



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 16, 2010

Florida Gunman Provokes Gun-control Debate

It was bound to happen. The dramatic story of a Florida gunman opening fire on the Panama City school board is now being used as a talking point in the debate over gun control.

[The Blaze](#) reports, "Last night's edition of CNN's '[Parker/Spitzer](#)' included a debate over gun control sparked by the recent Florida shooting. The question, in short: What can, or should, be done about a crazy man like Clay Duke running around and shooting up a school board?"



Appearing as guests on this particular episode were Mayor Jeffrey Jones of Patterson, New Jersey, who favors increased gun control, and Kevin Williamson of the *National Review*, a Second Amendment advocate.

The Blaze adds: "Taking the gun control side is former N.J. Governor Elliot Spitzer. Not only is he the token liberal on the show but, as the media has reported lately, he's also hijacked the show and taken the spotlight from fellow host, and sort-of conservative Kathleen Parker. So what happens, the segment turns into a we-need-more-gun-control segment real quick."

Mayor Jones began the segment by making an indisputable point. According to Jones, "The [gun] laws on the books are about folks who are abiding by the law. We're talking about folks who couldn't care less, so there has to be a much more aggressive approach."

However, he goes on to say: "I do understand and appreciate the benefit of anyone through this Constitution who bears arms, but show me one weapon, period, that doesn't kill. And tell me about the individual who owns the weapon. They're on the streets, don't have a clue what they're doing, and being extremely reckless. There are social conditions as part of that and other things. But the bottom line is there are too many [guns] on my streets."

Spitzer helped to articulate the Mayor's argument: "What we need to do is control the way [guns] are being sold, when we know they are being sold to criminals."

Parker responded, "Well, obviously."

Parker's response prompted Spitzer to continue on, asserting that pro-gun groups stand in the way of efforts to stop criminals from obtaining guns: "Well, don't say 'obviously' because that is what has been opposed by the NRA, and I'm not trying to turn them into a villainous group, although I fundamentally disagree with them, but they have used their political strength ... to prevent the ATF from using trace data and transfer that data to local police departments, and that just seems to be insane."

Williamson disputed Spitzer's characterization about why gun owners don't want to register their firearms, contending that the issue with the trace data entails privacy concerns and a fundamental lack



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of trust in the government to maintain individual rights. He also remarked that gun-rights groups fear national gun registries because of fears that the guns would eventually be seized, adding, "I don't think that's an entirely irrational belief."

[History](#) indicates that it's not. After all, history shows that tyranny is more easily achieved by restricting access to guns. In Germany, for example, five years prior to Hitler's rise to power, Germany passed the Law on Firearms and Ammunition, which substantially increased gun restrictions. Similarly, Stalin's regime introduced strict gun control. Even the British government sought to disarm the colonists prior to the start of the Revolutionary War.

Spitzer was not only wrong about that fact, but he revealed a fundamental misinterpretation of gun data. While accusing the NRA of launching a theological position against Mayors like Jones who are trying to keep guns off of their streets, Spitzer virtually alleged that pro-gun groups are responsible for street crimes because, he feels, gun-registration schemes will stop criminals from accessing guns.

Of course, the data proves otherwise. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, an overwhelming majority of all firearms used in criminal acts are obtained illegally.

Additionally, according to the [National Self Defense Survey](#) conducted by Florida State University in 1994, the rate of defensive gun use can be projected to be up to 2.5 million per year nationwide, meaning criminal acts are being averted from gun ownership, not increasing.

Second Amendment critics often cite accidental gun deaths as a reason to oppose gun rights. On November 17, 1999, however, [Benton County News Tribune](#) made a very interesting comparison between accidental deaths resulting from legal guns, and those resulting from medical malpractice. The figures are startling:

Number of physicians in the U.S.

700,000

Accidental deaths caused by physicians per year

120,000

Accidental deaths per physician

0.171

Number of gun owners in the U.S.

80,000,000

Number of accidental gun deaths per year (all age groups)

1,500

Accidental deaths per gun owner

0.0000188

Therefore, doctors are approximately 9,000 times more dangerous than gun owners.

Should the United States government pass laws restricting physicians as well?

In the end, Williamson and Parker successfully placed, at the very least, a reasonable doubt in viewers' minds that more and stricter gun-control laws would decrease gun crimes.

Parker reminded Spitzer and her guests, "In 2009, gun sales were up 12 percent and the crime rate was down. [Therefore], you can't draw a cause and effect line from gun ownership to crime."

Naturally, Mayor Jones and Governor Spitzer did not address Parker's statistic.



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