



NYC Mayor Bloomberg: "Too Many Guns"

According to the Associated Press, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg "railed against gun violence" on December 11, one day after a street peddler died in a shootout with police in Times Square. Unfortunately, this type of crime is increasingly typical in high-crime areas of major U.S. cities, especially where gun control laws make it extremely difficult for law-abiding citizens to possess a gun. Yet Bloomberg, the founder of the anti-gun group Mayors Against Illegal Guns, viewed the shootout as evidence that there are "too many guns on the streets."



Ironically, in making his point against gun violence, the mayor brought up the tragedy that occurred at Virginia Tech: "If you think about all the publicity about the terrible tragedy of Virginia Tech, we have a Virginia Tech in this country every day. It's just spread across 50 states." Doesn't the mayor know that instead of "too many guns," there was a dearth of guns on the college campus and the victims who were killed by the lone gunman were defenseless? Not surprisingly, the AP story reporting the mayor's remarks failed to point out this obvious contradiction in the mayor's "logic," reflecting the anti-gun bias of the reporters who wrote the story.

So what happened in the Times Square shootout?

Raymond Martinez, age 25, and his brother Oliver were regular vendors of CDs of Raymond's rap band, Square Free, in Times Square. Under the law they were required to have a "tax stamp" in order to sell their CDs. On Thursday, December 10, Sergeant Christopher Newsome, head of a task force that monitors "aggressive panhandling," recognized Martinez from previous run-ins with the law and asked to see his tax stamp. Martinez immediately bolted from his location and ran towards the Marriott Marquis hotel, with Newsome in hot pursuit. Martinez pulled out a gun and fired at Newsome, who returned fire, killing Martinez. Those are the "bare bones" facts. (See [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).)

AP reported that the Martinez incident occurred "in an area crowded with tourists and holiday shoppers." However, as reported by [DNAinfo.com](#), Martinez "fled into the parking area beneath" the hotel, and according to NY Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, "There was no one else in the immediate area. [Officer Newsome] took a defensive position, and [returned fire]."

The AP went on to say that Oliver, Raymond's brother, had been held for questioning and then was released without charges being filed. Another brother, Anthony, arrived at the Martinez household later, crying out that he hates the police. "They shot my brother!" he said. "They," of course, were the single officer Newsome, who "appeared to be within department guidelines, which allow for deadly force when an officer's life is threatened," according to the police commissioner.

AP then raised the issue of Martinez's character when it reported that a cousin of Martinez, Nailean Arzu, said that Martinez had been lawfully selling CDs for years. "Everyone loved him," Arzu said. "It's a great loss to the family." Another cousin, unnamed, said "He was a good person; he had a great



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heart.” However, DNAinfo.com [reported](#): “[Police Commissioner] Kelly said Martinez was part of a group of scammers in Times Square that used pressure tactics to bully passersby into buying unwanted CDs.” And the AP story acknowledged the Martinez brothers were “suspected of running a scam: asking someone’s name, writing it on a CD and then demanding payment of \$10.”

Daniel O’Phalen, who passes out fliers for the show “White Christmas” in Times Square, [said](#) Martinez was part of a regular crew of CD salesmen. Sometimes, he said, the group would order him off a corner, saying he was on their territory. “They’re pushy. They’re not nice guys,” he said.

Police said that Martinez was wanted for a prior assault.

But regardless of the particulars of the case, how does this shootout justify Mayor Bloomberg’s anti-gun position? Do laws disarming private citizens make the streets safer for the law-abiding ... or for thugs?

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