



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 17, 2016

Philadelphia Gun-range Owner: Daily News Reporter Kuntzman Misrepresented AR-15 Interview

There was no guarantee Frank Stelmach would talk to me. The owner of Double Tap Shooting Range and Gun Shop in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he'd been featured in an anti-AR-15 [article](#) written by Gersh Kuntzman (shown) of New York's *Daily News*. And Stelmach sounded none too happy hearing from yet another journalist. "It would be nice if journalists would write what you actually say!" complained Stelmach on the phone. Concerned that this once-bitten, twice-shy man might hang up on me, I quickly chimed in, "I'm pro-gun. I'm on the other side." Stelmach then asked, "How can I know you're really pro-gun?" I offered to send him a number of my Second Amendment-oriented articles, and he later was kind enough to speak to me.



Stelmach was right to be wary. In the wake of the horrible Orlando massacre — in which an "AR-15-type rifle" (it was a Sig Sauer MCX, to be precise) as the media put it, was used by Muslim terrorist Omar Mateen — the *Daily News* has been front and center agitating against such weapons (The paper's June 13 cover, referring to the Orlando massacre, [shamelessly read](#) "THANKS, NRA"). And it appears that Kuntzman misrepresented the gun-shop owner's words, though perhaps not nearly as much as the *News* has misrepresented the firearms.

Kuntzman went to Stelmach's range to try an AR-15. It was supposedly field research for the article he ultimately wrote, a [piece so outrageous](#) that it evoked accusations of dishonesty, with some critics calling the journalist a "liar." And here's its most cited passage:

The recoil bruised my shoulder, which can happen if you don't know what you're doing. The brass shell casings disoriented me as they flew past my face. The smell of sulfur and destruction made me sick. The explosions — loud like a bomb — gave me a temporary form of PTSD. For at least an hour after firing the gun just a few times, I was anxious and irritable.

None of the above rings even remotely true.

For the record, I've fired numerous guns in my life, and years ago I had the opportunity to shoot the AR-15 on multiple occasions. And I can verify that the weapon is rightfully famous for having *almost no kick*. It possesses this quality partially because the mechanism is designed to absorb much of the energy of the blast. In fact, this is a reason the rifle is so popular and can be easily fired by even young children, such as the seven-year-old girl in the video below (forward to 2:55 if you want to see just the actual firing).



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Questions: Did the girl — who was shooting an AR for the first time — exclaim “Ow!” or indicate discomfort upon firing in any way? Did she rub her shoulder? Did she appear shocked at the recoil? And if a small girl shooter, weighing perhaps 70 pounds soaking wet, was barely jolted by the kick at all, how could the gun have bruised a grown man?

It simply couldn't have. When I asked Stelmach if Kuntzman complained about discomfort or if he even mentioned that the weapon hurt his shoulder, he answered no and called the notion that an AR-15 could cause such bruising “nonsense.” And let's be clear: The AR has far less recoil than *any other firearm I've ever shot*. Thus, unless Kuntzman had some bizarre psychogenic reaction induced by stress (he did claim to be “terrified”), I simply don't believe he suffered any such bruising. My judgment is that he made the whole story up.

Then there are the shell casings that supposedly “disoriented” Kuntzman as they “flew past” his face. Please look at the picture below of the journalist firing the gun with Stelmach.



Now, I don't doubt that Kuntzman was disoriented (and likely still is); note, however, that the journalist shoots right-handed, so his head is on the rifle's left side — but the AR's ejection port is on the rifle's *right side*. Ergo, the shell casings would have been directed toward the right and *could not* have flown past his face.

As for the “smell of sulfur and destruction” making the journalist sick and the bomb-like “explosions” giving him a “temporary form of PTSD,” Stelmach tells me that Kuntzman fired a total of *three shots*; he then bowed out while grousing that the AR-15 was a “dangerous weapon,” which, I suspect, was his predetermined conclusion.

I do believe the journalist was for an hour, as he put it, “anxious and irritable.” One could just imagine the possible inner conflict: “I've been assigned this story and it must reflect the *News'* anti-gun slant, but the AR isn't really that fearsome. How can I do this job and tell the truth?!”

By the way, that the above could characterize Kuntzman would come as no surprise to Jack Kemp, a friend and colleague of mine. Relating how he [personally saw](#) the journalist hurl a mostly-empty can of Diet Coke at a “Truman Democrat' woman” he was debating in 2006, Kemp calls Kuntzman “a total jerk.”

While I didn't ask Stelmach if he agrees with that characterization, he did state that Kuntzman misrepresented his position on one thing in particular: European-like mental-health screening for prospective gun owners. Stelmach told me that the journalist asked *him* about Europe, at which point he proceeded to explain European standards. He also made clear to me, however, that he doesn't advocate such standards in the United States. And as someone who lived under the Marxists in Poland



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— where gun ownership was basically impossible for the average person — Stelmach does appear to value Second Amendment rights.

But what of the AR-15's value? Is it a "killing machine" that is "a mass murderer's best friend," as the *News* [has called it](#), or reminiscent of "a cannon," as Kuntzman put it? The AR-15 fires the .223 round — as did the Sig Sauer MCX used by Mateen — a small-caliber cartridge of the exact diameter of a .22. Yes, .22s are those teeny-weeny cartridges you put in your Marlin as a kid. But what of its "killing power"? The list found [here](#) ranks 41 different rifle rounds' by power, defined basically as a function of the bullet's mass multiplied by its velocity.

And the .223 has the *second least* killing power at 10.1.

In contrast, the .458 Winchester Magnum heads the list at a whopping 217.3. This is precisely why, mind you, *many states prohibit the use of AR-15s for hunting big game*. They consider the .223 to not have the stopping power to reliably bring down game animals, such as deer. For that you need a more formidable weapon — you know, the type the media currently aren't even talking about banning because metrosexual reporters don't see them looking all black, sleek, and cool and spraying bullets in war movies.

Speaking of which, what of the AR's rapidity of fire? Kuntzman claims that even "in semi-automatic mode, it is very simple to squeeze off two dozen rounds before you even know what has happened."

This is perhaps possible — if you're "disoriented" and generally don't know what's happening in your life — because you have to pull the trigger two dozen times to "squeeze off" those two dozen rounds. You see, that's what "semi-automatic" means: Every trigger pull releases one shot, and only one shot.

And the ARs, and Sig Sauer MCXs, available to the public are configured to only fire semi-automatic — just like virtually every firearm sold in America. In other words, almost all legal guns can be fired as rapidly as these weapons. They are not, contrary to myth, "machine guns"; consequently, neither are they "assault weapons" (a propaganda term), as a rifle must be capable of machine-gun fire to qualify as such.

So if "AR-15-type rifles" (cue the scary music) really should be banned because their function makes them dangerous "killing machines," then also banned should be other functionally identical firearms — meaning, virtually every gun in America. And, of course, this is precisely what anti-Second Amendment zealots such as Kuntzman want.

In fairness, though, Kuntzman isn't all wrong. He opened his piece of faux journalism with the line "It felt to me like a bazooka." And sure enough, much like the AR-15, a bazooka has no recoil.



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