



Homicides in Chicago to Establish a New Record in 2012 — Who's to Blame?

Chicago is about to set a new record for violence, [according to the Chicago Tribune](#). In the first eleven months, homicides have risen from 398 a year ago to more than 480 at the end of November, with some predicting a new record of 500 before the end of the year.

Some have blamed the weather, including Jeremy Gorner, the *Chicago Tribune* reporter, who said that they “skyrocketed amid unseasonably warm weather,” while others say that the rate of homicide in the Windy City has actually declined recently thanks to “gang audits” being conducted by Chicago police. Robert Tracy of CPD said “I think we’ve done a very good job with that.”



The inevitable college professor tried to explain that the increase in homicides is all just a statistical aberration. Arthur Lurigio, a professor of criminal justice at Loyola University Chicago, was actually quoted as saying: “Last year’s total was markedly low, so we should expect an uptick this year simply because statistics fluctuate.”

[Bob Costas](#), the NBC sports commentator, [explained](#) that he thinks crime can be traced to a “gun culture.” In defending what many considered to be improper remarks about Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Jovan Belcher’s shooting death of his girlfriend, Costas said:

What I was talking about here — and I’m sorry if that wasn’t clear to everybody — was a gun culture...

It demonstrates itself in the Wild West, Dirty Harry mentality of people who actually believe that if a number of people were armed in the theater in Aurora, they would have been able to take down this nut-job in body armor and military-style artillery.

It plays itself out in the inner cities where teenage kids are somehow armed to the hilt. And it plays itself in the sports world where young athletes are disproportionately armed.

[Katie Pavlich thinks](#) that Costas is right, sort of. She thinks there are two cultures in America: the “peaceful, traditional” gun culture, and the “violent” gun culture found in gangs in Chicago and elsewhere:

The first gun culture is deeply seated in American history and her founding. Founding Fathers like George Washington understood that an armed citizenry would prevent government tyranny, which is why we have the Second Amendment....

The other gun culture in America can be found in the inner city of Chicago, Washington D.C., New York City, Los Angeles and others. Ironically, violent gun culture is found within gangs in cities



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with the strictest gun laws.

[Alan Gottlieb](#), chairman of the [Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms](#) (CCRKBR), [blames](#) Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago city council for the increase in homicides:

Rahm Emanuel has some blood on his hands. He and the city council have done everything possible to prevent law-abiding Chicago residents from exercising their restored Second Amendment rights in the two years since the Supreme Court's landmark McDonald ruling.

Just four days after that ruling, the city council adopted the Responsible Gun Owners Ordinance which required prospective gun owners to take a firearm safety course at a gun range in order to obtain a permit to own a gun in their home. But then the council banned all gun ranges in Chicago.

Gottlieb and his organization sued the city and obtained a ruling that the city could not ban gun ranges. When that came down, the council then put such onerous restrictions on potential gun ranges that made it nearly impossible to start one, thus keeping Chicago citizens defenseless in the face of rampant crime. Concluded Gottlieb:

So nobody has a way to protect themselves from the bad guys who obviously don't care about the gun laws — [who are] are going to commit murder or rape or robbery because [they] don't care about what the gun law says, [they're] going to get the gun illegally anyway — and so the good people are penalized by the law and the bad people, basically have targets of opportunity to shoot at.

[John Lott](#) gets even closer to the underlying reason why Chicago is about to break its own record on homicides in a single year. He has studied the matter for years, and has written extensively about it — six books, including his highly acclaimed [More Guns, Less Crime](#), a scholarly study of 29 years' worth of data — and concludes that there is a predictable inverse relationship between gun laws and crime.

He thinks [the criminal culture that thrives in Chicago](#) is to blame:

To put it bluntly, criminals are not typical citizens. About 90 percent of adult murderers have an adult criminal record. They tend to have low IQs and long histories of social problems. Murders are also very heavily concentrated ... in urban areas.

Over 70 percent of murders occur in about 3 percent of the counties in the US. Even if our country passed laws banning guns, most of these murderers are not the kind of people who are going to voluntarily turn in their weapons.

It seems that everyone has an opinion about why Chicago's homicide rate is so high: It's the weather, it's a statistical aberration, it's the gun culture, it's Rahm Emanuel and Chicago's city council, it's the criminals.

One part that is missing from nearly every conversation is any discussion of the deeply embedded violence in professional sports, especially and particularly professional football, and how it supports violence off the field as well as on.

Jeff Benedict and Don Yeager produced a damning indictment of professional football in 1998 in their book [Pros and Cons: The Criminals Who Play in the NFL](#). By simply collecting readily available public data on the criminal records of those playing professional football in just the 1996/1997 season, they discovered that more than one in five players "had been arrested or indicted for serious crimes ranging from fraud to homicide," and that coaches not only ignored such information when considering hiring



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them but some actually sought those with violent criminal records to play for their teams.

There's a lot of blame to go around to explain why Chicago's homicide rate is about to set a record. It's too bad that no one is talking about the sport that Jovan Belcher, the player for the Kansas City Chiefs who ignited all the conversation in the first place by murdering his girlfriend, was engaged in before turning the gun on himself: the deliberately violent sport of professional football.

Photo of downtown Chicago at night

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