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PRESENTS

Nicole Hockley (00:00:06):

It was a normal Friday to start with. You know, get the kids up give them their breakfast. Dylan went to the Sandy Hook School. That day I put my boys on the bus and then my friend was calling and she said, "Nicole, it's a shooting and it's at our school."

Rep. Lucy McBath (00:00:42):

It was the day after Thanksgiving. I was at my family's home in Chicago. My son was with his father in Florida. I picked up the phone and there was just this, this dead silence. And I said, "Where's Jordan, what happened to Jordan?" And that's when Jordan's dad said Jordan's been shot. You're 25 times more likely to die by gun violence in the United States of America than any other developed nation in the world. What does this say about us as Americans if we're just willing to let people die? Because we're afraid of the NRA?

Frank Smyth (00:01:40):

There's no other single issue lobby in the United States that has had as much success advancing its agenda against the wishes of the majority of the country.

Greg Jackson Jr. (00:01:53):

Gun violence is taking lives at a historic rate. It's only getting worse and worse, and yet we're focused on the right to bear arms and not the right to live.

Frank Smyth (00:02:06):

The NRA has managed to convince millions of Americans that when people get killed in gun violence, that is the price of freedom. Why has that happened? We have to start unpacking their myths.

Crew Member (00:02:29):

David Keene.

David Keene (00:02:38):

I'm Dave Keene. I was president of the National Rifle Association from 2011 to 2013. I continue to serve on the NRA board, as I have since 2000. I've been in politics in Washington and nationally for more than 40 years. I've been involved in one way or another with every major battle over gun rights in this country. At the NRA, what you have to do is try to every day advance and protect the rights of gun owners.

David Keene (00:03:07):

No, you shall not take the freedoms bequeathed to us from us. We will go to the ballot box. We will demonstrate, we will organize. We will do everything it is necessary to do to protect those rights.

David Keene (00:03:27):

Americans came to this country, survived on the frontier, protected their families. They knew that if they got into trouble, help was probably not going to come. And so they developed this self-reliance. Gun control is not simply about guns. It's about an assault on values and an image of America that believers in the Second Amendment hold dear. It's an attack, not just on the guns. It's an attack on them. It's an attack on their lifestyle. It's an attack on the country and the values that the founders cared about. It was George Washington, who said, "Every citizen should be armed."

Sen. Chris Murphy (00:04:09):

The NRA wants you to believe a fantasy about our founding in which our founding fathers believed that there should be no regulation of firearms. That couldn't be further from the truth. It is absolutely clear that our founding fathers loved gun control. They in fact had loads of it.

Robert Spitzer (00:04:41):

From our very earliest days in the 1600s through the 20th century, there were literally thousands of gun laws, and they were gun laws of every imaginable variety.

Sen. Chris Murphy (00:04:59):

We had rules on who can own a weapon and who couldn't. You had to register your weapon, you had to register your gunpowder. You couldn't bring your weapons certain places.

Robert Spitzer (00:05:18):

When we think about the American West, you think of it as a lawless period where everybody carried a gun and that it was guns that won the West. And that's really not the story of the West at all. The norm was strict regulation and prohibition of gun carrying. That's why in recent years, even Justice Antonin Scalia, a very conservative member of the Supreme Court, made very clear that the Second Amendment wasn't an unlimited right.

News Anchor (00:05:49):

How far does that constitutional right go?

Justice Antonin Scalia (00:05:52):

Limitations upon the right to keep and bear arms are permissible because there were some that were acknowledged at the time.

Robert Spitzer (00:06:01):

We think today of this great battle between those who support gun rights versus those who want stronger gun laws, but in the first 300 years of our history, that was not how it was.

Frank Smyth (00:06:15):

When the NRA was founded in 1871, they took no position on gun control whatsoever because they saw no need. I started covering the National Rifle Association in 1994. The National Rifle Association was founded in order to deal with future possible threats involving European military forces. They organized shooting competitions to improve the skills on the range, which could then be applied to the battlefield.

Speaker (00:06:47):

The fact that the high level of marksmanship is maintained and that a continuous program of training and education is carried forward is the result of the work of the National Rifle Association.

Frank Smyth (00:06:57):

And that remained their main focus, riflery and later hunting to expand the shooting sports for over a century before the NRA changed.

Speaker (00:07:14):

The President’s car is now turning onto Elm Street. And it will be only a matter of minutes before he arrives at the Trademark. It appears as though something has happened in the motorcade route.

Speaker (00:07:27):

President Kennedy has been assassinated. It's official now.

Yohuru Williams (00:07:32):

The 1960s is a decade in which the gun comes to symbolize the chaos and disunity that the nation is experiencing as a whole.

Mary Anne Franks (00:07:43):

For the first time, you get signs that there's going to be a push for racial equality.

Crowd (00:07:48):

Black is beautiful.

Mary Anne Franks (00:07:52):

You get signs that there's going to be a push to say women have equal rights. And you also see at the same time this incredible upsurge of dramatic gun violence.

Yohuru Williams (00:08:02):

From the assassination of John F. Kennedy, to the assassination of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Medgar Evers. There's also the mass shooting at the University of Texas, Austin in 1966, that begins the age of mass shootings. It's a decade that's awash in police violence. Most of the urban unrest is tied in some way to firearms and to shootings.

Rep. Lucy McBath (00:08:31):

My first true understanding of what gun violence does was when Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated. I distinctly remember watching my father be so distraught and my mother sobbing. Because he represented freedom.

Mary Anne Franks (00:09:00):

It's not a coincidence that the assassinations of the 1960s are against people who are representing progress. Every time it seems that there is some group that is going to rise up and say, "We are Americans too. And we deserve the same rights as everyone else." That's the point at which violence breaks out.

Robert Spitzer (00:09:26):

The upsurge in violence shocks the country and spurs calls for new, stronger gun laws.

President Lyndon B. Johnson (00:09:33):

I call upon the Congress and the name of sanity to give America the gun control law America needs.

Scott Melzer (00:09:45):

NRA members and gun rights activists arose in the 1960s, not just in response to the rising tide of support for gun control, but also in response to the political and social movements of that time. Those movements threatened the status of a lot of white men.

David Keene (00:10:08):

It wasn't until what we now call the culture wars broke out back then that gun ownership and the Second Amendment became a matter of controversy.

Man (00:10:18):

Restrictive legislation at the present time is the initial step to the takeover of this country.

David Keene (00:10:29):

At that point, the fight took place within the National Rifle Association.

Frank Smyth (00:10:36):

You had one element focused on the shooting sports and they were not interested in politics. You had another element of the NRA starting to raise the alarm about gun rights.

David Keene (00:10:49):

Some NRA members believed the goal was to abolish firearms in the United States. They realized, unless you do something you're not going to have the right to have a firearm.

Harlon Carter (00:11:02):

We stand in the forefront of millions of those people in America who like to shoot.

Igor Volsky (00:11:08):

These new voices in the NRA are led by a man by the name of Harlon Carter.

Harlon Carter (00:11:15):

We believe that the right to keep and bear arms is a salient part of the American tradition.

Igor Volsky (00:11:23):

Carter believed that every gun control measure violated true American identity and principles of individualism and freedom and began organizing NRA members.

Speaker (00:11:41):

The NRA has been campaigning against the gun laws, fearing it might curtail their members' activities.

Speaker (00:11:47):

We have sent a letter to our entire membership.

Speaker (00:11:50):

By sending instructions on how members were to write their congressmen, the NRA had clearly launched a very effective lobbying campaign.

Frank Smyth (00:11:58):

Harlon Carter wanted to take the activities that the NRA had been supporting for over a century in the shooting sports and co-opt all of that activity into their gun rights agenda.

Sen. Robert Kennedy (00:12:11):

The nation and sportsmen have been subjected to a massive publicity campaign against this bill. This campaign has misled thousands of our citizens. It is a responsibility to think not only of our own convenience, but of the tragedy of sudden death.

Speaker (00:12:35):

Senator Kennedy has been shot.

Speaker (00:12:45):

The National Rifle Association of America is under siege today.

Matt Lacombe (00:12:48):

After the high-profile political assassinations, a lot of Americans began to see the NRA as this organization that is responsible for preventing the passage of strong regulations on guns.

Frank Smyth (00:13:03):

Under pressure, the NRA came around to support the Gun Control Act of 1968.

President Lyndon B. Johnson (00:13:13):

We've come here to the cabinet room today to sign the most comprehensive gun control law ever signed in this nation's history.

Igor Volsky (00:13:24)

The Gun Control Act of 1968 was a measure that for the first time created categories of prohibited purchasers.

Igor Volsky (00:13:40):

There were leaders within the NRA who didn’t have a significant problem with that law and thought the organization had strayed too far from its original intent of marksmanship and sports shooting. They gutted its lobbying shop, fired about 60 individuals.

Frank Smyth (00:14:10):

This was the Old Guard, and they were interested in moving the NRA out of Washington to shift the focus of the NRA away from politics completely.

Frank Smyth (00:14:22):

Harlon Carter ended up leaving the NRA and accusing the NRA of betrayal. He truly believed that gun rights was the most important issue facing America.

Yohuru Williams (00:14:37):

There's a deeper history with Harlon that goes back to a murder he committed when he was just 17 years old. He had killed a young Mexican named Ramon Casiano in an act of vigilantism for which he will ultimately be convicted of murder, but have that sentence vacated by a judge who felt the jury had not ben properly advised about self-defense.

Frank Smyth (00:15:01):

Harlon Carter changed the vowel in his first name from Harlan to Harlon and in doing so managed to keep his murder conviction quiet for 50 years. In the 1950s, he had been a border patrol officer and the border patrol chief using truly draconian measures.

Man (00:15:25):

You're talking Harlon about being able to carry a handgun around in your belt. And you're saying that is a liberty that I demand at the expense of 25,000 lives per year.

Harlon Carter (00:15:38):

The price of those lives I put up against my right to the presumption of innocence, my right against self-incrimination under the Fifth Amendment, the right of due process under the Fifth Amendment that the government can’t seize my property without due process. Those things are worth all the lives you will ever pay for.

Frank Smyth (00:15:53):

So this man, this former convicted murderer, this man who advocated extreme positions as a border patrol chief, this man believed that gun rights are more important than the toll of gun violence.

Harlon Carter (00:16:08):

And I respectfully submit to you, that if we can ever embark upon the principle that because a liberty might be abused the government can restrict it, restrain it, or abolish it, ladies and gentlemen you have lost everything.

News Anchor (00:16:32):

The National Rifle Association convention in Cincinnati went into overtime last night, a stormy all night session.

Frank Smyth (00:16:40):

Harlon Carter plotted and organized to take over the NRA. Back then the NRA elections were conducted in person at the annual meetings, and he managed to get more than 500 of his supporters to travel to Cincinnati for this meeting.

Man (00:16:59):

If you take my rifles, my shotgun and my pistols away from me, then what are you going to do then after that? Take the pocket knives, the hunting knives? You know, where’s the stopping point?

Frank Smyth (00:17:10):

You had a convention floor that was rowdy. Carter had deployed his followers in the audience equipped with walkie talkies so that he could give his lieutenants the orders about which way they needed to vote. The old guard was caught completely unaware and ill prepared, and they ended up firing the old guard, every one of them, one by one, getting themselves elected as the new leaders of the NRA. This is the founding of the modern NRA who believes that almost any form of gun control must be opposed.

Harlon Carter (00:18:01):

Any national gun law, no matter how innocent in appearance, no matter how simple it might be, presupposes a still further growth in a centralized, computerized gun control bureaucracy in Washington, DC.

Frank Smyth (00:18:25):

The NRA in '77 implemented a practice of total control. The entire organization was restructured so that everything went up the chain of command. Independent voices would not be allowed because they had a political gun rights agenda, and they wanted to make sure that everything they did supported this agenda.

Igor Volsky (00:18:50):

NRA membership really exploded. It grew by something over 300 percent.

Speaker (00:18:58):

This is headquarters in Washington, plush, computerized, heavily staffed, well-funded and geared for action.

Igor Volsky (00:19:10):

The NRA began to use the Second Amendment as the bedrock for arguing against gun control measures. They're going to wrap any argument in the American flag.

Speaker (00:19:26):

Here at the organization's convention, there are pamphlets citing the Second Amendment, posters and booths. It's all part of the NRA's lobbying effort against gun control legislation.

Frank Smyth (00:19:37):

The NRA started hiring paid scholars to start writing articles in law journals to shift the way the American system of jurisprudence and the courts look at the Second Amendment.

David Keene (00:19:52):

The Second Amendment is not about hunting rabbits. It's about self-defense. It's about self-reliance. It's about all the things that the founders cared about. Our job is to say, here is a threat to the Second Amendment. Our members know when they hear that, they rise up.

Yohoru Williams (00:20:13):

Harlon Carter recognized the tremendous potential of the NRA as an organization that can lobby, an organization that can have political influence, an organization that can amass a great deal of power.

David Keene (00:20:27):

The main sponsor of the Gun Control Act of 1968 was Senator Joe Tydings. He was supposed to be a slam-dunk candidate for reelection. Then all of a sudden he found that he was being attacked by all these gun owners. Joe Tydings lost, and he lost because of the gun issue. That was the first political scalp on the wall. That served as a wakeup call to the political community, because the difference between gun owners and others, is that gun owners actually vote.

Matt Lacombe (00:21:07):

My name is Matt Lacombe. I'm currently unpacking why the NRA's members are so politically active. I collected about 80 years of the NRA's magazines. The American Riflemen is the NRA's official journal. It's the most widely circulated firearms-related magazine in the United States. I digitized those and used a tool called structural topic modeling, a fancy computer algorithm to take all the documents and to group them together into topics. There was a topic that was clearly related to the Second Amendment. Also a topic called Americanism and Guns. There was also clearly a topic related to crime.

Matt Lacombe (00:21:53):

I was then able to plot the substantive ideas that the NRA pushed over time. The NRA has played a singular and important role in cultivating an identity around gun ownership, in which guns are not simply tools that a lot of folks use, but instead are symbols of who they are, what they value and how they view their place in the world. The NRA has taken this identity around gun ownership and politically weaponized it. We see the NRA portraying gun control as threats to who its members and supporters are. When people's identities feel threatened, they're much more likely to take action. This gun-centric ideology enabled the NRA to align with the Republican Party when the time was right.

TV Host (00:22:51):

David Keene, southern coordinator for Reagan last year, what do you think the Republican Party needs to do to resuscitate itself?

David Keene (00:22:58):

It should be based on an opposition to government involvement and interference with the family and individual life.

David Keene (00:23:05)

Ronald Reagan emerged as a hero to most people on the right and certainly to most gun owners. He was of course an outdoorsman himself and a gun owner, and recognized these things.

President Ronald Reagan (00:23:17):

Tales of Wild West men and women are woven into the dreams of our youth and the standards we aim to live by in our adult lives. You know what they are — words like self-reliance, personal initiative, those bedrock values that made America great.

Igor Volsky (00:23:36):

It is not surprising that the first presidential candidate that the NRA endorsed was Ronald Reagan, who came from Hollywood, starred in many cowboy movies.

Ronald Reagan (00:23:50):

You wanted law and order in this town. You got it. I'll shoot the first man that starts for those steps.

Igor Volsky (00:23:56):

He personified this myth that the NRA told that the country is built on individualism, on manifest destiny, and that those notions were rooted in firearm ownership.

Man 1 (00:24:13):

The NRA are the type of people who stand for this country.

Man 2 (00:24:15):

They are patriotic Americans interested in preserving our heritage and our American way.

Speaker (00:24:20):

It was an appreciative crowd that heard President Ronald Reagan today reinforce their philosophy and tell them what they wanted to hear.

President Ronald Reagan (00:24:27):

We will never disarm any American who seeks to protect his family from fear and harm.

Yohuru Williams (00:24:39):

The story of Reagan and the NRA, really it goes back to 1967. Reagan had been governor of California during the passage of the Mulford Act.

Caroline Light (00:24:51):

The Mulford Act criminalized the open carry of firearms and was designed specifically to disenfranchise and to disarm members of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, because they were demonstrating in public carrying firearms openly to shed a spotlight on police violence against black and brown people in California.

Man (00:25:18):

You have no right to take my gun away from me.

Ronald Reagan (00:25:21):

There is absolutely no reason why out on the street today, a civilian should be carrying a loaded weapon.

Yohuru Williams (00:25:29):

Throughout our history, the fear that African-Americans could have access to firearms and use those firearms to the detriment of whites is pervasive. So what you see from the very beginning in American history, are very stringent laws to prevent the ownership of firearms by people of color, like The Black Codes, and this is going to be a theme that will run all the way up into the 1960s when we get The Mulford Act.

Frank Smyth (00:26:04):

The NRA helped draft the legislation itself to make sure those new laws were passed.

Yohuru Williams (00:26:13):

Ultimately the motivation behind their support, it really boils down to race. Many argue that this isn't really an attempt to deal with the issue of guns, as much as it is an attempt to scapegoat communities of color for the violence that's overtaking the nation in that moment.

Caroline Light (00:26:30):

It's all part and parcel of a longer arc of the NRA's support for the criminalization of certain populations' access to firearms.

Yohuru Williams (00:26:42):

In the 1980s, this fear overtakes the nation, and Reagan will campaign successfully on this idea that Americans aren't safe, that you need to reinvest in law and order.

Ronald Reagan (00:26:53):

Guns don't make criminals. Hardcore criminals use guns and locking them up, the hardcore criminals up, and throwing away the key is the best gun control law we could ever have.

Speaker (00:27:07):

NRA's spokesman acknowledged that part of their new membership comes not from sportsmen, their traditional members, but from people worried about crime.

Harlon Carter (00:27:16):

Crime is the important thing. I think that's what the people are interested in.

Yohuru Williams (00:27:25):

Gun rights activists concerned about crime always decouple that conversation from the poverty that accompanies the decline of American cities. Industry is moving out of the inner city to the suburbs. People have less space and they're competing for fewer resources and fewer jobs. Those pressures create a powder keg in American cities.

Greg Jackson Jr. (00:27:48):

Where you see gun violence that's most rampant, root causes are most rampant. The response in our country has been to intensify our law and order approach.

Woman (00:28:02):

It cannot be that every black male between 18 and 25 belongs to a gang. And yet when you see an arrest invariably that's what you see.

Greg Jackson Jr. (00:28:13):

The 80s and 90s showed us that you can’t meet a public health crisis with criminal law enforcement and carceral strategies and expect it to work. Even in current times we always start with how do we manage a threat versus how do we save lives of those who are most impacted. Right now black youth are 14 times more likely to be shot or killed by firearms than white youth in America. And as a survivor of gun violence, I've seen that people in our communities are the ones who are paying the price for this quote unquote “freedom" that advocates from the NRA are talking about.

News Anchor (00:28:57):

It is Christmas Eve in New York and the talk of the town is not peace on earth, but the violence among us. This time in the subways, where a vigilante and his gun brought terror this past weekend.

Frank Smyth (00:29:07):

There are a number of cases that are instrumental in the beliefs of the modern NRA. One of them was the Bernard Goetz shooting.

Speaker (00:29:16):

A passenger on the New York City subway, a white man, said four black teenagers wielding screwdrivers pressed him for 5 dollars. He shot all four then fled through the subway tunnel.

Speaker (00:29:27):

The shot severed Darryl Cabey's spinal cord, paralyzing him for life.

Frank Smyth (00:29:34):

The NRA defended Mr. Goetz as a way of putting their own stamp on gun rights through his case.

Speaker (00:29:41):

The National Rifle Association today began running ads in New York City newspapers. Ads that say law-abiding citizens have the right to protect themselves because the city no longer does.

Richard Feldman (00:29:53):

The greatest single deterrent to crime is an armed citizen.

Yohuru Williams (00:29:58):

Bernie Goetz is hailed as a hero and lost in that conversation was the fact that Bernie Goetz was carrying that gun illegally.

News Anchor (00:30:05):

Four young blacks wounded by a white gunman and the cheering hasn't stopped.

Man (00:30:11):

We're tired of being pushed around.

Woman (00:30:13):

Three cheers for him. Three cheers.

Yohuru Williams (00:30:17):

People see him as a vigilante who's had enough and is going to fight back. Guns down these four teenagers, including famously saying to one of them after he shot him, "You don't look like you're hurt too bad. Here's another one." I remember how I felt going into the city after that, and it felt like it was open season. You had to think differently about the way that you showed up in public places. It was clear in the way that people talked about that case, what the line of demarcation was. And it was the fact that Bernie Goetz, who was white, shot four black teenagers. Society bought the narrative that was promoted by the NRA, that armed white men could solve the problems of America, in going out and killing the bad guys. In that moment, Wayne LaPierre rises to national attention when he petitions to vacate Bernie Goetz’s conviction, because he argues that Bernie Goetz had acted in self-defense.

Wayne LaPierre (00:31:24):

Any firearm has a legitimate self-defense purpose. When a criminal is trying to rape, rob, or injure the victim.

Rob Pincus (00:31:33):

Wayne LaPierre was hired by Harlon Carter as a lobbyist. He wasn't a diehard gun rights guy. He wasn't the guy that wore the NRA patch on his sleeve. He was a mild-mannered, educated guy who could walk into a room and present an argument for gun rights issues without being intimidating, without being bombastic, without being flamboyant.

Wayne LaPierre (00:31:56):

If you really want to get at gun crime, you've got to narrow the focus, put in some tough mandatory sentences, and go after the bad guys.

Rob Pincus (00:32:04):

I'm a gun rights advocate, and I'm the executive vice president of Second Amendment Organization. I've been in the firearms industry for a little over 20 years. In the gun community, when we talk about gaining ground, one of the things that Wayne LaPierre has done for us very, very effectively was to make it much easier to get a concealed carry permit.

News Anchor (00:32:24):

Tomorrow, sweeping new state laws take effect that will make it significantly easier for many people in Florida to obtain permits to carry concealed weapons.

David Keene (00:32:36):

The first state that allowed concealed carry was Florida.

David Keene (00:32:43):

Then Wayne LaPierre said, let's get concealed carry across the country.

Female Speaker (00:32:47):

The new law to allow citizens to carry concealed handguns [crosstalk 00:32:50].

Female Speaker (00:32:50):
[crosstalk] Texans were given the right to carry concealed handguns [crosstalk]

Male Speaker (00:32:52):
[crosstalk] Thousands of concealed handgun applications [crosstalk]

Female Speaker (00:32:55):
[crosstalk] 700,000 applications for permits will come in to sheriff’s offices.

Cassandra Crifasi (00:33:00):

Over the last several decades, we've seen a shift from most states not issuing a license to carry a concealed firearm, now to every state doing so.

Wayne LaPierre (00:33:12):

Right to carry is sweeping across the land.

Rob Pincus (00:33:17):
It became a concealed carry revolution.

Cassandra Crifasi (00:33:23):

To get a concealed carry license requires some training that you have to undergo. You have to pass a test. But now we have 21 states that don't require any form of license to carry a firearm.

News Anchor (00:33:40):

Tomorrow anybody in Kansas can carry a concealed weapon and won't need a permit or the training to buy the gun.

David Keene (00:33:46):

It's called Constitutional Carry.

Mary Anne Franks (00:33:50):

It's a great piece of branding by the NRA to take a concept like permitless carry and to say we're going to call that Constitutional Carry.

News Anchor (00:33:58):
Texas Senators have just passed permitless, or what’s known as constitutional, carry. You wouldn’t have to get a license, no training required, and there would no longer be a test.

Mary Anne Franks (00:34:09):

We're going to take the notion of no regulation whatsoever and we're going to call that constitutional.

Cassandra Crifasi (00:34:15):

One of the most rigorous recent studies that investigated what happened when these laws changed, found that violent crime increased between 13 and 15%.

David Keene (00:34:28):

If you suggested to Harlon Carter that by 2020 carry laws of one form or another would be in effect in all 50 states, he would've said you're crazy. But they are.

Rob Pincus (00:34:42):

Because of the work that the NRA has done, we have this huge number of people who now have guns in their everyday life. It's not just Saturday afternoon at the competition. It's not just hunting season. You're literally carrying a gun around on earth every day. To work, to the store, dropping your kids off at school, with the idea that you're going to be able to use it to defend yourself or other people in an emergency.

Caroline Light (00:35:06):
The NRA has managed to promote this ideal of guns everywhere, that more guns are going to provide more safety.

Yohuru Williams (00:35:17):

The NRA then begins pushing for legislation that would encourage people, not only to be able to carry it but to be able to use guns to defend their lives without fear of being prosecuted.

Caroline Light (00:35:30):

If you look at Stand-Your-Ground Laws, any person who feels themselves under threat can use lethal violence. Stand-Your-Ground Laws have proliferated across 33 states. The National Rifle Association was a key element in the passage of those laws.

Greg Jackson Jr. (00:35:53):

In all states where Stand-Your-Ground Laws have been passed, we've seen gun-related deaths and homicides increase. This violence continues to rage forward. And we're watching individuals in our community being slain.

Rep. Lucy McBath (00:36:12):

Jordan was very compassionate and very, very sensitive. He had a lot of wisdom, a great deal of understanding, and trying to figure out the world around him. The man who murdered my son was claiming that he feared for his life. That my son had a gun or stick, and he needed to defend himself. And the Stand-Your-Ground Law gave him the ability to be able to do that.

Speaker (00:36:51): Oh my god, somebody’s shooting.

Speaker (00:36:54):

Jordan Davis was shot and killed here at Baymeadows in Southside during an argument over loud music. Dunn admitted to firing his weapon but said he did it in self-defense after he says he was threatened by the teens.

Speaker (00:37:08):

No gun was found in the teens’ SUV.

Rep. Lucy McBath (00:37:12):

That man was using his implicit bias and his racism as a means to act out his violent tendencies towards my son and his friends. Because you can shoot- to-kill and ask questions later, based upon a perception of threat under Stand-Your-Ground. Having just watched the same scenario with Trayvon Martin, I even had discussions with Jordan about Trayvon's murder. And Jordan said, "Mom, why did that man, why did he kill Trayvon? Trayvon wasn't doing anything wrong?" And I remember saying to him, "Baby, you've got to be careful." As a young black man, somebody will take out a gun and shoot you. And there the very discussion I had with my child became his own reality. Every single moment that we ignore what is happening in our streets with our laws, people die.

President Bill Clinton (00:38:39):
I, William Jefferson Clinton, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States.

Matt Lacombe (00:38:50):
In the early 1990s, the Democrats have control of Congress, and they decide to pursue gun regulations.

President Bill Clinton (00:38:58):

What's the point of being President if you can't help improve the lives and futures of people?

President Bill Clinton (00:39:06):

Laws can help. That's why I want to take these assault weapons off the street. To regulate how we deal with this craziness of violence.

David Keene (00:39:15):

The '90s were a time of turmoil because of the Clinton administration's assault on firearms rights.

President Bill Clinton (00:39:25):

I thought we weren't asking for that much.

Scott Melzer (00:39:29):

Clinton introduced a couple pieces of legislation. One was the 1993 Brady Bill, which established background checks named after Reagan's press secretary Jim Brady, who was shot along with Ronald Reagan.

Speaker (00:39:44):

The new Brady Law could be a turning point in the fight against gun violence in America.

James Brady (00:39:49):

87 percent of gun owners support this legislation. And you begin to wonder, "Well, who then does the National Rifle Association represent?"

Scott Melzer (00:39:60):

Next Bill Clinton introduced the Federal Assault Weapons Act.

Man (00:40:04):
Weapons designed exclusively for the purpose of killing people should be banned except for military personnel.

President Bill Clinton (00:40:10):

When I was growing up, all we had was hunting and fishing. This is our culture. And part of my political base when I was elected President was working class whites. I thought we can fix this without interfering with hunting and self-protection.

President Bill Clinton (00:40:30):

We have taken this important part of the life of millions of Americans and turned it into an instrument of maintaining madness.

News Anchor (00:40:40):

Public support for an assault weapon ban is overwhelming, as much as 70 percent in some polls. The trick is translating that into votes on the House floor.

Frank Smyth (00:41:00):

LaPierre was elected to take over the NRA as the highest-paid executive and try to defeat any efforts to pass gun reform.

Wayne LaPierre (00:41:07):
This is a campaign for eliminating the Second Amendment entirely. Unless we fight it, that’s America’s future. And it starts with a simple step like a simple gun ban that too many are too cowardly to fight.

Frank Smyth (00:41:23):
LaPierre started talking about something called “the slippery slope”. That even the most seemingly benign form of gun control would eventually lead toward greater gun control and ultimately disarmament.

Rob Pincus (00:41:41):

The Assault Weapons Ban of 1994 is the indicator that, Oh if we don't stand up and really assert ourselves, if we don't really do something about this, we're going to potentially lose everything.

Igor Volsky (00:41:53):

Wayne LaPierre began penning incredibly incendiary communications to NRA members.

Man (00:42:01):

Mr. LaPierre talks about this administration. They'll stop at nothing, even murder federal agents wearing Nazi helmets that attack law-abiding citizens.

Frank Smyth (00:42:14):

The NRA's absolutist unyielding positions was too much for many people then in the GOP, including even Ronald Reagan.

President Reagan (00:42:22):

I support the Brady Bill and I urge the Congress to enact.

Scott Melzer (00:42:28):

Former President George Bush Sr. resigned his NRA membership in response to LaPierre's rhetoric.

Speaker (00:42:37):

Former Presidents Reagan, Carter, and Ford all signed a letter urging House Members to vote for the Assault Weapons Ban.

President Clinton (00:42:44):

No good member of the House or Senate, no Republican or Democrat, no rural legislator should ever fear losing their seat for voting for this bill.

House Speaker (00:42:54):

Recorded vote. The Yeas are 216, the Nays are 214, and the bill is passed.

Matt Lacombe (00:43:03):

They passed the Brady Law of 1993, and then they passed as part of a broader crime package, the Assault Weapons Ban of 1994.

David Keene (00:43:15):

It was an assault on an entire part of the population, on their vision of what America is. And that's why the NRA's job is to ring the bell.

Man (00:43:31):

We need to make sure that come November, these traitors are defeated, humiliated at the polls, and never serve in public office again.

Igor Volsky (00:43:41):

In this election cycle, the NRA perfected their well-oiled lobbying machine and powerful grassroots army.

Matt Lacombe (00:43:51):

The NRA had developed scorecards that rate political candidates, making it very easy for its members to find who it was endorsing, and to act on that.

David Keene (00:44:01):

Your congressmen is A-rated or F-rated. They go out and they vote. They turned out in huge numbers in the '94 election. That was the year that guns made a difference.

Speaker (00:44:13):

Welcome again to CNN's continuous coverage of Election '94.

Man (00:44:17):

This is an earthquake. This is a tidal wave.

News Anchor (00:44:21):

It's happening in the House. It's happening in the Senate. The sands are shifting right out from under the Democrats' feet.

Speaker (00:44:26):

Republicans take over the Senate.

News Anchor (00:44:30):

CNN estimating that the Republicans will take more than enough seats to take control of the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years.

Speaker (00:44:36):

Day breaks in Washington, DC, as voters across the country wake to the scale of the beating they've given President Bill Clinton and his Democratic Party.

President Bill Clinton (00:44:50):

God they took it out on us. The NRA claimed to have defeated 19 members of the House when we lost the House. And we lost 54. I woke up in a cold sweat thinking about how I’d let the country down. I'm sorry, I mean we got... The NRA beat the Speaker of the House.

Speaker (00:45:15):

Tom Foley, 30 years in Congress is the first Speaker of the House voted out of office since Abraham Lincoln's time.

President Bill Clinton (00:45:22):

What does that tell you? There's a difference between having popular support and voting support. We can't just depend on an opinion poll. The NRA made guns a voting issue.

Wayne LaPierre (00:45:36):

You launched a political revolution that changed the face of Congress and rewrote Bill Clinton's idea of American history.

Robert Spitzer (00:45:49):

Not only was the NRA very successful in flipping party control in the ‘94 election, it also put a 10-year limit on the Assault Weapons Ban so that it automatically lapsed after 10 years. And that was the price that they paid in order to get that bill through Congress.

News Anchor (00:46:10):

Now, the Assault Weapons Ban. The ten-year-old law expires at midnight tonight. Is there any question in your mind that the lifting of the ban will in fact cause more of these weapons going on the streets?

Man (00:46:21):

Oh, there's no question that there'll be more weapons on the streets. Right now the companies are taking orders.

Mary Anne Franks (00:46:29):

The NRA profit from this idea that the assault weapon is something that was banned by those liberals that were coming to take your guns. "Thank goodness that ban is no longer in effect. You never know when it's going to come back. So everybody come out and get a gun like this."

Bill Clinton (00:46:46):

And I remember Christmas advertisements, discount prices on AR-15s. Buy your bargain assault weapons for Christmas.

Robert Spitzer (00:46:59):

The NRA and gun companies really begin to market assault weapons, specifically their military features. You can accessorize different stocks, different grips, threaded barrels, removable magazines, and that means much more profitability for the gun industry.

Frank Smyth (00:47:20):

These weapons proliferated. The AR-15 became as the NRA dubbed it, America's rifle.

Robert Spitzer (00:47:30):

But then you begin to see these weapons used in mass shootings.

Speaker (00:47:31):

A gunman appeared at the front of one of the theaters, and then he opened fire. At least 50 people were hit.

Cassandra Crifasi (00:47:42):

If you look at high-fatality mass shootings there are studies that show — yes, they have increased since the Assault Weapons Ban lapsed.

Mary Anne Franks (00:47:53):

In the face of these tragedies, the arms industry is uniquely protected no matter how negligent or reckless their practices might be.

David Keene (00:48:02):

We did, I think in one of our great victories, save the firearms industry. There was a move to hold firearms companies liable in court, you know, for the misuse of a firearm. We got Congress to pass an act that would prevent that.

Mary Anne Franks (00:48:22):

Because of this law you don't get products that are designed for safety. You don't get products that are designed to stop people from using them for improper means. You get a blank check to an industry to advertise in the most irresponsible ways, to market themselves to kids.

David Keene (00:48:47):

If those frivolous lawsuits had not been stopped gun companies would have gone out of business. The NRA was key to the survival of American firearms manufacturers, more than the other way around. So they ought to be grateful, but we don't get our money from them, primarily.

Male Speakers (00:49:09):

This is my rifle.

Speaker (00:49:11):

It's been tested in every theater of war for the last 50 years.

Male Speakers (00:49:14):

My rifle is my best friend.

Speaker (00:49:17):

Through the dust, the rain and the snow, it's battle tested. And it's in a class all by itself.

Male Speakers (00:49:25):

This is my rifle.

Speaker (00:49:27):

This is Colt.

Rep. Jason Crow (00:49:32):

I believe in the right of self-defense, but you don't need an assault weapon or a thousand rounds or armor-piercing bullets to do that. My name is Jason Crow. I'm the Congressman from Colorado's sixth congressional district and I represent many of the families of the Aurora theater shooting, the Columbine tragedy. I served overseas in three combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is a big reason why I didn't carry an assault weapon in the woods when I was deer hunting. And there's also a really good reason why I didn't have my deer hunting rifle or my duck hunting shotgun when I was in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because the weapons that I carried in Iraq and Afghanistan were weapons of war.

Rep. Jason Crow (00:50:21):

They were designed to inflict terrible damage on humans and to take human lives, and to do that with remarkable efficiency. From every little element, from the magazine capacity, to the muzzle velocity, to the type of round that's used, everything is designed with that singular purpose in mind. The specifications and the technical aspects of weapons mean a lot. So nobody's ever going to tell me that there's no such thing as an assault weapon because there's no basis in truth for that. Whether it's in El Paso with an AK-47, or in Aurora, we know what has occurred. And it’s not gonna stop unless we do something to stop it.

Nicole Hockley (00:51:14):

December 2012, everything changed. Dylan was six, so he loved school and didn't want to go at the same time. We had this routine that every day we would do a countdown. So Monday was five days school, two days no school. Tuesday was four days school, two days no school. And as the bus was coming around the corner and the kids were all lining up, Dylan just looked at me and he said, "Last day school, Mommy." And I said, "That's right, D. One day school, two days no school." And he just kind of nodded at me and said, "Last day school."

Nicole Hockley (00:52:06):

And literally across the driveway where I was standing with my boys, the shooter had probably already killed his mother in the house directly across the driveway from mine. And I've thought, if I'd looked up at a window, would I have seen him looking down? Is there something I could have done to stop him from then driving to the school? Only a few minutes later, probably.

Caller (00:52:36):

Sandy Hook school, I think there’s somebody shooting in here.

Speaker (00:52:39):

154 bullets fired in less than five minutes from the Bushmaster assault rifle.

Speaker (00:52:49):

The gunman killed 26 people, 20 of them children as young as five.

President Obama (00:52:59):

The majority of those who died today were children, beautiful little kids between the ages of five and ten years old. As a country we have been through this too many times.

Sen. Chris Murphy (00:53:16):

In the days following the shooting, we thought the world had changed. We thought everyone had woken up to the idea that we had to get serious about preventing another slaughter like this. And we thought that the silence from the gun lobby and from the NRA meant that they were contemplating how far they were willing to go to compromise.

Frank Smyth (00:53:38):

The NRA didn't say anything, which has been their practice after almost every mass shooting in the modern era.

Crowd (00:53:44):

Shame on the NRA.

News Anchor (00:53:46):

For four days after the killings in Newtown, it had nothing to say. Nothing on its website, on Facebook or on Twitter.

Speaker (00:53:53):

The White House says that President Obama is supporting new legislation banning assault weapons, closing the gun show loophole for buying guns, as well as a ban on high capacity ammunition clips.

Frank Smyth (00:54:04):

And then they announced they were having a press conference.

News Anchor (00:54:07):

For the first time, the National Rifle Association is responding to the Newtown attack.

David Keene (00:54:13):

It was our assumption that we were up against a very big fight. So we had to be able to rally our people.

David Keene (00:54:21):

Like all Americans, we've been discussing all of the various options that are available to protect our children. And at this point we would like to share our thinking with you.

Wayne LaPierre (00:54:40):

Good morning. Some have tried to exploit tragedy for political gain. We have remained respectively silent. Now we must speak.

Frank Smyth (00:54:57):

I wondered what he was going to say, and if he was going to say something to attempt to validate the emotions that were swirling around the nation about this heartbreaking tragedy.

Wayne LaPierre (00:55:08):

The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.

Frank Smyth (00:55:17):

And to me that's like, come on.

Woman (00:55:20):

Reckless behavior coming from the NRA.

Cassandra Crifasi (00:55:22):

For people to stand there and say, "No, we need more guns." It was extremely disheartening.

Man (00:55:30):

NRA, stop killing our children. It is the NRA and assault weapons that are killing our children.

Frank Smyth (00:55:37):

He essentially blamed the victims. That the teachers themselves of this elementary school should have been better prepared. And the vision that LaPierre put out was one that's consistent with everything I knew about the modern NRA, but they had never before said it so clearly and so plainly out loud, because they were afraid it would be too unpopular.

Wayne LaPierre (00:55:58):

We need to have every single school in America immediately deploy a protection program proven to work. And by that, I mean armed security.

Nicole Hockley (00:56:16):

After the service, we did our first interviews with media. One of the first questions was, "What is your response to Wayne LaPierre saying this morning that the only thing to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun?" And I said, "Who's Wayne LaPierre?" And all I could think was, whoever he is, that is one of the most absurd statements I've ever heard. We can't just arm everyone and expect a safer society. That was my introduction to the NRA in this battle.

President Obama (00:57:00):

All of us need to demand a Congress brave enough to stand up to the gun lobby's lies.

Speaker (00:57:10):

Victims of gun violence and their families demonstrated on Capitol Hill.

Man (00:57:14):

We're here from Tucson, from Aurora, from Columbine. Names that have become iconic in America's bizarre and shameful epidemic of gun violence.

Speaker (00:57:26):

In Congress, the leader of Senate Republicans joined the chorus of politicians who are suggesting that something needs to be done.

Sen. Mitch McConnell (00:57:33):

As we continue to learn the facts, Congress will examine whether there is an appropriate and constitutional response that would better protect our citizens.

Peter Ambler (00:57:42):

Americans watched Congress, they watched the Senate. Surely Democrats and Republicans would come together to put something in place.

Sen. Chris Murphy (00:57:52):

We thought we could get a restriction on assault weapons passed. That became unachievable, and we were left with this expansion of background checks. Joe Manchin, coming from a pretty conservative state, and Pat Toomey, a Republican coming from a pretty conservative state, got together at considerable political risk to themselves and wrote a compromise that would save lives.

Sen. Joe Manchin (00:58:18)

Truly the events at Newtown changed us all. Nobody here with a good conscience could sit by and not try to prevent a day like that from happening again.

Sen. Pat Toomey (00:58:25):

I don't consider criminal background checks to be gun control. I think it's just common sense.

Peter Ambler (00:58:32):

The NRA during that period had an ironclad grip on our political system when it came to the question of guns and gun violence in America.

Reporter (00:58:47):

How are you, Congresswoman?

Peter Ambler (00:58:48):

It takes the courage and resilience of somebody like Gabby Giffords to take them on. I started in her office January 3 of 2011. Five days later she was shot in the head from three feet away.

Speaker (00:59:05):

Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords has been shot.

Speaker (00:59:07):

Five victims are dead at the scene.

Peter Ambler (00:59:20):

Eventually made a miraculous recovery and went on not only to fight for her life, but to contribute to public service once again.

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (00:59:24):

I've known days of pain and uncertain recovery, but confronted by despair, paralysis and aphasia, I put one foot in front of the other.

Peter Ambler (00:59:41):

In the aftermath of the Sandy Hook shooting, on the two year anniversary of Gabby being shot, we threw ourselves into working to pass the Manchin-Toomey expanded background checks bill.

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (00:59:54):

Violence is a big problem. Too many children are dying. Too many children. We must do something.

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (01:00:12):

Today I struggle to speak, but I have not lost my voice.

Nicole Hockley (01:00:18):

We never thought background checks were going to be easy to pass, but there was the will of the people and the polls and the way people were speaking out.

Cassandra Crifasi (01:00:31):

We hear all the time, that no one agrees on anything and why even bother? But it's really a false narrative. I'm a gun owner, I regularly go to the range and try to keep my skills up. I believe that people should be able to own guns, but we need to do a hell of a lot better job to make sure that people who shouldn't have them, don't get them.

Crowd (01:00:51):

Shame, shame, shame, shame.

Wes Siler (01:00:54):

The NRA just does not represent gun owners anymore. My passion is hunting, and half of all NRA members are hunters. Why is an organization that claims to represent gun owners working against any effective safety measure capable of keeping American children safe? We all want to see kids not get killed in schools. We all want to see crime be lower. We all want to live in a better, more perfect union. By making guns so partisan and saying politicians are trying to steal our guns, the NRA is preventing a larger conversation from happening.

Cassandra Crifasi (01:01:31):

More than 80 percent of US adults support requiring background checks for all gun sales. And there is no difference between gun owners and non-gun owners or by political affiliation.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (01:01:43):

Every American abhors the recent tragedies.

David Keene (01:01:48):

I remember talking to Joe Manchin. He bragged that he'd gotten a new shotgun, and I said, ‘Well, what happens if the guy on the neighboring farm wants to buy the old one? You don't need it anymore. How's he going to like it when you say, 'We got to get in the car and drive 25 miles to a federal firearms dealer. And then we got to do a background check on you.' Is that going to make him happy? And is he going to be any happier when he finds out the reason he has to do it is because of you?’

Nicole Hockley (01:02:14):

It was bizarre to get to the actual vote and feel that that was a victory. And then to start hearing that we might not have the numbers.

Sen. Joe Biden (01:02:27):

The question is on the amendment, the clerk will call the roll.

Clerk (01:02:31):

Mr. Alexander, Ms. Ayotte, Ms. Baldwin.

Nicole Hockley (01:02:34):

Sitting out in the gallery, you knew where your no votes were cause they wouldn't even... They obviously couldn't look at themselves in the mirror. They couldn't look at us. We had senators who cried in front of us, and then voted against us.

Clerk (01:02:55):

Ms. Heitkamp, no. Mr. McCain, aye. Mr. Chambliss, no.

President Obama (01:03:10):

A few minutes ago, a minority in the United States Senate decided it wasn't worth it. They blocked common sense gun reforms, even while these families looked on from the Senate gallery.

Nicole Hockley (01:03:25):

I felt that we'd failed. I had failed Dylan. I couldn't even do this for him. I couldn't save him and I couldn't even get one measly little policy passed that might help someone else.

President Obama (01:03:42):

Everybody talked about how we were going to change something.

Cassandra Crifasi (01:03:45):

To see nothing happen was just a blow.

President Obama (01:03:49):

So all in all, this was a pretty shameful day for Washington.

Cassandra Crifasi (01:03:53):

If this, if the death of 20 children can't motivate people to take action, what will?

Sen. Chris Murphy (01:04:03):

We thought that we were going to get all of these changes in gun laws to make our communities safer. But what we found out is that that's not how politics works. The NRA had been organizing for 40 years to get ready for that moment in 2013. They were ready for those parents who came to Washington, and they beat them.

Nicole Hockley (01:04:26):

When we started I knew nothing about the NRA, and I had no idea what a powerful lobbying group they were and how insidious they can be. You know, hearing the lies that they would tell. You're not just up against smart political thinking, you're up against people that are just going to say whatever they need to say in order to get what they want.

David Keene (01:04:50):

We've all been under attack since the Connecticut tragedy, by those who would exploit the victims of a madman to advance their own anti-Second Amendment agenda. But the United States Senators realized that their constituents actually do count.

Peter Ambler (01:05:05):

The NRA was not interested in compromise. They were not interested in solutions. They were interested in a dark cynical vision for this country.

David Keene (01:05:15):

By the time it was over, we had a million new members and we had turned the tide.

Man (01:05:29):
Please welcome our executive vice president, Wayne LaPierre.

Wayne LaPierre (01:05:32):
The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun, is a good guy with a gun.

Robert Spitzer (01:05:44):

When Wayne LaPierre spoke in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook shooting, his comments were very much aimed at the more extremist gun rights community that is the base of support for the NRA. There's an old axiom in politics that a small but a highly motivated minority can often win the day over a large but fairly apathetic majority. And that's pretty much the tale of the NRA.

Wayne LaPierre (01:05:48):

By almost every measure we are less free today than we were a decade ago, in ways our forefathers could never have conjured in their worst nightmares.

Scott Melzer (01:06:24):

Attacking gun safety groups as folks who fundamentally pose a threat to the future of the country. This is the culture war that the NRA has been fighting for decades now and that Donald Trump took up.

News Anchor (01:06:44):

Some big guns backing Donald Trump. This afternoon, the National Rifle Association endorsed him for President.

Wayne LaPierre (01:06:50):

Oh my gosh, I mean here's somebody that really understands. Let's go after the bad guys and leave all the good people alone.

Donald Trump (01:06:57):

The Second Amendment is under a threat like never before.

Igor Volsky (01:07:04):

When Donald Trump ran for President, the NRA believed that they were looking into a mirror because Donald Trump personifies the playbook that the NRA has successfully been using for decades.

Donald Trump (01:07:18):

Hillary Clinton wants to abolish the Second Amendment, just remember that.

Wayne LaPierre (01:07:23):

Our right to gather, our right to speak, our financial freedom. All of it in decline.

David Keene (01:07:32):

In 2016 from the Trump and the NRA standpoint, you're talking about the same people. The people that came out in those small towns were our people.

Frank Smyth (01:07:36):

Trump represented something they had never seen before. Mitt Romney, McCain, H.W. Bush, even George W. Bush didn't speak that kind of language.

Donald Trump (01:07:51):

The National Rifle Association endorsed me and they endorsed me early, long time ago.

Robert Spitzer (01:07:58):

They contributed $31 million to his campaign, poured around $70 million into the 2016 elections overall.

David Keene (01:08:08):

We decided that if he was going to have any chance in the fall, that it was the one bet that had to be placed and we placed it. So we all worked together to create a tsunami of rural small town votes that might not otherwise have occurred.

Robert Spitzer (01:08:23):

And lo and behold, the gamble paid off.

Donald Trump (01:08:27):

Thank you.

Wayne LaPierre (01:08:32):

It wouldn't have happened without us. Without us, we wouldn't have had President Trump. I mean there's not another organization in the country that is directly responsible because of the influence we all have as American citizens that stand for the Second Amendment.

Rep. Jason Crow (01:08:53):

You see the gun lobby try to wrap this issue in the rhetoric of patriotism and freedom. That language is incredibly troubling to me. I especially take it personally when I see militia groups dressed up like commandos, carrying assault weapons on our streets.

Frank Smyth (01:09:01):

Not only is the United States one of the only advanced nations that allows for civilian ownership of guns without licensing or registration, but it’s even permissible to walk around during a political protest with loaded AR-15s.

Cassandra Crifasi (01:09:27):

We're seeing more and more firearms openly at demonstrations or rallies as a way to intimidate.

Man (01:09:36):

And we may be scary to some people, but that's because we don't know what's going to happen and it's our right in this country to do this.

Cassandra Crifasi (01:09:45):

The NRA has shifted the pendulum so far that there's a group of folks at the extreme that think that the right to own guns as an individual gives them the right to do whatever they want with those guns.

Wayne LaPierre (01:10:00):

We stand and we fight like hell for freedom. The revolution to take America back starts here.

Mary Anne Franks (01:10:10):

Now you have a version of the Second Amendment that says, I can stop you from speaking. I can stop you from participating in democracy. I can stop democracy itself, and I am honoring the constitution by doing so.

Wayne LaPierre (01:10:22):

I want you to fight back. I want you to raise hell.

Donald Trump (01:10:27):

We fight like hell and if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore.

Matt Lacombe (01:10:32):

It's hard to imagine the support that Trump got for his efforts to overturn the election, being there without the foundation laid by the NRA as an organization.

Robert Spitzer (01:10:44):

Whether it's the NRA or Donald Trump, when you build and feed your organization members such a steady diet of that kind of messaging, it could explode into disorder and violence.

Caroline Light (01:11:02):

In Kenosha, an armed citizen sent out a Facebook message saying, we need all the armed citizens to come out and resist this Black Lives Matter demonstration in response to the recent police shooting of Jacob Blake, a 29 year old black man.

Man (01:11:20):

Black lives matter.

Crowd: (01:11:22):

Black lives matter.

Mary Anne Franks (01:11:25):
So Kyle Rittenhouse hears that there are protests going on, and thinks “I should pick up weapons to defend this other place and their property,” that that would be a patriotic thing to do. And does in fact do that.

Speaker (01:11:43):

17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse killed two protesters and left one injured.

Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes. (01:11:48):

What do you think is going to happen if you have an agitated man with a long gun walking down the streets, thinking that he's some sort of peacekeeper?

Yohuru Williams (01:11:57):

Why is there no attempt to deal with this person who's obviously carrying a gun? It's because that narrative that the NRA has been so effective at promoting, has really taken root in American society and culture.

President Bill Clinton (01:12:11):

The NRA believes the deaths of innocent people is just a necessary price to pay for people to exercise their freedom. And you see what the logical conclusion of that is, that we don't really have mutual responsibilities to each other. It's a very high price.

Yohuru Williams (01:12:40):

The NRA talks about being fundamentally concerned about American Liberty. Is it the liberty to own a gun and to pass laws that give people really the opportunity to treat neighborhoods like hunting grounds? Or is it this idea that we ultimately want to protect life and create a standard of living for everyone in this nation?

Frank Smyth (01:13:00):

The American Dream of wanting to live peacefully and wanting to enjoy life and wanting to go to school and become educated and raise your children and have a healthy safe life, and not be attacked.

Fred Guttenberg (01:13:30):

My girl, my 14-year-old baby. I sent her to school. She was supposed to be safe. My job is to protect my children and I sent my kid to school.

Speaker (01:13:46):

A heartbreaking day in Florida and sadly an all too familiar one. 17 people are now confirmed dead.

Fred Guttenberg (01:13:55):

In the morning sometimes things get so crazy and I don't always get to say, I love you. I don't remember if I said that to Jamie yesterday morning.

Fred Guttenberg (01:14:11):

Jamie loved to dance and I loved to watch my daughter dance. She would have been an amazing person to watch grow up. I won't get to do that now.

Fred Guttenberg (01:14:32):

Don't tell me there's no such thing as gun violence. It happened in Parkland.

Rep. Lucy McBath (01:14:41):

It's with the Parkland shooting that I absolutely lost it because those children were the same age as Jordan. As I watched them running out of their high school for their lives.

News Anchor (01:14:59):

President Trump is now publicly demanding stricter gun control in a break with the NRA and fellow Republicans.

Rep. Lucy McBath (01:15:05):

I watched on television, President Trump was at a round table discussion.

Donald Trump (01:15:11):

It doesn't make sense that I have to wait till I'm 21 to get a handgun but I can get this weapon at 18. I don't know.

Sen. Chris Murphy (01:15:16):

You underestimate the power of the gun lobby.

Donald Trump (01:15:18):

They have great power over you people. They have less power over me.

Rep. Lucy McBath (01:15:22):

And I remember distinctly when President Trump said, "You don't need to be afraid of the NRA." And they're all sitting there shaking their heads like yes, yes and I thought, okay, maybe something's going to be done.

Donald Trump (01:15:35):

Don't worry about the NRA, they're on our side. You guys, half of you are so afraid of the NRA. There's nothing to be afraid of.

Speaker (01:15:42):

President Trump held a late night meeting with the National Rifle Association and then tweeted, "It was a good, great meeting in the oval office."

News Anchor (01:15:50):

President Trump dialed back an earlier and stronger call he had made to raise the age limit for buying some guns.

David Keene (01:15:57):

In President Trump's case, he obviously empathized on some of these things as do all of us, but then upon reflection, he realized that maybe what he said wasn't what he really wanted to do. He knew what we did in that 2016 cycle. He was grateful for it and remains grateful for what we did. He had our support and he had our back.

Rep. Lucy McBath (01:16:22):

The NRA had a seat at the table in the White House. So at this point, nothing was going to be done.

Fred Guttenberg (01:16:32):

It all hit me. My daughter didn't need to die. These shootings are predictable and they're preventable. The NRA knows it, but they're okay with it. It's a cost of doing business. It's an opportunity for the NRA to turn around and say, the only way is more guns. And I just said to my friends and my family, I'm going to break the fucking gun lobby.

X González (01:17:11):

Every single person up here today, all these people should be at home grieving, but instead we are up here standing together because if all our government and President can do is send thoughts and prayers, then it's time for victims to be the change that we need to see.

X González (01:17:34):

Anybody can make a positive change, and I mean, we were kids. I am Emma González, I now go by X González. Young people took control of the narrative and told our stories, honestly. Politicians funded by the NRA telling us nothing could have ever been done to prevent this. We call BS. As a kid, being able to look at the politicians and tell them — you made a mistake and it hurt people. That was something that a lot of people really understood.

Crowd (01:18:07):

We want change and we want it now. We want change and we want it now. This is what democracy looks like.

Igor Volsky (01:18:13):

Young people became the new messengers for gun control in America.

X González (01:18:19):

They say a good guy with a gun stops a bad guy with a gun. We call BS. When I gave that speech and it exploded, we all realized we actually had the eyes of the nation on our social media. And I started reaching out to people. We're going to start this. Let's look into how we can make March For Our Lives a non-profit. Let's get a board. Let's have the kids be in charge.

Speaker (01:18:46):

Thousands of students are expected to walk out of their schools against gun violence.

X González (01:18:54):

All of a sudden, we went from being this organization that was barely existing to seeing marches happening all over the world.

Speaker (01:19:02):

Here they are flooding the streets of Boston, Massachusetts, in Philadelphia and in Los Angeles.

Crowd (01:19:07):

You are responsible. You are responsible.

Nicole Hockley (01:19:13):

My kid couldn't do this, but these kids, this happened to them and they were able to stand up in that moment and say, "No way, this is not right." And they don't have to control what they're saying or be likable or moderate. They're just going to say exactly what they think.

X González (01:19:34):

This is our opportunity to talk to President Trump, Senator Marco Rubio, and all other members of the United States government that are being funded by the NRA. Now is the time to get on the right side of this. The NRA is so good at threatening people because they have so much money and power. Interviewers would be like, "And you're not scared to take on the NRA?" No, because we have no money from them. We were experiencing a problem and vocalizing solutions.

Cameron Kasky (01:20:03):

Senator Rubio, can you tell me right now that you will not accept a single donation from the NRA?

X González (01:20:12):

They were afraid of us.

Greg Jackson Jr. (01:20:16):

What was encouraging about March For Our Lives is that they opened the door for folks who were impacted by violence of all walks of life, to take the mic and start to tell their stories.

MFOL Speaker (01:20:29):

Everyday shootings are an everyday problem [crowd repeating in chant]. It's time to care about all communities equally. It's time to stop judging youth, that look like me or my brother and that come from impoverished communities, any different than anyone else.

X González (01:20:45):

We are trying to stop gun violence in all of its forms. You have to address the system on the whole, and gun violence is an epidemic. It should be treated like an epidemic.

News Anchor (01:20:55):

What are you asking for here in Washington?

Cameron Kasky (01:20:57):

An assault weapons ban, prohibition of sales of high capacity magazines.

Ellen DeGeneres (01:21:01):

You're not saying no guns?

X González (01:21:02):

We're not saying no guns. We are saying we want to regulate semi-automatic weapons and accessories that make them fully automatic.

MFOL Speaker (01:21:10):

We need to focus on changing the conditions that foster violence and trauma. That’s how we will transform our communities and uplift our voices.

Igor Volsky (01:21:24):

The young leaders were instrumental in breathing new life into the gun reform movement. When there's limited opportunity to tighten gun laws, we have to ask ourselves what power do non-legislative actors have to help us solve this problem?

News Anchor (01:21:48):

Dick's Sporting Goods says thoughts and prayers are not enough. The chain will stop selling assault style rifles at its 600 nationwide stores. It's also ending the sale of firearms to buyers under the age of 21 and will no longer sell high capacity magazines.

Edward W. Stack (01:22:05):

If these kids are brave enough to organize and do what they're doing, then we should be brave enough to take this stand.

News Anchor (01:22:10):

No chance you're going to reverse this?

Edward W. Stack (01:22:11):

Never.

Speaker (01:22:13):

First it was Dick’s Sporting Goods and now Walmart. Walmart said they will no longer sell guns or ammunition to anyone under 21 years old.

Speaker (01:22:22):

At least 16 companies now say they cut ties with the NRA.

Ed Bastian (01:22:27):

When you saw the rhetoric that the NRA had, we could not have our brand attached.

Chip Bergh (01:22:31):

It was the Parkland shooting that really got to the tipping point. We needed to take a position.

Scott Melzer (01:22:38):

The general public cried out for change and that led to tremendous progress at the state level.

News Anchor (01:22:45):

In Florida, its Republican governor Rick Scott broke with the President and with the NRA.

Speaker (01:22:51):

The so-called Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act raises the minimum age to buy a rifle from 18 to 21.

X González (01:22:58):

The School Safety Act put in place red flag laws, extreme risk protection orders. It started spreading gun legislation all over the country.

Speaker (01:23:09):

Despite being the newest target of the NRA, Vermont's gun owning Republican governor says he's not backing down.

Speaker (01:23:16):

Getting a gun in Illinois just got a little harder. Governor Bruce Rauner signed two gun measures.

Speaker (01:23:22):

The governor says she is proud that Oregon passed gun control legislation since Florida's mass shooting.

X González (01:23:31):

And then we started pushing the importance of midterm elections.

MFOL Youth (01:23:41):

Register, speak out, vote. Because what if checking a box could save a life?

X González (01:23:48):

Elected officials are not in charge. We can vote them out whenever we want to. We had candidates running primarily on gun violence prevention, like Lucy McBath.

Rep. Lucy McBath (01:24:01):

I was afraid.

Rep Lucy McBath (01:24:03):
I will always just be a mother on a mission.

Rep. Lucy McBath (01:24:09):
I'd never run for a federal office before, but I felt it was more of a tragedy not to even try to save people's lives. And that even if I didn't win, making sure that people know this has to be an issue that you go to the polls on. This has to be an issue that you stand righteously on. This has to be an issue that is not going away.

Rep. Jason Crow (01:24:34):

I'm a first time candidate. I've made this a part of my campaign because I'm frankly not willing to sit back and let this become a new normal. When you know that something is right and you know that there needs to be change. Sometimes you just have to jump in.

Fred Guttenberg (01:24:52):

Americans for the first time were given the chance to respond to candidates with clear plans and messages, being given the chance to say, yeah, we want this done.

Peter Ambler (01:25:07):

We ran campaigns from coast to coast. We endorsed in dozens and dozens of races, spent millions of dollars. We elevated gun safety as a primary voting issue for the American electorate.

X González (01:25:25):

We saw on election night, all of the counties and all the states flipping from the NRA owned. It was wonderful to watch those returns come back around the country.

News Anchor (01:25:36):

This morning, Lucy McBath was declared the official winner.

Peter Ambler (01:25:41):

We managed to help beat 40 NRA-backed Republican incumbents and elect in their place a gun safety majority to the House of Representatives.

Rep. Elaine Luria (01:25:51):

This is your night. Your democracy.

Rep. Jason Crow (01:25:55):

Tonight begins a new era that puts people first and recognizes our shared destiny.

Rep. Lucy McBath (01:26:01):

There is a sea change that's happening with all the young people that are marching forward. They're going to the polls as a one issue voter, and that's guns.

Youth (01:26:14):

When I say ‘guns’, you say ‘laws’. Guns.

Crowd (01:26:16): Laws.

Youth (01:26:17):

Guns.

Crowd (01:26:18):

Laws.

Crowd (01:26:19):

Vote them out.

President Bill Clinton (01:26:20):

There is a critical mass now of people who at least know they won't get beat for doing the right thing, unlike what happened in 1994. And they know we've got a chance to have a civilized conversation about it. That's a big plus and we owe it to them. They did that. I couldn't do it in my time, but I tried.

David Keene (01:26:44):

Anybody that thinks the NRA is going to disappear has got another thing coming, because every time they've thought that was about to happen, it didn't. And it's not going to now. The Second Amendment believer, whether he’s an NRA member or not, will rise up once that bell's been rung and do whatever's necessary to guarantee the continuation of those rights.

Mary Anne Franks (01:27:21):

Think about what would have happened if the revolution at the NRA didn't take place. What if they had become an important community organization and a place for people who cared about the skills associated with firearms? Would we have the division that we have right now? The politicization of the NRA did signal the end of rational conversation about guns.

Wes Siler (01:27:56):

Any organization that will not bend or compromise is going to break and that's what we have in the NRA. Children are dying in our schools as we speak, and nobody is representing gun owners in the conversation about how to make that better.

Cassandra Crifasi (01:28:17):

I want us as gun owners to be part of the solution, part of the conversation. So we can co-create strategies that are respectful of the culture of gun ownership in this country, but also have an evidence base so that we can reduce the burden of gun deaths in the US.

Greg Jackson Jr. (01:28:35):

By letting an organization like the NRA have such a big role in the debate, they're dominating the discussion. When in reality, this is a public health crisis and requires community leaders and survivors to be leading the discussion.

Crowd (01:28:49):

Hey hey, ho ho. The NRA has got to go. Hey hey, ho ho. The NRA has got to go.

Rep. Lucy McBath (01:28:55):

We the activists, we're the Davids to the Goliath of the NRA gun lobby leadership. And just as David took down Goliath, we too will take down the gun lobby.

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (01:29:11):

These are scary times. It will be a long, hard haul. Now is the time to come together. Be courageous.

Nicole Hockley (01:29:25):

What I want people to do is care, learn, be angry, and then use that rage to become courage to take action and do something, to say, this is not okay and I'm not just going to be apathetic and let it continue happening and saying, it's never going to touch me. Because it will and you have the power to do something about that.

X González (01:29:50):

One of the most basic ways that we are capable of making an impact is voting. Let the politicians in your area know that you are paying attention to what's going on and a lot of people working together on that can make a huge difference.

Fred Guttenberg (01:30:11):

My strength comes from Jamie. I've lost this capacity for fear and anxiety. We can't be afraid of the NRA anymore. Too many people have died, and now it is time to fix this.

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (01:30:31):

We are at a crossroads. We can let the shooting continue, or we can act. We can protect our families, our future. We can vote. We can be on the right side of history. Please join us in this fight.