bullet is released with each trigger pull. And virtually every gun sold in America is semi-automatic.

A true "assault weapon" would be fully automatic or have a "special-fire" feature. What the guns incorrectly labeled assault weapons do have is a military *appearance*. But if looks are everything, we might as well put a Porsche body on a Yugo chassis and call it a race car.

3. The 1990s Assault Weapons Ban (AWB) got these weapons off the street.

After the Colorado movie-theater shooting, the *Daily News* [wrote](#), "Once, federal law would have kept [shooter James] Holmes' hands off a superdeadly [sic] weapon like the AR-15. In 1994, under President Bill Clinton, Congress outlawed the manufacture and possession of assault weapons, but the statute had a 10-year expiration date."

But media ignorance, it seems, has no expiration date. The AWB did [nothing to eliminate weapons](#) such as the one Holmes — or Newtown shooter Adam Lanza — used. It simply outlawed the sale of such firearms when they had certain combinations of relatively insignificant, superficial features, such as a bayonet mount and a pistol grip, or a folding stock and a flash suppressor. But the guns themselves were still readily available.

So, sorry, my liberal friends, but Bill Clinton and the rest of your leftist leadership conned you.



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4. What we're calling "assault weapons" are especially deadly

As with the Newtown shooter, James Holmes' "menacing looking" AR-15 got all the attention; in reality, however, most of his victims died of shotgun wounds. *The New York Times* explained why, [writing](#), "If anything, the experts said, a shotgun in that [soft-target, close-quarters] situation might have been the most lethal, since every shell can spray a half-dozen or more pellets, each capable of killing or maiming a person."

Except there's no "if" about it. A shotgun is a hand cannon. This is why G. Gordon Liddy once said that, when he was at the FBI, the agents' gun of choice when going out on a raid would be a shotgun, not an automatic or semi-automatic rifle.

5. Guns aren't generally used for self defense

While evil done with guns makes headlines, we don't hear about the evil thwarted with them. But [according to](#) Florida State University criminologist Dr. Gary Kleck, citizens use guns to defend themselves approximately two million times per year.

6. Foreign nations have lower murder rates because of gun control.

Britain is often used as an example. But as Thomas Sowell recently [wrote](#):

Britain has had a lower murder rate than the United States for more than two centuries — and, for most of that time, the British had no more stringent gun control laws than the United States....

The crime rate, including the rate of crimes committed with guns, is far higher in Britain now than it was back in the days when there were few restrictions on Britons buying firearms.

In 1954, there were only a dozen armed robberies in London but, by the 1990s — after decades of ever tightening gun ownership restrictions — there were more than a hundred times as many armed robberies.

Sowell also points out that Russia, Mexico, and Brazil have stricter gun-control laws than the United States but higher murder rates, while the Swiss have a far higher gun-ownership rate than the Germans but a lower murder rate. Other nations he cites as having high gun ownership but little murder are Israel, Finland, and New Zealand.

7. School massacres are a modern American phenomenon.

Untrue. As John Fund [writes](#):

Mass shootings are no more common than they have been in past decades....

In fact, the high point for mass killings in the U.S. was 1929, according to criminologist Grant Duwe of the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

Incidents of mass murder in the U.S. declined from 42 in the 1990s [during the "assault weapons" ban] to 26 in the first decade of this century.

The chances of being killed in a mass shooting are about what they are for being struck by lightning.

Until the Newtown horror, the three worst K-12 school shootings ever had taken place in either Britain or Germany.

Then there is Norway, where in 2011 Anders Breivik murdered 77 people. In contrast, while I don't



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have precise figures, let's *very* generously estimate the number of people killed in American mass murders during the last 30 years to be 500. Given that our population is 310 million and Norway's is only 5 million, this means that Norway's mass-murder rate is almost 10 times as high as ours.

Beware of Norway, the mass-murder capital of the world.

8. Americans want more gun control

Celinda Lake and Joshua Ulibarri of progressive Lake Research recently [asserted this](#) in an op-ed. Yet it's deceptive. The public does support criminal background checks and making it more difficult for the mentally ill and drug users to acquire weapons. In addition, they may support a ban on the incorrectly labeled "assault weapons" only because of the belief that they're machine guns. But the truth is, [writes](#) David Frum, that "support for gun control has collapsed in the United States" over the past 20 years.

9. More guns mean more crime

Legal scholar John Lott refuted this years ago in his [book](#) *More Guns, Less Crime*. Thomas Sowell also addressed this myth in the earlier cited article, writing:

The rate of gun ownership ... is higher in rural areas than in urban areas, but the murder rate is higher in urban areas. The rate of gun ownership is higher among whites than among blacks, but the murder rate is higher among blacks. For the country as a whole, hand gun ownership doubled in the late 20th century, while the murder rate went down.

10. The Second Amendment only guarantees a right to raise a militia

Not according to leading Second Amendment scholar Stephen Halbrook, Ph.D. As he wrote in his [book](#) *That Every Man be Armed*:

In recent years it has been suggested that the Second Amendment protects the "collective" right of states to maintain militias, while it does not protect the right of "the people" to keep and bear arms. If anyone entertained this notion in the period during which the Constitution and Bill of Rights were debated and ratified, it remains one of the most closely guarded secrets of the eighteenth century, for no known writing surviving from the period between 1787 and 1791 states such a thesis. The phrase "the people" meant the same thing in the Second Amendment as it did in the First, Fourth, Ninth and Tenth Amendments — that is, each and every free person.

As a bonus, I'll include something else apparently untrue: the media's claim to desire honesty in Second Amendment discussion. For example, Celinda Lake and Joshua Ulibarri wrote in their editorial that they wanted "open and honest debate" and that people such as me "should welcome a gun-control debate — especially if they think they have the winning hand." Well, I wrote to them and said that I'd debate them, as I put it, "anytime, anywhere." As of this writing, they have not responded to my challenge.



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