

Firearms Don't Cause Mass Shootings - Capitalism Does!

You want to do something to end firearms violence? Excellent - so do I. Excellent. Then let's do something that's *actually* going to be effective in ending it.

Firearms control is "low hanging fruit". Firearms are an easy target to aim at and firearms control serves as a distraction from actually looking at, understanding, and acting upon the very real and complex issues - the underlying systemic issues and problems - that are the root of such acts, while doing absolutely nothing to address them.

Let's start with this:

The vast majority of mass shooters are:

- 1) male
- 2) white
- 3) Christians
- 4) "middle class"
- 5) abusers with anger issues.

That gives us an excellent picture who shoots.

Secondly, let's look at some numbers.

The vast majority of firearms deaths are suicides. That's easy. According to Pew Research, in 2021 (last year they had complete data for), suicides accounted for 26,328 out of 48,830 firearms related deaths in the US.

Mass shootings make up a very small portion. The exact count varies due to definitional issues, but according to Mother Jones (MJ is a good liberal source on this, BTW. Their definition of mass shooting (also used by the DOJ including the FBI and most criminologists) is "a single attack in a public place in which four or more victims were killed". The MJ count for 2021 was 43 deaths due to mass shootings. (And 1,045 total since August 1982.)

Compared that to the ~20,900 total firearms related murders in 2021 (that's the FBI *estimate*, BTW - they couldn't make an exact count. Other sources like Pew and the CDC have slightly different counts, but they are all close).

Now let's look at the underlying socio-politico-economic factors at the root of mass shootings. These include:

- 1) Patriarchy – toxic masculinity, male fragility, and male entitlement
- 2) Social isolation, dislocation, alienation, lonerism, and lack of human connection and solidarity
- 3) The dog-eat-dog cult of the heroic individual that tells men that they are either "winners" or worthless and that getting ahead at any cost is *the* goal in life.
- 4) The nihilistic, neurotic consumerism which is ultimately empty and unfulfilling
- 5) Changing demographics and economic desperation, which leads to perceived a loss of power, and in turn leads to anger, and hopelessness.
- 6) Lack of universal healthcare, leading to poor access to and lack of support and mental health counseling
- 7) Reactionary and fascist politics fed by conspiracy theories expounded to explain the above.

By the way, a note on #6: The vast majority of the mentally ill are adamantly not a risk for causing violence, but rather at risk of being victimized. However, counseling can certainly help alleviate some of the above issues.

There's one single unitary thread running through each of these: *capitalism*. And note that the above causes are largely at the root of firearms violence in general as well. There are other socio-politico-economic factors at play, but they too largely come down to capitalism.

You want to do something about mass shootings? Better yet, do you want to do something about firearms violence in general, including suicide?

Don't fall for feel good, easy do nothing solutions like firearms control, especially when doing so will be harmful to the vulnerable. Instead, look at ending the actual causes.

That means abolishing capitalism, patriarchy, and systemic racism.

If you really, truly want to do something that will actually end the vast majority of firearms violence, you're going to have to start doing the hard work of actually dismantling capitalism, patriarchy, and systemic racism....

A few final notes:

As I said, firearms control in the US has always - ALWAYS - been a racist means to disarm people of color and other marginalized people - people who are the most vulnerable to acts of violence and the least likely to commit the sorts of actions that spur these calls. firearms control targets people who are most likely to be the victims of violence perpetrated by white Christian men, who are least likely to be well served by law enforcement, and deprives them of effective means of self defense.

Currently, the police in the US murder more people in a single year than every single mass shooter for the last 50 years. (In 2021, police killed 1,147 people. Mass shootings killed 1,045 in the last 50 years.) If you want to put a serious dent in shooting deaths, disarming the police rather than people of color, women, Muslims, the working class, and other marginalized people will be far more effective and far, far less harmful.

Finally, FUCK THE NRA. They are a corporate lobbyist group, more interested in maintaining and expanding the power of capital than in civil rights.

data sources:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/04/26/what-the-data-says-about-gun-deaths-in-the-u-s/>

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/homicide.htm>

<https://policeviolencereport.org/>

<https://www.hsd1.org/c/fbi-releases-2021-crime-statistics/>