

SPECIAL REPORT

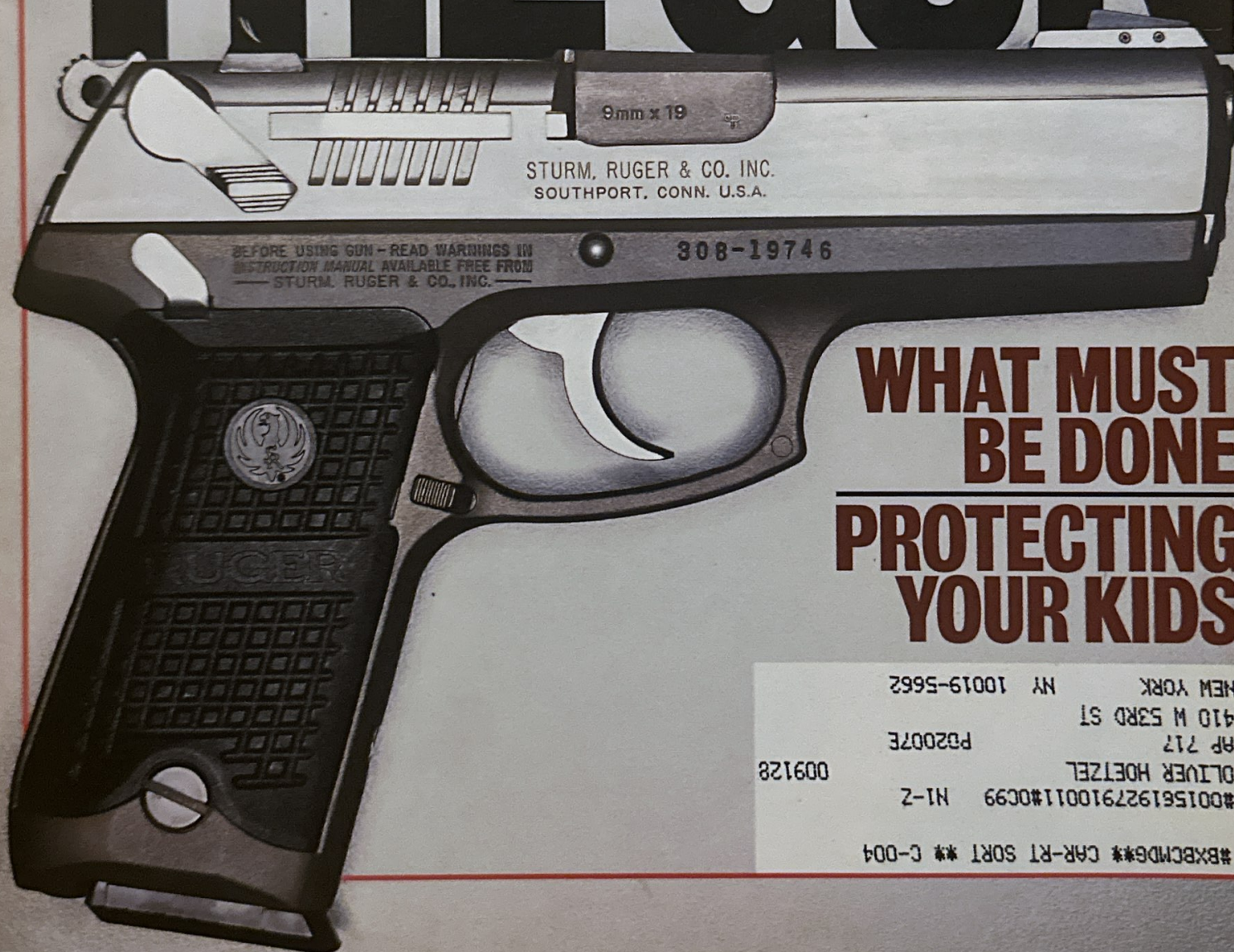
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AMERICA UNDER THE GUN



**WHAT MUST
BE DONE
PROTECTING
YOUR KIDS**

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IN THE LINE OF FIRE

The scene—of a gunman, police and terrified children—was all too tragically familiar. Yet another shooting in a usually placid American place, this time a day-care center in Los Angeles, raises an urgent question: is no one safe? A Special Report on guns and violence in America.

FLEEING 'THE BAD MONSTER': In suburban Granada Hills, police lead day campers to safety after the attack

DAVID BOHMER/LOS ANGELES TIMES



GUNS IN AMERICA WHAT MUST BE DONE

AFTER IT WAS OVER, AFTER THE SWAT TEAMS HAD swept in and the suspect had fled, after the screams and the tears, a little boy too young to know his letters wanted to thank the men who rescued him from the shooter. Handing his mother a green crayon and a piece of blue construction paper, 4½-year-old Nathan Powers started dictating. "Thank you policemen," Nathan said, "for saving us from the gun because you're our friend."

For saving us from the gun. Nathan had been in day care at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Granada Hills, an outlying Los Angeles community, last Tuesday morning, when Buford O. Furrow Jr.—loner, hater, white supremacist—came through the front door. Armed, authorities say, with an Uzi (he had four other assault weapons back in his van), Furrow opened fire, spraying the day-care center's lobby with 70 rounds. Five were wounded; as the gunman escaped, he used a Glock 9mm pistol to kill a letter carrier, 39-year-old Joseph Ito. Once

again, the nation asked why—why an armed man had brought sudden death to a place that ought to be safe.

At the end of the century ancient forces (hate, heartbreak, reversals of fortune, inexplicable demons) and newer ones (busy and broken families, Hollywood, the Internet, videogames and music) can, alone or in concert, produce explosions of violence. Few terrible acts like Furrow's can be traced to a single cause, and as the body count mounts and the country tunes in to a depressing series of shootings-of-the-week, there is plenty of blame to go around. In the NEWSWEEK Poll, majorities blame poor parenting (57 percent) and violence in the media (52 percent). Seventy-two percent believe intense media coverage makes people feel more endangered than they really are. But from Littleton, Colo., to Atlanta to Granada Hills, there has been one common link in the chain of violence: firearms, which are growing ever more lethal.

NOT AGAIN: Police help the day camp's children out of harm's way during the Granada Hills rampage



DAVE ALBERT/TAUBMAN-SABA

Just as it won't do to act as if a single bill can fix all our problems, it won't do to shrug off the role guns play

Madmen will always do mad things; we can never legislate evil out of existence; people kill people with broomsticks and bombs and their bare hands. Yet the facts are inescapable: there are more than 200 million guns in circulation in the United States, and more than a third of American households have one. Though our gun-related death rate has been mercifully falling overall, we still lose an average of 87 people a day to firearms. We lead the industrialized world in the rate at which children die from guns. Three years from now, gunfire may surpass cars to become the leading cause of unnatural death in the United States.

The debate over firearms has been polarized for too long. Millions of law-abiding people own and enjoy guns. But criminals and the disturbed and even confused kids often use firearms, too, to tragic and devastating effect. Reflexive liberals tend to want to ban all guns, and portray their owners as rednecks who don't seem to care that gangbangers and hatemongers can get their hands on firepower. At the other extreme, entrenched gun lobbyists appear to believe that virtually any regulation is a threat to their constitutional rights. They fear, they say, an eventual "knock at the door" that will bring a government confiscation of their weapons.

America, or at least the sensible center where most of us stand, has had enough—of this senseless violence, and of this circular debate. For more than a generation, we've watched as the great and the pedestrian have died in the line of fire. Though it won't do to act as though, in the emotional aftermath of yet another shooting, a sweeping ban or a single bill will keep more tragedies from happening, it also won't do to shrug off the deadly role guns play.

So what must be done? It is time, as Franklin Roosevelt said long ago, to try *something*. The anti-gun movement must accept that the United States realistically will not, and should not have to, abolish handguns or any reasonable sporting weapon. At the same time, the pro-gun forces ought to acknowledge that the Second Amendment is not unconditional and be open to reasonable restrictions. If the warring camps can make that tentative peace, there may be a path out of this bewildering debate.

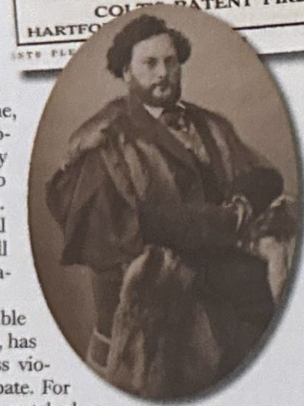
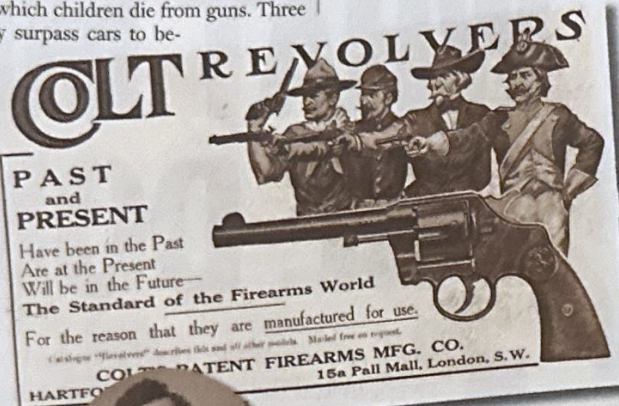
We must slow the flow of guns into a market that too often seems to serve criminals, who shouldn't get guns, rather than hunters and hobbyists, who should. Those who cherish their firearms might consider judging every possible regulation by the following standard: is a loss of convenience, of privacy or of a cate-

gory of gun worth the price if the reform has a chance of keeping a firearm away from somebody—a criminal, or maybe a kid—who shouldn't have it?

It will be a difficult argument to win; guns are in our blood. For millions of us the whiff of cordite is intermingled with the smells of home and family: of hunting dove, ducks or deer. For others a pistol seems to offer security in a dangerous world. The roots of the

culture run deep, back to the Bill of Rights. The Founders believed that the right to bear arms and to form grass-roots militias was a safeguard against another tyrannical government. Hence the Second Amendment: "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." It was the beginning of an undeniably romantic mythology. Militiamen and minutemen threw off the British yoke; the pioneers settled the frontier with long rifles, and the West was home to towering, gun-toting cowboys.

TAKING ROOT: Though the gun myth begins with the Revolution, the Civil War and Samuel Colt's marketing genius made firearms broadly popular



The truth, however, is more complicated. Emory University historian Michael Bellesiles has shown that from the Revolution to about 1850, no more than a tenth of the population owned guns. So how did guns seep into the culture? Samuel Colt and the Civil War. Colt was an impresario, targeting his company's firearms at middle-class anxieties about self-defense by giving his guns names like "Equalizer." Then came the real boom: Fort Sumter. Between 1861 and 1865, guns went into mass production, and both Union and Confederate soldiers kept their weapons after Appomattox. Suddenly there was widespread ownership, and an industry to feed a growing market. If we separate legend from history, guns can be seen not just as inviolate relics of the Revolution but as what they are: products.

And products are something we often need to regulate, be they cars, lawn mowers or pharmaceuticals. It's time to apply consumer-product safety standards to firearms (Saturday-night specials, for example, ought to have to meet minimum safety requirements). We should always be wary of relying on government, but it's reasonable to weigh the Second Amendment against the common good and risk more bureaucracy; even property owners have to submit to zoning. "No federal appellate court or the Supreme Court has ever ruled you can't put some limits on the Second Amendment," says Tom Diaz, a senior policy analyst at the Violence Policy Center. Here are proposals that ought to be part of the debate. They are not exhaustive. But each has a reasonable chance of slowing the flow of guns from the law-abiding to the potentially dangerous.

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If we separate legend from fact, guns are not relics of the Revolution but products that can be regulated

Require background checks on all sales and transfers. The Brady bill requires an instant background check when someone purchases a firearm from a licensed dealer. The law has kept hundreds of thousands of felons and other prohibited purchasers (fugitives, those who were committed to a mental institution by a court, the military's dishonorably discharged, those with a record of domestic abuse) from buying guns at a legitimate source. More can be done: the country needs to build a reliable database that won't let felons slip through the system. It's especially important to pay attention to the "secondary market," that largely unregulated universe of private sales and gun shows, where, in many cases, guns change hands without a record. By some estimates 40 percent of American firearms transfers take place in the secondary market, and in virtually every state anyone can sell firearms at gun shows or flea markets without conducting a background check on the buyer. (The Glock Furrow used to kill the postal worker, for example, came from this netherworld.) All sales and transfers of guns should require a check. Will that keep one guy from swapping or selling with someone else off the books? No. But this would make it harder for the nefarious to obtain guns openly.

Enforce what's on the books. Credit the National Rifle Association for pushing this common-sense solution. Born in Richmond, Va., Project Exile encourages police and prosecutors to strictly enforce federal gun laws. Among other things, it's illegal to carry a gun when you're in possession of drugs. But for years, authorities didn't make such gun cases a priority. In Richmond, prosecutors started using these statutes, cracking down on people who are likely to use guns in a crime. It's worked: Richmond has seized 512 guns and sent 215 violators to jail. Meanwhile, the homicide and robbery rates have fallen about 30 percent each.

Ban assault weapons—for real. We've been here before, and the lessons from that battle shed light on the tricky terrain ahead. The Uzi Furrow probably used in Granada Hills can no longer be legally imported to the United States, but was obviously available. Gun control wouldn't have stopped him. Still, assault weapons have few sporting purposes. With their folding stocks and pistol grips, they resemble their military ancestors, which were designed to lay down a lot of ammunition very quickly over a small field of fire. In 1994, when the federal ban on assault

weapons passed, many manufacturers slightly modified their models to get around the law and went back to market. Gun enthusiasts argue that this is cosmetic debate, that we want to ban guns that *look* sinister when all semiautomatics are deadly in the wrong hands. One answer is to follow California and ban the sale, manufacture and import of semiautomatics with the capacity to hold more than 10 rounds, and prohibit features—like high-capacity magazines, flash suppressors, bayonet lug nuts—that attract the criminal and the irresponsible.

License owners and register all guns. To ears unaccustomed to the nuances of the gun debate, this could sound innocuous, or at worst bureaucratic. But proposals to establish a gun registry, either state by state or nationally, raise gun owners' most fundamental fears. Still, licensing could operate along the same lines as the DMV: to drive a car, you need to pass a minimal test. There are potential perils; authorities might be distant, or abusive, or inattentive. But licensing could improve gun safety, particularly for beginners.

Registration pushes the most buttons. The gun lobby says the government shouldn't know who owns a firearm, and on Second Amendment grounds it has a point. Bill Clinton isn't likely to confiscate guns, but some president in the distant future might. Still, all rights have to be balanced with the need for public order, and registration

is one sure-fire way of shutting off a line of supply to criminals. Why? If all sales of firearms have to be logged in a registry, then the typical gun owner who gets his firearm legitimately knows the government has a record of his acquisition. He may then be much more careful about what happens to that gun for fear that crimes committed with it would bring the police to his door. Would it stop underground gun traffic altogether? No, and the NRA says the measure would create "massive civil disobedience." But registration could help keep guns from slipping, through a careless private sale or swap, into a criminal's grasp.

On the morning after the shootings in Granada Hills, parents of children at the day camp arrived early, determined not to flinch in the face of hate, or of guns. "We're not going to let anyone scare us," one father said. Bringing sanity to the gun wars, and safety to our schools and public places, will take the same flinty courage. The road will be rough and long, the battles pitched and confusing, the compromises difficult and costly. But let us begin.



UNDER FIRE: As the body count rises, the sensible center has had enough

SPECIAL REPORT

THE GUN WAR COMES HOME

The shooting victims of today's headlines are not distant leaders, but schoolchildren and office workers. Political emotions are rising, and for the first time, the debate over firearms may become a central part of a presidential campaign. **BY HOWARD FINEMAN**

GOV. GEORGE W. BUSH IS A hunter, and a Second Amendment man. He signed a bill that allows Texas citizens to carry concealed weapons, and another that bars Texas cities from suing gun manufacturers. So there was a moment of dread in the Bush camp last week when the news spread of the arsenal Buford Oneal Furrow Jr. had brought with him in his van. According to police, Furrow had seven guns, one a custom-made assault rifle with an XS-15 shooting mechanism. At first, investigators thought he might have used it to wound five people in a Los Angeles Jewish community center, or to kill a Philippine-born letter carrier nearby.

Every gun has a history, and this one was potentially explosive. Federal officials quickly traced the XS-15 mechanism to a company in Maine owned by one Richard Dyke. Until last

month, he was Bush's state finance director in Maine. He's an ally of top Bush political supporters; he had flown down to Austin, Texas, to take part in a luncheon with the governor. And, as bad luck would have it, Dyke's company bears an unfortunate name: Bushmaster Firearms. "We were looking at a public-relations nightmare," said one Bush adviser. By Friday, police said that Furrow, in fact, had used other weapons in his arsenal: an Uzi and a Glock 9mm pistol. Even so, Democrats thought they had found a way to attack the Republican presidential front runner. The gun-control issue, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York told NEWSWEEK, "could be the No. 1 chink in George Bush's armor."

The guns in the schools and the streets have touched off a war in the world of politics. It's not the first of its kind, but it's the first that could end up as a central feature of a presidential campaign. In the new NEWSWEEK Poll, 78 percent of voters said that gun control would be an "important"

factor in their choice of a president. After the Kennedy and King assassinations in the '60s, gun control surfaced as an issue, and did so again after the attempt on Ronald Reagan's life in 1981. But this time the emotional driving force is different, and arguably more powerful: the continuous loop of murderous assaults on children in schools, workers at computer terminals and unassuming citizens in the streets. This time, it's not about distant victims, but about your kids and co-workers.

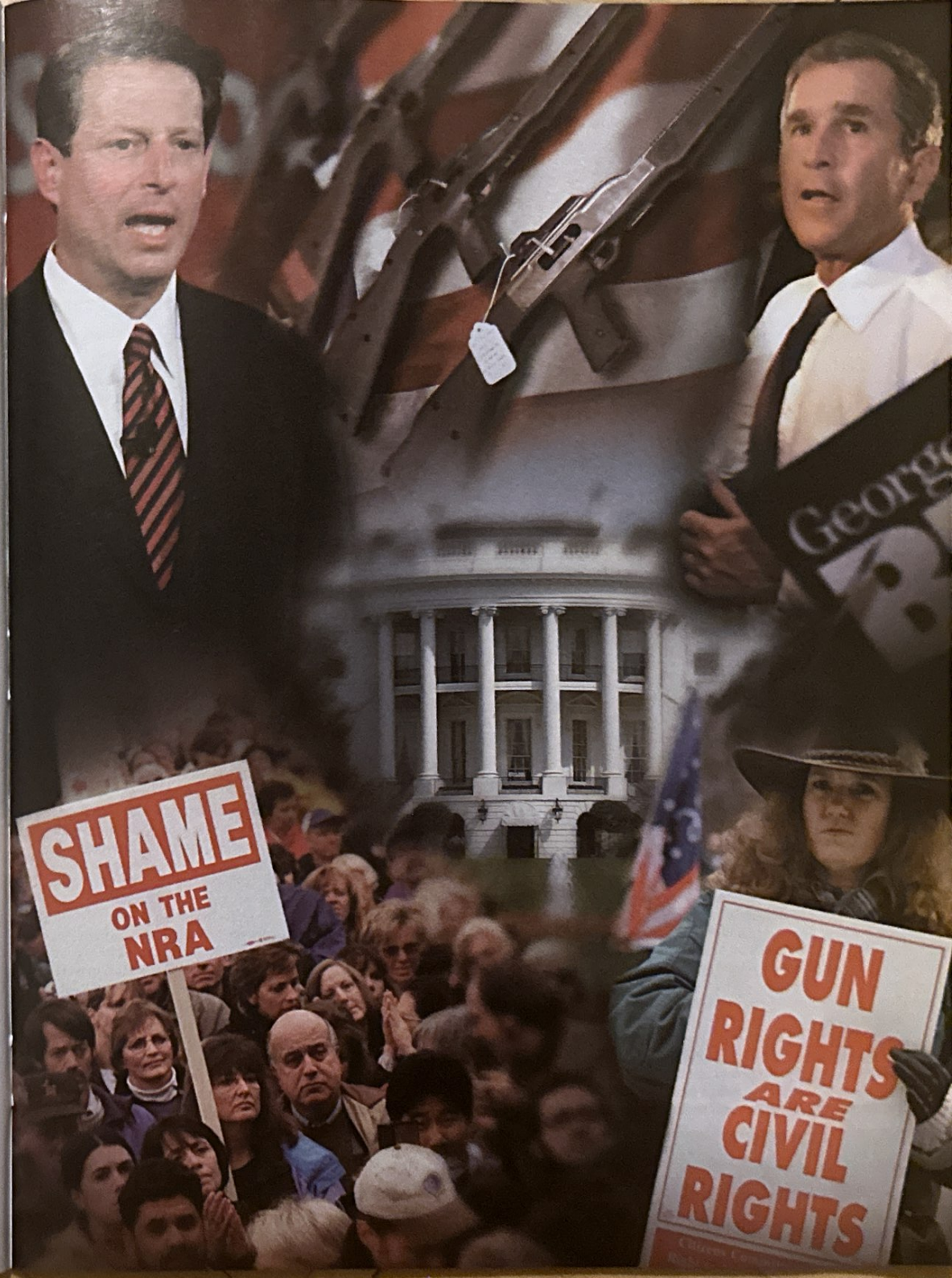
As a result, state legislatures are passing new gun-control measures once thought impossible to enact. Congress, when it returns from recess next month, will debate new curbs with a new sense of urgency—or at least the kind of made-for-cable hysteria designed to excite each party's grass roots in time for the 2000 election. Bill Clinton and his attorney general, Janet Reno, are proposing sweeping new measures. Al Gore and Bill Bradley, vying for the Democratic nomination, are offering dueling gun-control proposals. Republican contenders, meanwhile, stand shoulder to shoulder with the gun lobby, as do most—though not all—GOP leaders on Capitol Hill. And all the while the National Rifle Association gains members, launches new ad campaigns and girds for an electoral Armageddon next year. "We'll be ready," NRA spokesman Bill Powers told NEWSWEEK. "We will see you all on Election Day."

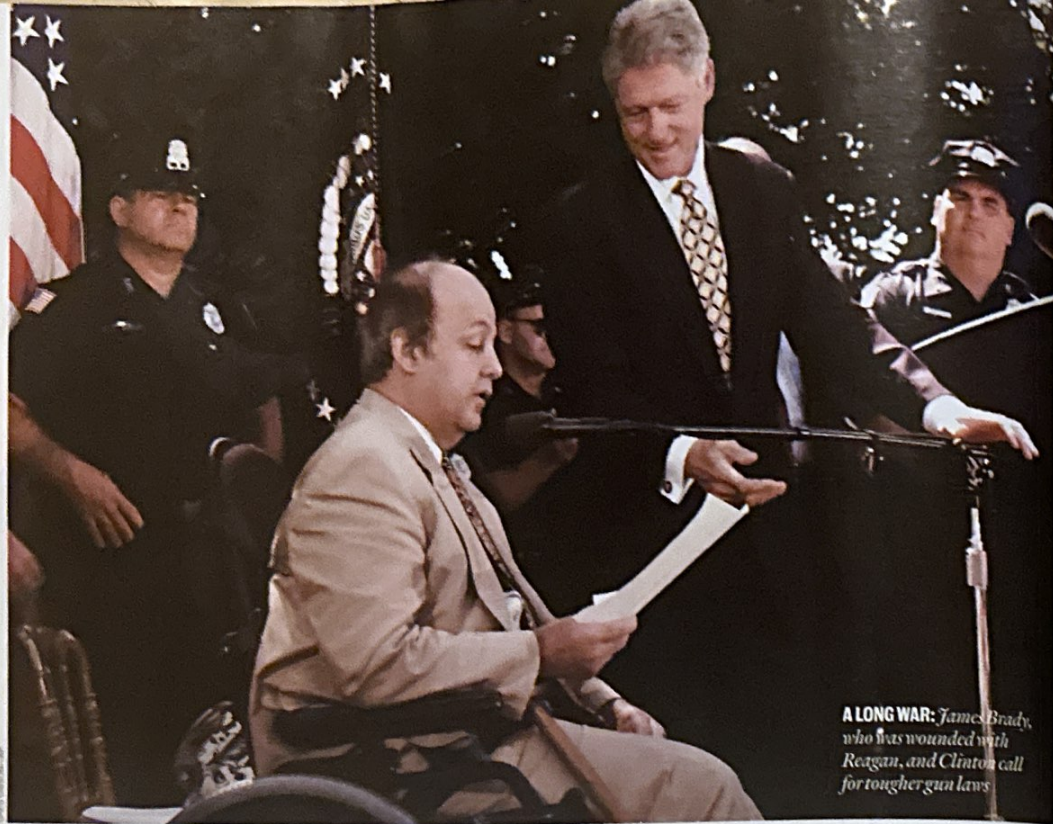
The American people, as usual, are more

In the NEWSWEEK Poll, 74% support registration for all handgun owners, and 93% favor a mandatory waiting period for people who want to buy handguns

FOR THIS NEWSWEEK POLL, PRINCETON SURVEY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INTERVIEWED 755 ADULTS BY TELEPHONE AUG. 12-13. THE MARGIN OF ERROR IS +/- 4 PERCENTAGE POINTS. THE NEWSWEEK POLL © 1999 BY NEWSWEEK, INC.

OPPOSITE PAGE: DIGITAL IMAGE BY NEWSWEEK. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DONNA MISWILL/AM. AP. JAY QUADRACCI—ZUMA. NO CREDIT. ERIC DRAFFER—AP. GARY BUSSEMAN—AP. LINDA MCCONNELLY—ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS, NEWSWEEK





A LONG WAR: James Brady, who was wounded with Reagan, and Clinton call for tougher gun laws

sensible and centrist than the political insiders who use overwrought rhetoric to build their get-out-the-vote lists. The NEWSWEEK Poll shows that even most gun owners are in favor of some significant new gun-control measures. According to the poll, 81 percent of non-gun-owners want all handgun owners to register with the government—but, surprisingly, so do 66 percent of gun owners. The same with mandatory courses on gun safety: 88 percent of non-owners favor it, but so do 80 percent of owners. There is near-universal support for child-safety locks on guns, and for a waiting period to allow background checks for all handgun purchases. There's even substantial support among gun owners—45 percent in the poll—for requiring the owners of hunting rifles to register with the government.

But voters also know what gun-control hard-liners refuse to admit: that gun control is no panacea. Asked in the poll to identify "the most effective" deterrent to violent incidents, only 18 percent said "stricter gun control." By

comparison, 33 percent said the best answer was to pay closer attention to antisocial behavior, and 23 percent favored increasing security in schools and offices. Only a third of the public thinks that stricter gun-control laws would reduce violent crime "a lot."

That realistic view is supported by the facts investigators have compiled in the Furrow case. Every one of the seven guns in his possession, NEWSWEEK has learned, was legally in circulation. They were all first sold by a licensed retail dealer. Two were purchased by Furrow from licensed dealers at least two years ago, according to officials of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The Glock semiautomatic pistol that authorities say Furrow used to kill the postal worker also followed a legal chain of custody. It was purchased in 1996 by the police department in Cosmopolis, Wash. The department swapped it at a firearms store in town. The store's owner sold it to a legal buyer, and that buyer gave it to a friend, who sold it at a gun show to Furrow in early 1988. Furrow, a senior ATF investigator

told NEWSWEEK, apparently bought the four other weapons in similar fashion.

Chillingly, Furrow from 1992 to 1995 held a federal firearms license, which allowed him to buy and sell guns across state lines. He also would have been eligible to apply for a permit to own fully automatic weapons such as machine guns. At the time, officials now know, Furrow was deeply involved with white-supremacist groups, but officials couldn't have denied him the license on that basis. ATF officials are looking into what trafficking in guns—if any—Furrow conducted. He didn't renew the license.

Still, by the time he went on his L.A. rampage, Furrow was legally barred from having any guns at all. Convicted in May of assaulting mental-health workers last fall, Furrow served 165 days in jail. As a felon, he was prohibited by federal law and by a Washington state court order from possessing firearms. State officials had the discretionary authority to search his home and arrest him if he still had any guns. They reportedly were planning a search, but too late.

Rather than make the case for new laws,

78% think gun control will be an important issue in next year's election. By a margin of 34% to 26%, they agree more with the Democrats on the issue.

ANCIENT DILEMMA

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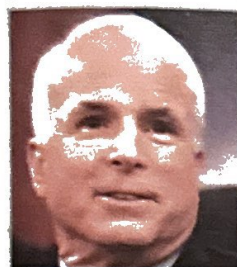
What the Candidates Say

THE REPUBLICAN HOPEFULS



GEORGE W. BUSH

The leading GOP contender and hunter signed bills allowing people to carry concealed weapons and limiting the right to sue gunmakers. He supports national instant gun checks and felony charges for anyone giving guns to minors.



JOHN MCCAIN

The Arizona senator says he is "uncomfortable moralizing and telling people how to live their lives." Supports background checks at gun shows and trigger locks. He says violent media should display warning labels.



ELIZABETH DOLE

Following the Columbine massacre, she was the first GOP contender to come out for more gun control. "You don't need an AK-47 to defend your family," she said. She opposes assault weapons, favors safety locks and background checks.

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STEVE FORBES

He wants to make sure that "felons don't buy guns" and supports automatic jail time for any criminal who attempts to buy a gun or for anyone possessing a gun while committing a crime. He also supports a national instant background check.

THE DEMOCRATIC HOPEFULS



AL GORE

As a senator, cast some pro-NRA votes, but as vice president was a leading force in passing the Brady bill and assault-weapons ban. He would require anyone who wanted to buy a handgun to first obtain a picture ID license.

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BILL BRADLEY

He has proposed tough anti-gun measures, including registration of all handguns, a mandatory safety course for handgun owners, a ban on Saturday-night specials, mandatory background checks at gun shows and trigger locks on handguns.

ban on Saturday-night specials, mandatory background checks at gun shows and trigger locks on handguns.

gun advocates contend that Furrow's story makes *their* point: that the answer to the criminal use of guns is strict enforcement of criminal laws already on the books. Their favorite example is Richmond, Va., where violent street crime has been dramatically curtailed. The reason, they say, is that the U.S. attorney there has made a crusade of prosecuting in federal court—and asking for maximum penalties—all cases in which perps are found with a gun while committing a crime.

SOME GUN-CONTROL ADVOCATES are willing to concede that enforcement can make a difference, but they press for new limits on guns anyway. "We don't have to argue that gun control is the *only* answer," says Democratic consultant Robert Shrum, who began his career as an aide to Bobby Kennedy. "All we're saying—all we have to say—is that further gun control can help." The opposite side, led by the NRA, is left to argue an absolutist case—that virtually no new legal measures will do any good—and in the current political mood that has become a tougher case to make in the court of public opinion. "Gun control has never been a 'voting issue'—the kind that really draws people to the polls,"

says Shrum. "This time, I think, it will be."

Democrats are betting on their side—and there is a sliver of evidence in the NEWSWEEK Poll to support them. Democratic voters, who tend to favor strict measures, are more than twice as likely as Republicans to say that gun control will be the "single most important issue" to them next year. In California, the leading national indicator of political trends, the Democratic-controlled legislature recently passed—and the Democratic governor signed—a new bill that goes well beyond the assault-weapons ban enacted by Congress in 1994. Rather than list specific guns, the California measure describes them by type, making it harder to skirt restrictions. In a growing list of cities, among them New Orleans, Atlanta and Chicago, Democratic mayors are now supporting sweeping cost-recovery suits against manufacturers, which would force them to pay for injuries caused by their guns. In Los Angeles, even the Republican mayor, Richard Riordan, has joined the litigation crusade.

It's a different, more complex story in Congress. Both parties, for different reasons, have mixed feelings about taking any real action. Democratic hard-liners such as Schumer truly want a tough new bill, and see little or no downside risk in actually passing one. But it's easy for him to say: he

represents liberal New York. Elsewhere in the country, advocating gun control can be hazardous to political health. The NEWSWEEK Poll shows why: in rural areas, 59 percent of those polled say they own a gun, compared with 41 percent nationally. The South is the region with the highest percentage of gun ownership, 46 percent.

Not surprisingly, the few gun-control Democrats left in the heartland aren't eager to vote for a bill. Some Republicans genuinely want action, led by two prototypical Lincoln moderates from Illinois: Speaker Dennis Hastert and Judiciary Committee chairman Henry Hyde. But the pro-NRA forces in the GOP rank and file are led by the powerful Republican whip, Tom DeLay of Texas. And he wants no bill at all.

The measure Congress will debate next month is hardly revolutionary. It would require that safety locks be sold with all new handguns. It would make it illegal for an adult to own a gun if he had committed a crime as a juvenile. It also would require a federal background check for sales at gun shows, and here's where the vehement arguments begin. Democrats want to allow authorities three days to complete the background checks; GOP hard-liners want "instant" checks, which can sometimes be less

reliable. Democrats want to broadly define a "gun show," requiring permits for any event at which more than 50 guns are displayed for sale by two or more people. "That's absurd," says the NRA's Powers. "I'd need a federal permit to sell my grandfather's gun collection."

But wars have started over less. The NRA has been on alert for months, running infomercials on late-night cable featuring chairman Charlton Heston and other actors. Membership is up nearly 500,000,

and now approaches 3 million. But the NRA seems to be circling the wagons as much as reaching out. In a new video project, for example, NRA camera crews in Britain, Australia and Canada have been filming citizens turning in their firearms to comply with strict new anti-possession laws. It's the ultimate nightmare for Second Amendment True Believers: the dread moment when the government comes to "take up the guns." "We have video of people lining up to turn in their ancestors' old shot-

guns," says Powers. "It's frightening." On the Hill, meanwhile, the NRA already has picked out its targets, among them influential and wavering Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee such as George Gekas of Pennsylvania and Howard Coble of North Carolina.

Congress, gridlocked as usual, is likely to pass the buck to where it always stops in American politics, and where it really belongs: the next presidential campaign. On the Democratic side, Gore and Bradley are

Only 21% of gun owners favor an outright ban on nonpolice handguns. But 50% of the people who don't own firearms are in favor of such a ban.

gun-control advocates of long standing, though Bradley was the first to make it a centerpiece of this year's campaign. Gore, who once represented gun-toting Tennessee, occasionally threw the NRA a vote in Congress, but as vice president he was a leading force in passing the assault-

weapons ban and limits on the ability of felons to own guns. Bradley supports registration of all handguns; Gore would require anyone who wanted to buy a handgun to first obtain a picture ID license. "The differences are dime thin," insists one Gore adviser. But by avoiding outright gun regis-

tration—the reddest of red flags to the NRA—Gore may be trying to save face with voters in key swing states such as Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio and Tennessee, where many gun owners are Democrats.

The GOP "presidentials" are the mirror opposite: genuinely devoted to gun rights,

'I Think the Real Target Is the Second Amendment'

The NRA's top strategist on the right to bear arms, the battle over guns and a solution to the crisis of violence

WAYNE LAPIERRE, executive vice president of the National Rifle Association, serves as the group's top strategist and as one of the gun lobby's leading hard-liners. In a conversation with NEWSWEEK's Jon Meacham, Howard Fineman and Matt Bai last week—three days after the Los Angeles shootings—LaPierre stoutly defended the NRA's positions and laid out its vision of how to deal with violence. Excerpts:

NEWSWEEK: Are people right to be saying "Why do we have guns? Why can't we do something about this violence?"

LAPIERRE: Absolutely. I think we all share that same emotion of stopping violence and stopping these horrible tragic situations. They're unimaginable. I think what we differ about is what will stop them. I've watched this debate for 20 years, and the reality of politics in Washington has become completely detached from the reality of crime and

violence with guns on the streets. We know what would make an immediate, dramatic impact on stopping violence with guns ... Confront these criminals with guns directly. Confront the gun dealers directly. Confront the felons trying to buy guns directly and get them off the streets.

So you think the problem is not with the laws, but with enforcing them.

There's a deliberate effort by this administration and by the Department of Justice not to enforce the laws on the books and not to prosecute any of these cases. They ridicule programs like Project Exile [the Richmond, Va., effort to prosecute felony gun cases and lock up offenders, supported by the NRA]. And they're getting people killed every day on the streets of this country by not doing it. Instead they're going to concentrate on cutting off guns at the source. Well, I mean, give me a break. They can try that for the next 50 years, and criminals that want

guns are still going to get them.

I really don't believe that there's a criminal in the United States that cares about a one-gun-a-month law. What they would care about is if tomorrow morning [Attorney General] Janet Reno would hold a press conference side by side with the NRA and say, "We just approved \$100 million for additional prosecutors and additional enforcement people. And I can guarantee you tomorrow night, if you're out on the street with a gun and a felony record, if you're a violent juvenile with a record with a gun, if you're carrying guns and selling drugs, if you're walking into a school with a gun—I can guarantee you 100 percent of the time you're going to be prosecuted and spend time in the federal penitentiary." That would have an impact.

Why are you so opposed to licensing gun owners?

People believe they have a constitutional right and a freedom

to own guns in this country. And they don't want their names on government lists. They know what the next step is. It's a knock on the door confiscating their guns. And, you know, they're not going to

"What is being offered is some utopian society where guns do not exist. I hate to tell people, you're never going to get there."

—WAYNE LAPIERRE

stand in line and submit to that. What purpose is there for the government to compile a list of who has guns in their homes in this country? Why does Janet Reno need a list?

I'll tell you what's going to

happen with a registration system and a licensing system: a lot of duck hunters' guns are going to suddenly fall off the canoe into the water. They're never going to register them and they're never going to li-

cense them ... You're going to have massive civil disobedience on a scale that you've never seen. Why do they want to pass a law that puts the American public in that position?

Why do you think they want to do it?

I think the real target is the Second Amendment. I don't think it has anything to do with crime. I don't think it has anything to do with stopping violence. I think the ultimate target is to take away the freedom and take away the Second Amendment.

Why do you think they want to do that?

I don't know. Let them tell you why.

How about stricter bans on assault weapons, like California just enacted?

They don't want to say they want to ban all semiautomatic firearms in America, because they know they'd get a huge uproar from Americans all over the country that own and use them. So what they say is, "We want to ban these bad guns as opposed to these good guns." Well, I hate to tell them, but they all shoot the same. And that's why the NRA says, "You guys are a bunch of hypocrites." You know, if you want to ban guns, just say it.

Are you willing to compromise on gun laws?

I think there have been 20,000 compromises [that is, 20,000 laws on the books already].

This latest crime happened in California, and it has some of the toughest gun laws in the country. Crazy people and criminals don't care what the gun laws are. And the problem is that what is being offered is some utopian society where guns do not exist. And I hate to tell people, you're never going to get there.

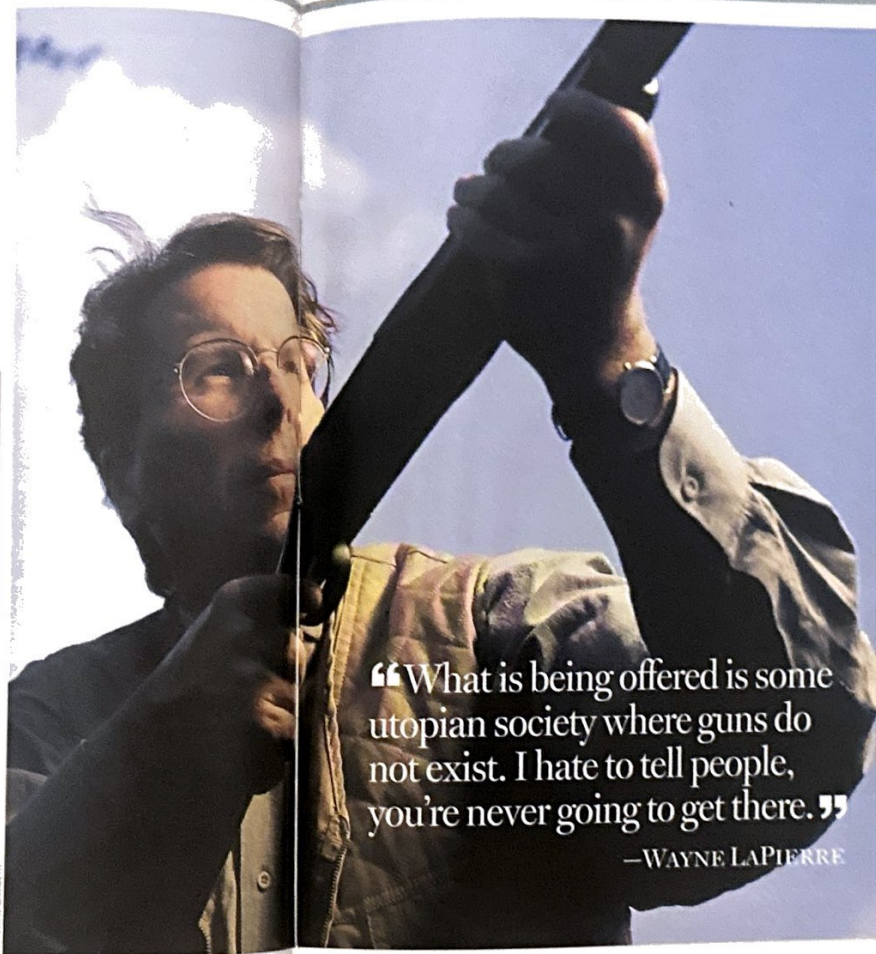
The countries that have bans, you can still get guns. If you've got cash in your hands, it's just like drugs, the guns are there. It's the honest people who fill out the forms, abide by the paperwork, and have to live with the bans.

How do you think this issue will play in the 2000 campaign?

I think the Democrats want to ban guns and I think the Republican candidates, from what I've seen pretty much, want to stand for the freedom. And I think the Republicans are much tougher than the Democratic candidates I've seen on enforcement and prosecutions.

The Democrats are on the wrong side of that. When you get on the wrong side of freedom and people's rights, you're on the wrong side politically and I think they're going to find it hurts them at the polls.

The American public is seeing through a lot of this stuff. I've been getting swamped everywhere I go by the American public going, "You're right, don't cave in." And we'll see who's right. I believe that the public is with us.



comfortable with the gun-show crowd—and scared to death of crossing the NRA. In Ames, Iowa, last weekend, Republican candidates were dense on the ground, scouring for votes at the GOP straw poll. If the shooting in L.A. registered much, it wasn't noticeable in the tents outside the Hilton Coliseum. A good example of the GOP attitude is Elizabeth Dole, who began her campaign this spring with a well-advertised swipe at the gun lobby. It wasn't so much what she said—she opposes assault weapons and favors safety locks—as the forum in which she said it: on her first swing through New Hampshire. But these days she doesn't mention guns. When asked if the GOP risks alienating voters with its stance on guns, she retreats into a lecture on the evils of pornography on the Internet.

But the candidate with the most at stake—and hardest hand to play—is George W. Bush. Texas is the proud homeland of the American gun culture, and Bush knows how to heft a shotgun, and actually hit a quail with it. He was proud to sign a “concealed carry” law in 1995, and in the Texas Legislature earlier this year followed the NRA line supporting only instant checks at gun shows. In the semantics of national politics, these are the kinds of signals that would help Bush secure the GOP’s “base” if he’s lucky enough to be the party’s nominee next year. But at the same time Bush’s strategists are obsessed with ensuring that he is competitive—if not a winner—in states such as California and New York. That means appealing to women in the suburbs. And soccer moms don’t generally carry guns.

So it’s not surprising how the Bush campaign decided to deal with Richard Dyke when they first learned about the company he owned. When he’d come down for lunch, he was known only to top Bush campaign officials as a “businessman” and CEO of “Dyke Associates.” Then the Democratic “opposition researchers” vetted the luncheon lists, and discovered his gun company. Soon thereafter, reporters started calling him. Soon after that, Dyke quit the Bush campaign. It didn’t matter that Dyke had never talked with Bush about guns, or that the governor had had no idea what Dyke did for a living. The title “gun manufacturer” was enough. “I didn’t want him to carry my baggage,” Dyke told NEWSWEEK. The feeling was mutual: no one tried to talk him out of leaving.

With MARK HOSENBALL and MICHAEL ISIKOFF in Washington, DAVID BROOKS in Iowa, TARA WEINGARTEN in Los Angeles and GREGORY BEALS in New York

▶ TO WEIGH IN ON THE GUN WARS AND WHAT AMERICA SHOULD DO, LOG ON TO WWW.NEWSWEEK.COM ON WEDNESDAY, AUG. 18, AT NOON EDT



A VISITOR FROM THE DARK SIDE

The accused L.A. gunner drove into town on a high of delusion and self-destruction. BY ANDREW MURR

DOWN ON HIS LUCK AND MAD at the world, Buford Oneal Furrow Jr., 37, decided to drive to Los Angeles and go hunting for Jews. The way police tell it, on Aug. 7 he bought a used Chevrolet van in Tacoma, Wash., and stocked it with five assault rifles, two pistols, 6,000 rounds of ammunition and a flak jacket.

Furrow cased several well-known Jewish institutions, including the Simon Wiesenthal Center, but decided security was too tight. He finally chanced onto the North Valley Jewish Community Center in suburban Granada Hills, Calif. On Aug. 10, authorities say, he walked in and opened fire, wounding a receptionist, a camp counselor and three little boys. Then he roared off



A PATTERN OF HATE: Debra Mathews, on the right in this 1986 photo of three women in KKK robes, married Furrow in 1995; they split up in 1997. Richard Kelly Hoskins's book 'War Cycles/Peace Cycles' was found in Furrow's van. Below left, postal worker Joseph Ito was shot dead because he was a federal employee and nonwhite. Below right, LAPD officers at the scene of Ito's murder in suburban Chatsworth.



and, after carjacking a Toyota, spotted mailman Joseph Ito, 39, making his rounds in nearby Chatsworth. Deciding that Ito was a good “target of opportunity” because he was a federal employee and nonwhite, Furrow shot him nine times with a Glock pistol. After that, investigators said, he got a haircut, bought a new shirt and went looking for a prostitute.

The next morning, after an \$800 cab ride from L.A. to Las Vegas, Furrow strolled into an FBI office and reportedly said, “You’re looking for me—I killed the kids in Los Angeles.” He was wrong about that: all five shooting victims from the Jewish center survived. But that was a gift of fortune, not of the violent misfit who, sources say, confessed to attacking them.

Furrow is not unintelligent. He is a graduate engineer who worked for several years on the B-2 stealth-bomber project for Northrup Grumman Corp. before his life began to spin out of control. He has a long-standing obsession with guns and kept a number of them, despite the fact that since May, when he became a convicted felon, he was prohibited from owning firearms. Last year, evidently near the end of his rope,

Furrow tried to get help at a psychiatric hospital outside Seattle. The encounter turned nasty; Furrow pulled a knife and was charged with assault. “Yesterday I had thoughts that I would kill my ex-wife and some of her friends, then maybe I would drive to Canada and rob a bank. I wanted police to shoot me,” he wrote in a statement to police at the time. “Sometimes I feel like I could just lose it and kill people. I also feel like I could kill myself.”

What distinguishes Furrow from other stressed-out loners is his avowed belief in the violent racism and anti-Semitism of the American Nazi movement. Furrow was a member of Aryan Nations, the notorious neo-Nazi group based in Hayden Lake, Idaho. According to a former federal informant interviewed by NEWSWEEK, Furrow showed up at Hayden Lake as early as 1989. By the mid-’90s, despite his lack of police or military experience, he was made a security guard and was videotaped wearing the uniform of an Aryan Nations “lieutenant.” He got to know Richard Butler, founder of Aryan Nations, and he met Debra Mathews, widow of a neo-Nazi leader who died in a 1984 shoot-out with the FBI.

“She was the Jackie O of the neo-Nazi movement,” says a staffer with the Anti-Defamation League. In 1995, Furrow and Mathews were “married” at Hayden Lake and settled down in Metaline Falls, Wash.

It didn’t last, neighbors say, because Furrow is a control freak with an uncontrollable temper. He and Mathews split up sometime in 1997, and Furrow, who had been working as a tractor mechanic, lost his job. He moved to western Washington, got another job and tried unsuccessfully to patch things up with Mathews. He began to drink heavily and fantasize about suicide and mass murder. In October 1998 he slashed his thumb and arm in what seems to have been an act of self-mutilation. Several days later he went to Fairfax Hospital in Kirkland, Wash., and tried to check in. When he threatened two women staffers with a knife, the police were called and he was arrested. Charged with second-

degree assault, he served 165 days in jail and was released last May.

The issue now is what may have prompted Furrow to run amok in Los Angeles last week. Was he just another angry loser going over the edge, or did his race-war fantasies inspire him to kill? A more basic question is how he avoided going to a psychiatric lockup when there was so much evidence of his capacity for violence. The answer is simple: Furrow chose to plead guilty to the assault charge rather than plead not guilty by reason of insanity. As a result, the court sentenced him to jail as an ordinary offender. Meanwhile, his ideology clearly played a role. Last week police found a book by Richard Kelly Hoskins in Furrow’s van. Hoskins is well known among neo-Nazis for dreaming up the Phineas Priesthood, a mythical underground that sets out to kill Jews, nonwhites and homosexuals. A Phineas Priest is a lone avenger who risks martyrdom for the cause—someone like Buford Furrow, perhaps, a hero in his own mind.

With MARK HOSENBALL in Washington, D.C., BRAD STONE in Olympia, Wash., and TARA WEINGARTEN and ANA FIGUEROA in Los Angeles

68% say military-style assault guns should be outlawed, and **51%** want to ban gun shows where weapons are bought and sold with little regulation

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARY ELLEN MARK, COURTESY ADL; GEORGE WILHELM; LOS ANGELES TIMES; CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES—AP

CLOUDS OVER GUN VALLEY

The industry that armed generations of Americans now finds itself battered by lawsuits—and at odds with the greatest gun lobby of them all. **BY MATT BAI**

THEY CALL IT GUN VALLEY, THE hilly patch of New England that winds along the Connecticut River up into New Hampshire. It was here, drawn by the Revolution-era Springfield Armory, that men like Horace Smith, Daniel Wesson and Samuel Colt came to arm a new nation. For nearly two centuries, shifts of skilled laborers churned out the rifles and carbines that won two world wars, as well as the standard-issue revolvers for generations of soldiers and beat cops. They did it so quietly that hardly anyone knew they existed.

Today, the industrial-age factories are little changed: workers still sit at tin desks twisting and clicking new revolvers into place, at a rate of about four an hour, while the smoldering stench of forged metal drifts over the valley. But in just about every other way, life in Gun Valley is not what it was. As fewer people shoot for sport, profits are drying up quicker than the parched river. Old-line companies find themselves marketing cheap handguns and assault rifles in an effort to compete with renegade suppliers. Lawsuits are raining down on the industry, and public opinion has turned squarely against it. More than 200 years after the Revolution, Gun Valley is now the site of another popular revolt—this time, against the gunmakers themselves.

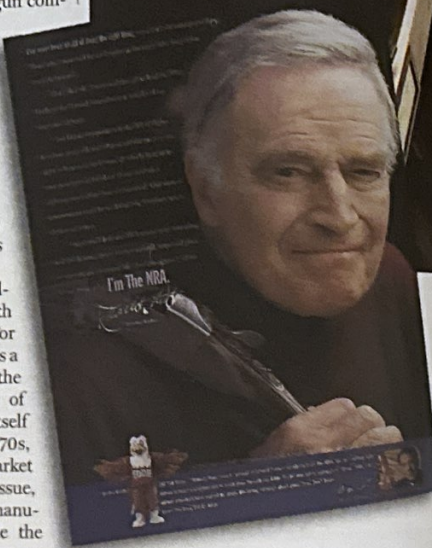
Change doesn't come easily to a business that still uses gravel to smooth out gunmetal. But it's coming. Determined to survive, the notoriously secretive gunmakers are preparing for a more friendly and public approach, putting their spokesmen on TV and reaching out to critics. Just last week, at a summit with officials from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, gun execs signaled they may now be willing to monitor their sales more closely to cut down on illegal traf-

ficking—a key demand of the 24 municipalities now suing the industry.

But before gunmakers can hammer out a truce with their enemies, they may have to fight their friends: the National Rifle Association. The NRA has boycotted gun companies before, with devastating effect, and the group has let it be known that it will not tolerate concessions that might jeopardize Second Amendment rights. "The biggest problem the industry has is the NRA," says an industry lobbyist. "There's going to come a point where they're going to have to sit down and say to the NRA: 'No, this is not how it's going to be.'"

Like so much of life in Gun Valley, the industry's relationship with the NRA has eroded over time. For decades, the organization served as a kind of marketing apparatus for the gunmakers, wooing generations of gun owners while the industry itself remained invisible. In the 1970s, when handguns flooded the market and gun control became a hot issue, the NRA acted as a shield for the manufacturers, fending off foes while the companies kept up brisk production.

But in relying on its customers to represent its interests on Capitol Hill, the gun industry put its fate in the hands of a group that sounded increasingly extreme. Fearing a backlash against the industry, some gunmakers talked openly of regulating their own products—only to find that the lobbying giant they helped create could turn on them with a vengeance. After a California school shooting in 1989 prompted calls for restrictions on semiautomatic weapons, one of the Gun Valley companies—Sturm,



TROUBLED TIMES: Making peace with its enemies won't be easy for the beleaguered gun industry. Gunmakers discussed with ATF (above) everything from reforming sales practices to requiring gun locks. But some compromises could rattle Heston and the NRA.



leans began suing the industry last year, claiming that gunmakers negligently distribute guns to criminals. Several companies tried to find a middle ground, meeting with mayors to head off lawsuits and striking a deal with President Clinton to put safety locks on new handguns.

Angered by the concessions, the NRA demanded unity in the gun lobby, but the reformers wouldn't listen. "Lemmings are

united in their march to the sea," observes Richard Feldman, who led the negotiations with the White House for the American Shooting Sports Council. "The industry isn't there to protect the Second Amendment. It's there to stay in business." The NRA set its sights on getting Feldman fired, and eventually had its way. Industry hardliners aligned with the NRA went even further: they had the ASSC itself disbanded.

Industry leaders are nearly desperate for a way to stop the current wave of senseless shootings. For one thing, the gunmakers are just plain tired of watching the news and wondering if they might have made the murder weapon. "I feel the way you do if you found out that somebody from your hometown committed a horrible act," says Jeff Reh of Beretta USA. More to the point, there's the fear that all the ugly publicity is poisoning the jury pool. "I don't want a jury of 12 people deciding public policy because no one's given them a better solution," says Paul Jannuzzo, Glock's vice president and general counsel. Jannuzzo is floating his idea for a modified one-gun-a-month law, where buyers of multiple guns could take one gun home after clearing a standard instant background check, but could get the rest only after a waiting period and a more thorough vetting.

Other proposals will soon be on the table. A critical element of the lawsuits involves the industry's two-tier distribution system; gunmakers ship their wares to distributors but make no effort to find out where those guns are ultimately sold. In their meeting with ATF officials, gunmakers offered to change that, although exactly how is unclear. "We are committed to doing more," says industry spokesman Bob Delfay. The gunmakers are also

willing to keep a sample casing from every gun sold, so agents can quickly match bullets used in crimes to the right guns.

The catch is that the industry insists Congress give the ATF additional money to lead these initiatives. And, even if that happens, it could put the gunmakers on another collision course with the NRA. While gun execs have worked closely with ATF agents in recent years, the NRA distrusts the agency; it once branded ATF agents "jackbooted thugs," provoking former president George Bush to resign his NRA life mem-

bership. NRA chief Wayne LaPierre warns bluntly that any company that agrees to too much compromise risks a boycott. "It's a miserable choice for any corporate boss: take your chances on an angry jury or a desperate Congress—or incur the wrath of the NRA." "If you take responsible leadership on this issue, they will beat you up unmercifully," Feldman says. "It does not feel good." In Gun Valley these days, very little does.

Requiring safety locks for new handguns is favored by **89%**, but only **41%** would punish makers or sellers if guns fall into the hands of children

AMERICA'S WEAPONS OF CHOICE

Owning guns is part of the bedrock of American culture. A year of sensational shootings has generated a fierce new debate about the place of guns in society. At the same time, however, gun violence is statistically on the decline. An overview of firearms in the United States:

PISTOL

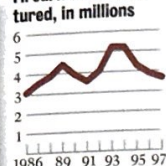
Single-chambered firearm that can be held with one hand. Each pull of a semi-automatic pistol fires a complete cycle, ejecting the shell casing and reloading another round from the magazine. The trigger must be released and pulled with each cycle.



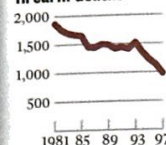
Smith & Wesson .40 caliber

PISTOLS	
Manufactured	
1986	692,977
1997	1,036,077
Exported	
1986	16,657
1997	44,182

Firearms manufactured, in millions



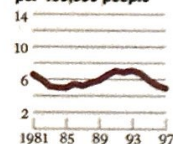
Unintentional firearm deaths



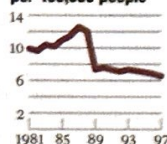
Top firearms traced to crimes, 1998

MANUFACTURER	TYPE	CALIBER	TRACES
Smith & Wesson	Revolver	.38	8,096
Lorcin Engin.	Pistol	.380	5,746
Ruger	Pistol	9mm	4,594
Raven Arms	Pistol	.25	4,520
N. China Indus.	Rifle	7.62	4,224
Mossberg	Shotgun	12ga	3,970
Smith & Wesson	Pistol	9mm	3,968
Smith & Wesson	Revolver	.357	3,849
Davis Industries	Pistol	.380	3,350

Homicides by firearm per 100,000 people

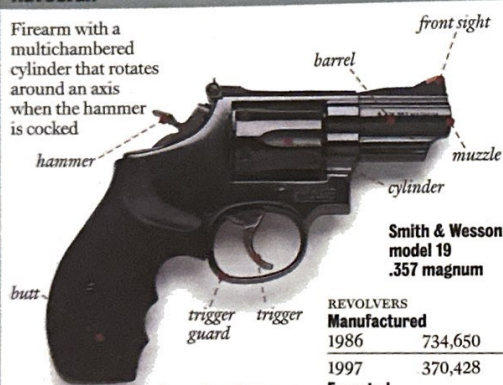


Suicides by firearm per 100,000 people



REVOLVER

Firearm with a multichambered cylinder that rotates around an axis when the hammer is cocked



Smith & Wesson model 19 .357 magnum

A revolver fires one round for each pull of the trigger

REVOLVERS	
Manufactured	
1986	734,650
1997	370,428
Exported	
1986	103,890
1997	63,656

A Week of Murders in Los Angeles

In Los Angeles, more than four people a day are killed by guns—more than in New York but not as many as in Chicago. Last week brought not only the Furrow case but 22 other homicides. Among them:

Fri., Aug. 6

1 Sunny Elijah Perez, 8, shot in the head as he stood in the doorway of a

relative's home. Declared brain dead. **2** Brian David Harris, 15, shot while sitting in the back

seat of a car. Possibly gang-related. **3** Bruce Battle, 31, shot and killed on a street corner.

Sun., Aug. 8

4 Male Hispanic adult shot and killed in an alley. Motive unknown.

5 José Luis Salinas, 21, shot and killed after exiting his vehicle. Killing believed to be gang-related.



Friends of Oscar Pacheco at his murder site

Short-range firearm with a smooth bore that discharges shells containing numerous pellets or a single slug



Pump-action shotgun has manually operated forearm that chambers, ejects and reloads a round

Semiautomatic shotgun allows for a complete firing cycle with one pull of the trigger

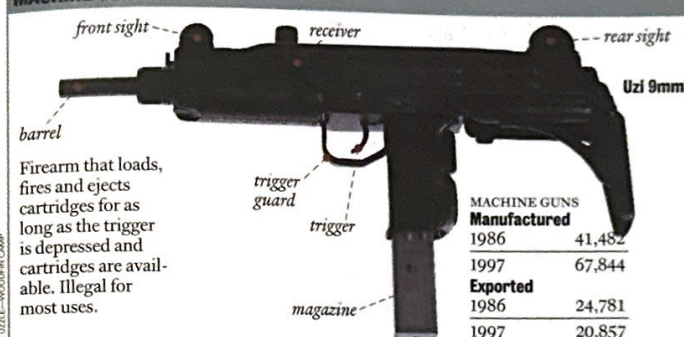
SHOTGUNS	
Manufactured	
1986	641,482
1997	915,978
Exported	
1986	58,943
1997	86,263

Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun

Federal gun laws

- Minimum age for purchase of a long gun: 18; handgun: 21.
- People who may not possess firearms: those indicted/convicted of certain crimes; fugitives; drug addicts; illegal aliens; those dishonorably discharged from military; those with certain restraining orders; those judged mentally defective.
- Manufacturing ammunition that defeats body armor is illegal.

MACHINE GUN

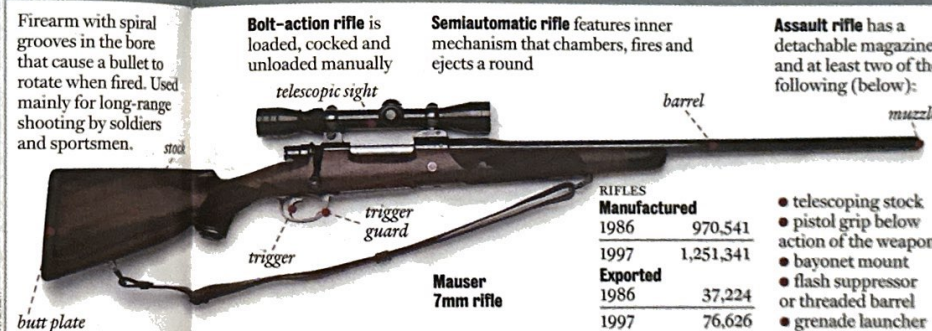


Firearm that loads, fires and ejects cartridges for as long as the trigger is depressed and cartridges are available. Illegal for most uses.

MACHINE GUNS	
Manufactured	
1986	41,482
1997	67,844
Exported	
1986	24,781
1997	20,857

RIFLE

Firearm with spiral grooves in the bore that cause a bullet to rotate when fired. Used mainly for long-range shooting by soldiers and sportsmen.



Bolt-action rifle is loaded, cocked and unloaded manually

Semiautomatic rifle features inner mechanism that chambers, fires and ejects a round

Assault rifle has a detachable magazine and at least two of the following (below):

- telescoping stock
- pistol grip below action of the weapon
- bayonet mount
- flash suppressor or threaded barrel
- grenade launcher

RIFLES	
Manufactured	
1986	970,541
1997	1,251,341
Exported	
1986	37,224
1997	76,626

Mauser 7mm rifle

Firearm deaths per 100,000 people*

SELECTED COUNTRIES	
United States	15.22
Brazil	14.15
Mexico	12.07
Finland	6.86
France	6.35
Australia	2.94
Germany	1.57
England & Wales	.46
Japan	.07

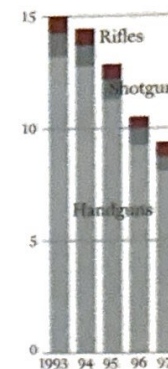
Percent of homicides using firearms

STATES WITH THE HIGHEST RATES, 1997	
District of Col.	80%
Mississippi	79
Louisiana	78
Maryland	78
West Virginia	76
Tennessee	76

LOWEST RATES, 1997

North Dakota	17%
Delaware	31
Iowa	31
Hawaii	33
Wisconsin	42
Nebraska	48

Murders by firearm in thousands



BULLETS

Hollow-point, soft-point and expanding bullets Designed with a cavity in the nose to expand on impact without passing through target. Such a cartridge is used in hunting to kill game instantly, as well as for self-defense and police operations.

Round-nose bullets Elongated design with radiused nose. Designed with less deadly force.



Wadcutter bullets Feature a cylindrical design and a flattened front end at right angles to their axes. These bullets are intended to cut paper targets cleanly and easily for accuracy in scoring.

Full-metal jackets Design in which bullet jacket encloses most of the core. Used for military and target shooting.

Armor-piercing bullets Designed to penetrate armor plate. Constructed with tungsten or steel cores.



Mon., Aug. 9

6 Mohammed Abdul Khaled, 26, shot and killed while working as a night clerk, an apparent robbery.

7-10 Victor Lopez, 42, Jaime Pacheco, 48, Oscar Pacheco, 37,

Andy Pacheco, 14, shot and killed at a home, allegedly by a former boyfriend of one of the home's residents who was upset over a broken relationship. **Tues., Aug. 10** Joseph Iletto, 39,

shot and killed by Buford Furrow Jr. **12** Clarence Henry Forrest, 24, shot and killed in a gang-related incident.

13 Wayne Alvarez, 24, shot and killed. Motive unknown.

Wed., Aug. 11

14 Edward Rojas, 36, shot and killed by officers when he pulled a gun after a car chase. **Thurs., Aug. 12** Deandre Win-dom, 19, shot and killed. Motive unknown.



HUMAN TOLL: Student Lance Kirklin was badly wounded at Columbine High; other students after the shootings (right)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE NEW AGE OF ANXIETY

Whether they live in a leafy suburb or an inner city, parents can no longer pretend that their children are immune from the threat of guns. The challenge is to make kids feel secure—but also aware of the real risks. **BY BARBARA KANTROWITZ**

IT IS INDEED AN ANXIOUS season—nowhere more than in Littleton, Colo., where students return this week to Columbine High School. Some, like junior Lance Kirklin, whose face was shattered by a bullet in the massacre last spring, bear physical scars of the tragedy. Others carry wounds in their hearts. Parents in Littleton say they are determined to protect their children. “We’re trying very hard to make it as normal as possible,” insists the mother of junior Diana Cohen. But will things ever be “normal” again, in Littleton or anywhere else?

Columbine—and Paducah and Granada Hills—sounded the alarm for parents around the country. Whether they live in the inner city or the most serene suburb, they now know that their kids are not immune from the threat of guns. “The places you used to think were safe have been violated by these random acts of violence,” says Kathy Thomas, a mother of three from Thousand Oaks, Calif. “I certainly don’t want my kids to live in fear.” Parents worry about how schools will protect their children and aren’t sure how to begin the uncomfortable but essential dialogue with their kids about the risks of guns. In that task they face “a terrible dilemma,” says

Neil Guterman, a professor of social work at Columbia University and an expert on children and violence. “They have to convey a sense of safety and security to their children and, at the same time, not hide the truth.”

Although 81 percent of those surveyed in the NEWSWEEK Poll think there has been

an increase in gun-related incidents at schools lately, violence in the classroom has actually declined dramatically in this decade. Schools are among the safest places children can be. The National School Safety Center reports that last year there were just 25 violent deaths (including 15 at Columbine), compared with an average of 50 in the early 1990s. Only a tiny fraction of all homicides involving school-age children occur in or around schools, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But it’s also true that guns are a serious threat to kids. “People are too worried about school,” says Kevin Dwyer, president of the National Association of School Psychologists. “I think they need to be more worried about the avalanche of guns in the community.” According to government statistics, 4,223 children were killed by firearms in 1997, many of them in accidents while playing at friends’ homes in their own neighborhoods. Thousands more were injured by guns. Some experts predict that firearm-related injuries could soon replace car crashes as the leading cause of death for young children.

More and more people seem to be getting that message. In the NEWSWEEK Poll, 64 percent of parents of kids under 18 were somewhat or very concerned that their





ANDREW TAYLOR/IPC

SEEKING SOLACE: A small boy clings to an adult following the Aug. 10 shooting at the North Valley Jewish Community Center

children might get hurt or into trouble while visiting the homes of friends who own guns. "I lived in New York City for 14 years and felt safer there because nobody had a gun in the house, but here people have rifles," says Debra Leonard, a physician who lives in rural Bethel Township, Pa. "I tell my kids nobody can protect themselves from a gun if it's not locked up in a cabinet, so they should leave the [friend's] house and call me to pick them up if anyone ever handles a gun."

Unlike some parents, Leonard did allow her two sons to play with toy guns. "Our children have water guns and cowboy guns," she says. "If you don't give them guns, they build them. My younger boy was a Lego maniac, and he built guns out of Legos." In fact, there's no evidence that playing with toy guns turns kids into killers. Many studies confirm Leonard's experience, that children—particularly boys—will turn anything available (a carrot, even a piece of spaghetti) into a weapon. "Toy guns are a minor issue," says Kathleen Heide, a criminologist at the University of South Florida. "The real concern should be helping kids deal with negative feelings and resolving conflicts." But the problem is that younger children often think real guns are toys. Parents should make sure their kids understand the distinction between play guns and weapons that kill.

Staying alert is the best defense. Karen Kaul, the mother of a third grader in subur-

Discussing the Dangers

Consider a child's age and development when talking about guns and violence. Here's some advice from experts:

- **Young children** Reassure them. They don't realize death is permanent or understand the difference between real and fake violence.
- **Elementary school** Explain the dangers of weapons. Encourage them to talk about worries, and limit exposure to media violence.
- **Early adolescence** As kids become more independent, keep a dialogue going so you're on top of potential problems.
- **Teens** Boys suffering from depression are at risk for suicide. Don't dismiss dramatic changes in behavior as "phases."

ban Wilmette, Ill., took quick action recently when she overheard the younger brother of one of her daughter's playmates say he was going to get a gun from his house. Although it turned out to be a BB gun, "I called the parents, and they talked to the kids about it," Kaul says.

Experts advise tailoring information about guns and violence to the age of the child. Youngsters under 6 may have heard news about shootings on TV and worry that they are directly in the line of fire. "Adults should be saying very emphatically that they are doing everything they can to keep kids safe," advises Betsy McAlister Groves, director of the Child Witness to

Violence Program at Boston Medical Center. And, she says, limit their exposure to violent images on television and in the movies. Slightly older kids, from about 6 to 10, "may sound more sophisticated than they actually are," McAlister Groves says. "Talk to them, reassure them." Young adolescents, from about 11 up, are more able to understand real risks and statistics.

At all ages, McAlister Groves says, "allowing kids to voice their worries is very important." The worst thing a parent can do is fail to provide an opportunity for children to talk. "We tend to think that if they don't talk about it, it will get better, but that's not the right message," she says. "They might think it's something that frightens us," and that would only increase their own fears.

The wave of gun violence has irrevocably altered the national self-image and should be a wake-up call to parents. "People had their confidence shaken and their complacency dispelled this past year," says Cornell University's James Garbarino, who has studied children and violence for years. "There is a growing recognition that the epidemic of youth violence has now reached a point where virtually every school contains boys who are troubled, angry and violent enough, who have access to weapons and violent scenarios and images, to become the next tragedy. I think people are now understanding that in their hearts—and minds."

No one is safe anymore. That's the lesson Lance Kirklin learned last April at Columbine High School. One bullet dug a crater in his cheek, and he faces four more operations. Still, he says he's not worried that such a cataclysmic tragedy will strike Littleton twice. Should people in the rest of the country be scared? "Yes," he says. "It will definitely happen again." Parents everywhere can only hope that he's wrong.

With ERIKA CHECK, ELIZABETH ANGELL, SHERRY KEENE-OSBORN in Littleton, DONNA FOOTE in Los Angeles and bureau reports

Only **21%** think tighter security is the best way to prevent school violence; **49%** want authorities to pay more attention to anti-social attitudes and behavior

MOURN FOR THE KILLERS, TOO

A 17-year-old survivor of the massacre in Littleton, Colo., reflects on the horror and on her own campaign for 'reasonable' gun control. **BY DEVON ADAMS**

THIS YEAR, I WENT BACK TO SCHOOL EARLY. MY JUNIOR year at Columbine High School officially begins this week. But last Friday, I was back in the building to show incoming freshmen around. The idea was basically to have fun—and we did. The serious part of the program was to let the freshmen know that there are people they can turn to when they have questions, or if they're in some kind of trouble. We finished last year at another school, but I've been inside Columbine several times since April, when Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold killed a teacher, 12 kids and themselves. The library, where the worst bloodshed

occurred, has been sealed off by a wall of lockers and replaced by a temporary library. By now, I've walked past the lockers so many times that I almost forget what's behind them. It looks so normal, and I think that's healthy. If the new kids see us treating the area as normal, then they won't be spooked by it.

Columbine has been the biggest part of my life since I was an incoming freshman. I'm glad I have two more years here—in a way, I never want to leave. And I never want to forget the people who died, including Eric and Dylan. I think we should mourn all of them. Dylan was my friend, and I still don't understand why he did it. At first, I blamed myself; I could have been a better friend. But then I began to see that all of society was to blame. Eric and Dylan were constantly ridiculed by many kids. And it was too easy for them to obtain guns.

Not long after the shooting, I joined a new, bipartisan organization called SAFE Colorado; the acronym stands for Sane Alternatives to the Firearms Epidemic. Our goal is to obtain reasonable gun legislation. We need to find compromises. Some people say background checks on gun purchasers should be completed within 24 hours. Others say five days. I think there's a happy medium: three days. Finding out if someone is dangerous takes more than 24 hours but less than five days.

Littleton is not the Wild West. It's more like a typical American suburb. I know that some of my friends' parents have handguns in the house, though I have never seen them because they are locked up. I don't want to outlaw all guns. I can even see someone having a handgun in the home for protection. But we need restrictions on automatic guns with a dozen or more bullets in their clips. The

only purpose for that kind of gun is to kill lots of people quickly. I also think guns should be licensed, just like cars. And the minimum age for gun purchasers should be raised from 18 to 21—the drinking age. If you're not responsible enough to drink alcohol, you're not responsible enough to buy a gun.

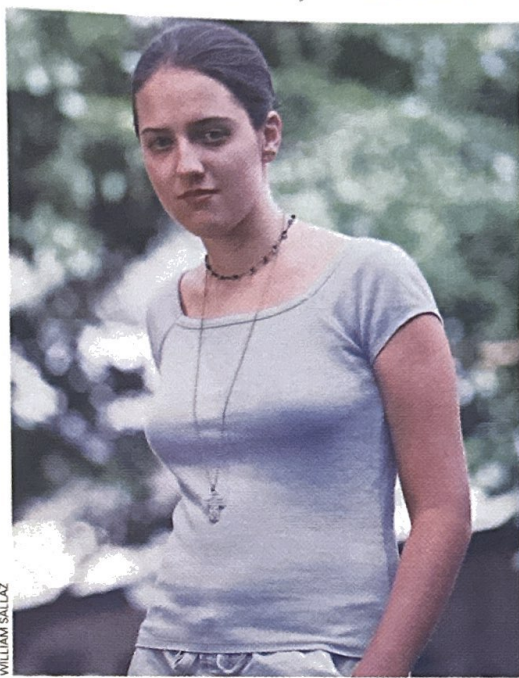
Last July, a group of us from SAFE went to Washington, D.C., to lobby for gun legislation, including an end to unregulated sales at gun shows. We talked to the president and the vice president, but half of Colorado's congressional delegation turned a deaf ear to us. My lobbying experience has left me disappointed in politicians. They just don't get it—that 13 young people die every day in this country from gun violence. And they don't seem to care that 70 to 80 percent of Americans support reasonable gun legislation.

I'm also saddened by a lot of the news coverage of Columbine. Some reporters respected our grief, but many were insulting. As one TV reporter primed for the camera, he was heard to say: "Do I look devastated enough?" And even people who hated Dylan and Eric were appalled by the magazine cover that called them "The Monsters Next Door." They were our friends, too. They were just kids. But someone had to make monsters out of them.

After the shootings, it was reported that Eric and Dylan wanted to kill nonwhite students and athletes, but many of their victims didn't fall into either category. One of them was a dear friend of mine, Rachel Scott. She was no athlete, she was a theater person.

Rachel was beautiful, inside and out. She was a hard worker with a great sense of humor. After I got out of the school on the day of the shooting, I watched the news coverage on TV, trying to find out who had been shot. I saw videotape of students running past a body on the ground. All you could see clearly was the victim's hair, but that was enough. I had helped to cut Rachel's hair, so I knew she was the one lying there. The sad thing is that Rachel would have been a perfect friend for Eric and Dylan, if only they had known her well, because she would have accepted them. I still can't believe they meant to kill her.

And now the shooting in Los Angeles. It was horrible enough that, at the age of 17, I had to run for my life from my own high school. It is even more hideous when guns are turned against preschoolers. This must stop, and it must stop now.



WILLIAM SALLAZ

COLUMBINE'S LEGACY: 'We should mourn all the people who died, including Eric and Dylan'

Desperate to protect kids and calm parents, schools are using SWAT teams, banning book bags and teaching students to get along. Will it work? **BY CLAUDIA KALB**

IT HAS BEEN ONLY A FEW MONTHS, but life has changed radically at Permian High in Odessa, Texas. Last May, when the dismissal bell rang out the old academic year, students were Jane and John Anonymous, and the closest thing to surveillance was a couple of security guards passing through the hallways. Last week, when students returned for the new year, they stepped into the new age of high-tech school safety. Every student is now required to wear a computer-coded ID badge. Seventeen surveillance cameras monitor the parking lot and school entrance. And "black boxes," some (no one knows which) containing cameras with audiotape, had been installed in some classrooms by engineers from Sandia National Laboratories, which designs security systems for the U.S. Mint and FBI. Permian, which has 2,100 students, isn't an especially dangerous campus. Still, "we're never satisfied," says principal Brian Rosson. "We're taking proactive steps to make this as safe a place as it can be."

But can any measure guarantee safety? That is the question plaguing administrators as school doors open across the country. Overall, school violence has declined this decade. But the mantra "It can't happen here" was buried once and for all with Columbine's young victims. The recent school shootings have forced a growing number of officials to take sometimes desperate measures to assure parents, teachers and students that *something* is being done to deter violence—even if there is no consensus on the programs' effectiveness. The range of strategies is enormous—from installing metal detectors for guns to training school personnel to identify alienation and hostility before they spin out of control. "There's been a shift from general security to crisis management," says Pete Blauvelt, head of the National Association of School Safety. "The recent shootings have kicked the anxiety meter up 50 or 60 notches."

In their effort to prevent disaster, some schools are adopting a near-militaristic approach. Fire drills are mere child's play compared with student rehearsals for armed intruders. "They know if I come on the P.A. and say 'we're in a lockdown situation'... to clear the hallways, get away from the windows and get down on the floor," says Sharon

Cross, principal of Schaumburg High in suburban Chicago, which instituted the drills last winter. "It means someone's life is in danger." The kids aren't the only ones getting ready. Local SWAT teams case the three-story building in the evening and on weekends, uncovering every last nook and cranny. Could a student hide here? Could a

gunman flee there? In Pittsburgh, SWAT teams took aim in the hallways of Brashear High last week, staging a mock emergency. Other schools are installing telephones and even panic buttons in classrooms. Many are hiring security officers, some armed, to monitor the comings and goings of students between classes.

City schools, like those in Los Angeles, have had metal detectors for years. But schools well outside urban terrain are now buying the machines, too—at \$2,500 apiece. At Garrett Metal Detectors in Garland, Texas, school orders have quadrupled since April, says Jim Dobrei, director of sales and marketing: "When Columbine hit, it threw

our production into turmoil." But the detectors are still far from routine. Evanston Township High outside Chicago considered them, but decided they'd be too intrusive. It opted instead for surveillance equipment. The four-story building is now being equipped with 500 video cameras in 47 stairwells and 81 exterior doors. The cost: \$1 million. "Some people think we're doing this to spy on them," says Kathy Miehl, an Evanston administrator. "But you don't spend that kind of money without a very compelling reason. In the end, it's for safety."

SWAT TEAM: Officers stage a drill at a Pittsburgh school in response to the shootings in Littleton and Los Angeles

But some experts on school safety wonder whether the pricey high-tech route is the answer. Columbine, for instance, had an armed security guard on the premises. And although video cameras might help with deterrence, they're not going to stop a determined killer. Nor can they solve the problems of bullying, harassment and alienation—which seem to have triggered many of the recent school shootings. Jan Hughes, an educational psychologist at Texas A&M University, worries that an overemphasis on surveillance can make kids feel targeted. That can increase the very alienation that lies at the root of so much youth violence. "[Surveillance] creates an environment where students don't feel that school is a place for them," says Hughes. "Rather than making them feel more comfortable, it makes them feel less secure." Hughes says schools should take a more personal approach to safety by building trusting relationships between teachers and students.

They're trying to do just that at Heath High School in Paducah, Ky., where administrators are identifying adults from faculty members to custodians to cafeteria workers whom students trust, then teaching them how to counsel the kids. "You can put up all the fences and guards you want," says Heath principal Bill Bond. "But when a kid pulls a gun and starts firing, all the prevention measures in

SCHOOLS ON THE ALERT



SECURITY CHECK: A Houston high-school student gets frisked with a metal detector prior to graduation ceremonies last May

the world are virtually useless. It's got to be prevented in kids' hearts." Almost 2,000 miles away, students at St. Genevieve Catholic High School in California's San Fernando Valley will spend the first week of school talking about how to build character and the importance of relationships. "We're not doing metal detectors," says principal Dan Horn. "We're doing welcome mats."

One program that many schools find effective in reducing violence is peer mediation. At Waterford Mott High in Michigan, the program has shown remarkable results. Before it was instituted, as many as 40 fights a year broke out at the school. But last year peer mediators resolved more than 90 disputes between students: only one ended in a fight. Such interpersonal approaches can start even in elementary school. At the Douglas School in the rural town of Princeton, Ill., kindergartners are learning to communicate with each other through "peace circles," where they air grievances and offer praise. The program, PeaceBuilders, has gotten high marks from researchers—and from the little people, too. "By being a peacebuilder," says Ryan Gosnell, 6, "you are making the school a better place."

But as with metal detectors and cameras, even the best-intended communication ap-

proaches are far from perfect. A recent study of 84 popular violence-prevention programs, including PeaceBuilders, gave just 10 an A; more than half received a C or D, many because they concentrated too heavily on providing information rather than on helping kids develop interpersonal skills. Other well-meaning attempts to stop violence before it happens also fail to live up to their promise. In Florida, Cheryl Catchings and her son Jo Jo started an anonymous teen tip line, Speak Out, after Jo Jo, an African-American, was jumped by a truck full of white boys on a gang initiation ritual. The

program is now active in 10 Florida counties and administrators in other states are interested in setting up Speak Out lines of their own. But Wesley Mitchell, chief of police for the Los Angeles Unified School District, says their local hot line has typically been used not for productive tips, but to harass fellow students. "It doesn't work," he says.

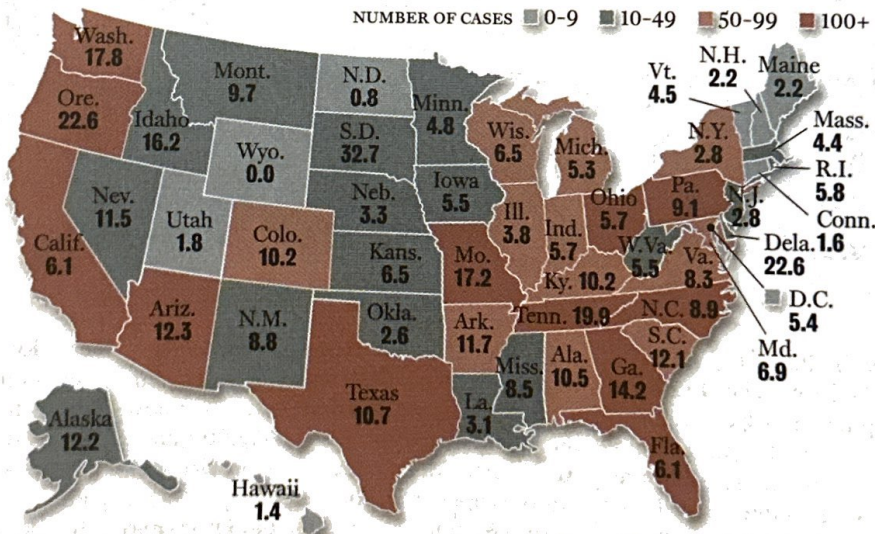
Even at Columbine, where a community has united in tragedy, there is no consensus on how to prevent the violence from recurring. The school now has 16 new surveillance cameras, and students must wear ID tags at all times. Parents are being recruited as hall monitors, and administrators are suggesting a dress code that bans hats and camouflage clothing. (In the immediate aftermath of last April's shooting, the school banned black trench coats.) But, says Kurt Bigelow, president of the newly formed Columbine Alumni Association, "all of the ideas that we have come up with wouldn't have prevented what happened April 20." In a country where a quarter of students say guns are easily accessible at home, expecting any measure to make a school invulnerable is unrealistic. There is no technological fix to the threat of school violence, and measures that strike at the root causes of youth violence have a long way to go. For schools, after all, are products and reflections of the society they serve.

With JOHN DAVENPORT, DONNA FOOTE in Los Angeles, BETH DICKEY in Melbourne, Fla., SARAH DOWNEY and STEVE RHODES in Chicago, SHERRY KEENE-OSBORN in Littleton and JEFF GREEN in Detroit

Students and Guns: A Better Report Card

Federal statistics released last week showed that 3,930 students were expelled during the 1997-98 school year for bringing firearms to school—down roughly 30 percent from the previous year.

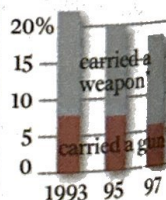
Student gun-related expulsions, 1997-98
NUMBER OF STUDENTS EXPELLED PER 100,000



Students and violence, 1997

8.5% said they have carried a weapon at school
7.4% said they were threatened or injured with a weapon at school
4.0% said they felt too unsafe to attend school

Students who said they have ...



*IN THE LAST 30 DAYS. SOURCES: U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION, JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

ALL CARNAGE, ALL THE TIME

The media say they're just doing their job: the shootings are news, and people want to watch. So why is the public so mad at the messengers? **BY RICHARD TURNER**

JOURNALISTS USED to be cast as magpies, or canaries, or even wise old owls. Let's just say that these are not the dominant or mythological metaphors right now. "The norm in this day and age seems to be the news media circling like vultures, each hoping to be the first to feast on the gory details of a story," a city court judge in upstate New York wrote last month, refusing to give the press a transcript of a preliminary hearing in a rape and murder trial.

Parents and alumni at Columbine High School planned to form a "human chain" around the school this week to keep the media away from the students. Large majorities of those polled by NEWSWEEK say they believe media coverage encourages copycat killings (88 percent) and makes people feel more endangered than they really are (72 percent). There've been other charges: all-mayhem-all-the-time desensitizes us to violence. It intrudes on private moments. It gives dysfunctional losers an opportunity to go out in a blaze of glory, and facilitated Buford Furrow Jr.'s horrific "wake-up call." It almost feels as if the infotainment empire is producing these shootings, providing a stage for the psychos to walk onto as if making an appearance on "The Jenny Jones Show."

To journalists, the complaints are troubling but double-edged. "They reward us by watching," laments Fox News vice president John Moody, "then complain about what they see." And, media types say, they are ever-vigilant about practicing restraint. CNN says it made sure not to show the children's faces as they left the building hand in hand last week. The Chicago Sun-Times played the Columbine shootings inside the paper the next day, saying it wanted to protect young children and prevent copycat crimes. Last spring, local TV stations in Los Angeles were properly contrite when they cut away from regular programming (one from "Animaniacs") to cover a police pursuit, only to have the suspect



SAFETY VALVE: Some television news editors now delay the broadcast of 'live' coverage by several seconds to avoid the unwitting transmission of on-screen carnage

shoot himself in the head on camera. Some news outlets have begun using a several-second delay on "live" coverage so they can pull the plug.

But rigid, across-the-board guidelines aren't going to happen, executives say. Neither is walking away from these stories. "You can just whitewash it, or try to minimize the terrible things that are going on," says Jeff Wald, news director of KTLA-TV in Los Angeles. "[But] the public has to know about these things. They're newsworthy... this is the unfortunate reality going on in the country right now."

News outlets also tend to blame other news outlets. The print people blame the TV people; the network news people blame the cable people. And indeed, news consumers in the 1990s need to recognize that there's no media monolith out there. Everybody's product is different. Sure, 24-hour cable-news channels get mind-numbingly repeti-

tive, but their audiences are tiny: fewer than a million homes normally tune in to the three services. Ratings for last week's shooting spiked to 2.5 million (compared with the 12.3 million that viewed the post-Littleton "20/20" episode). That's still out of nearly 100 million TV households. They're niches for news junkies. So common sense applies: punch the remote, monitor the kids. Or go elsewhere: when everybody was complaining about John Kennedy Jr. overkill, The New

York Times never once gave the story the lead position on its front page, subordinating it to tax cuts and Israel. But no, the tabloids and local TV stations, duking it out in the ratings and on the newsstands, won't renounce their mantra, "If it bleeds, it leads." And sells.

The big three networks, by contrast, do little live coverage, and they aired fewer crime stories last year than in any year since 1990, according to consultant Andrew Tyn-

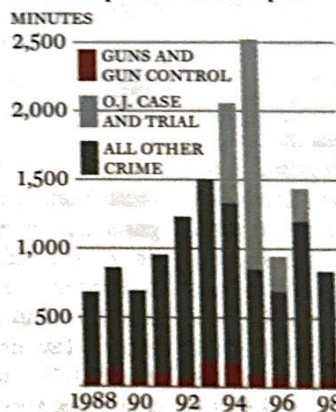
dall. But they're especially starved for big, sweeping news events. Like the news magazines, they've cut back on certain plain-vanilla stories in favor of more news-you-can-use about health, education, religion, entertainment. But they still retain their chops for get-me-rewrite news, and their infrastructures of reporters around the world. So when a big story breaks, they swarm all over it. The news magazines particularly like it if a story is imbued with the Zeitgeist, a little bit of everything. And these days, you can add one more element—perched ravenously on a dead tree, perhaps. The media are part of the story, too.

With ESTHER PAN

TV Crime Time

Time devoted to gun issues pales next to network coverage of crime and the long-running O. J. Simpson saga.

Air time spent on crime topics



NETWORKS ARE ABC, CBS AND NBC. SOURCE: MEDIA STUDIES CENTER

Public outcry and government scrutiny have entertainers dialing down the violence. What will a softer pop culture look like? **BY JOHN LELAND AND CORIE BROWN**

THE ENTERTAINMENT industry loves to say it influences people. Television and radio stations promise advertisers that they can shape consumer preferences in shampoo or soft drinks. Stars use their celebrity to publicize causes like AIDS research or famine relief. But when it comes to the influence of violence in some movies, television, music and videogames on behavior, the same people get prickly. In the wake of recent atrocities, the industry has turned typically defensive. Sumner Redstone, chairman of Viacom International Inc., raised the battle cry at a conference of cable-TV professionals in June. "I'm outraged by a lot of what we hear blaming the media for what's going on," he argued. "I don't think we have anything to be ashamed of."

Now some entertainers and executives—most of whom would speak only anonymously—say this armor is starting to come down. In private, they are willing to talk about an evolving sense of responsibility. "I am more sensitive than a year ago because of what is in the air," says the head of one major film studio. "Not that I believe [violent entertainment] causes street violence. But there is validity to the idea that it is a contributing factor, along with guns." A recent Writers Guild conference devoted a panel to discussing the recent carnage. They called it "Guns Don't Kill People, Writers Do."

This hand-wringing coincides with pressure from government and the public. In a new NEWSWEEK Poll, 78 percent of respondents said violence in the media deserved "some" or "a lot" of the blame for the recent mass shootings, a higher percentage

than blamed the increased availability of guns (70 percent). Last week the Federal Trade Commission began a \$1 million investigation into the marketing of violent entertainment and games to children. "I don't want to take on Washington," says one studio head. "We've passed on three projects recently that were too violent."

The Motion Picture Association of America is pressing all its members to

staunch the gratuitous flow of blood. Besides rating films, the trade group approves all advertising, including trailers and Web sites. "We've taken a hard look at guns" in ads, says the MPAA's Bethlyn Hand. "And quite frankly, that's a result of Littleton. Before that we'd let you have four guns on a poster. Now you can have one." The guidelines are equally stern, if less clear, concerning gore. The board occasionally bounces

ads for showing too much blood on a knife. How much is too much? "We allow a trickle," says Hand, "and not a stream."

The public's appetite for destruction may also be waning. In the mid-1990s, Schwarzenegger, Stallone and Willis filled summer screens with an orgy of blood. But as the movies got dumber, audiences turned elsewhere. Only the cyberpunk hit "The Matrix" carries a high body count this

season. "The Blair Witch Project," the summer's horror hit, shows no violence on the screen. "The public, through ticket sales, showed it is no longer interested in that," says Peter Strauss, president of Lions Gate Films, whose movies include "Gods and Monsters" and "Affliction." The irony, says Mark Amin, chairman of Trimark Pictures, which specializes in B fare, is that "we have to create more violent versions of

our movies to please the Japanese market."

Black-oriented movies and rap music have been years ahead in the movement to disarm, likely because African-American communities felt the pain of random violence before the rest of the country. After the rash of 'hood movies like "New Jack City" and "Menace II Society" in the early 1990s, filmmakers and producers turned their focus to a larger slice of black life. This



A LOWER BODY COUNT