

Ricky Parker

27, MARKETING AGENT

Are you interviewing me because I'm black? [Laughs]

Do you think gun ownership is a right?

I think it's entitled to us by the U.S. Constitution, and states shouldn't limit federal laws.

In light of the recent shootings in Newtown, Conn. and Clackamas, do you think there should be restrictions?

There has been gun violence since the gun was invented. A gun was created to do what? Not hunt. We were hunting before the invention of guns, so it was to kill humans. If you want to stop gun violence, stop manufacturing guns.

Would you consider owning a gun?

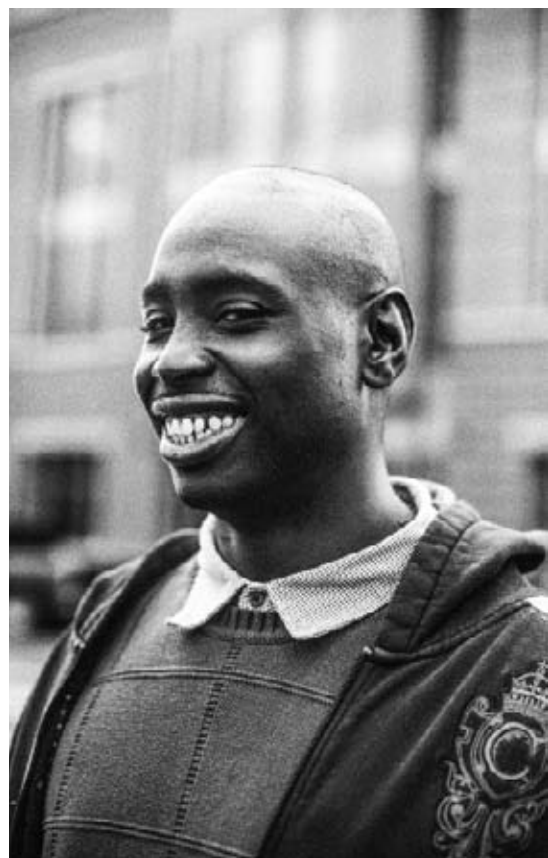
I'm not a gun-toting individual. I think it detaches society from the value of life. The idea of it, the premise behind it, it kind of carries negativity, although it may be preferred for protection. There are various other methods to protect yourself. Like I said, guns were made to kill humans. As to recent school violence, that's not recent to me. I'm from Los Angeles. School violence has been going on since my birth. Now it's being nationally publicized. It's a big problem, but it's been a big problem.

According to our gun laws, people can buy guns privately and at gun shows without undergoing a background check. What do you think about that?

Having a background check doesn't make the person behind the gun a sane individual. People respond differently in different situations. There's a situation where a sheriff killed his entire family. I'm pretty sure he passed a background check, matter of fact he was given a government-issued gun. He still didn't do the right thing with it. Inevitably, it comes down to the person who has the gun, and there is no way to measure a person unless, hypothetically, you can measure every situation that person may go through in life. He may use it on himself. That in itself is violence.

The NRA said, "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun." What do you have to say about that?

I think that is today's law enforcement practice. Stop criminals with guns by giving police bigger guns, but you fail to realize they are all human. And they all have that human element, the yin and the yang. There is no perfect human being on this planet, so, no, I don't agree with that. It's like "an eye for an eye." If you want to solve the gun problem, stop manufacturing guns. How are these military-grade assault rifles making their way to the streets? So you want to stop all the things that are happening in society, you are going to have to manage those who are in power. Inevitably, I don't think that's going to get done anytime soon because, guess what, if you try, they will use a gun. [Laughs.]



Cassie Constantine

15, STUDENT

Mikaila Kohle

15, STUDENT

Ida Foster

18, STUDENT

What do you think about gun ownership?

FOSTER: They protect people because the zombie apocalypse is coming.

KOHLE: People who have been in prison should not be allowed to buy guns. You shouldn't be able to go get a gun just because you want one. You should have to do something to get it, like be important or something.

Would you consider owning a gun?

FOSTER: Yeah.

KOHLE: Yeah. I'm underage but when I'm 18, yeah.

CONSTANTINE: Yeah. Fuck yeah.

FOSTER: I am 18, almost 19. I am down to get a gun.

Why would you own a gun?

FOSTER: Because there are crazy people out there. I think you should be able to defend yourself.

CONSTANTINE: OK, I would own a gun so the motherfuckers don't fuck with me. I would shoot them if they tried to touch me.

FOSTER: Because there are a lot of rapists out in Eugene and everywhere, you know what I mean?

CONSTANTINE: I'd shoot them in their toe. I don't think stupid-ass people should have guns.

FOSTER: People that have felonies or anything should not be able to have a gun, whatsoever.

People are allowed to buy guns privately and at gun shows without a background check. What do you think about that?

FOSTER: Honestly, I think you should do a background check.

CONSTANTINE: Maybe you should change the law so that you have to have a background check. I'm thinking about some of the homies that have guns.

FOSTER: Well, they do it illegally. I'm talking about legally.

The NRA said, "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."

FOSTER: Honestly, I don't know what to say about that.



Chris Holloman

60, RETIRED CAR DEALER

I'm a gun owner, collector and a shooter. I don't hunt.

The law says people are allowed to buy guns privately and at gun shows without undergoing a background check.

I'm fine with that. It's a free enterprise. I believe that if you buy through a dealer, you should have a background check, but in general person-to-person sales just like person-to-person automobile sales or if you sell a rifle to your cousin or whatever then it should be legal. I think those rights have been protected by the non-commerce clause in the Constitution since the beginning, so that's a right that citizens have. Just like you could sell garden poisons to your neighbor that could inflict harm on somebody, and that's perfectly legal, too.

Do you think there should be mandatory safety classes for gun owners?

I don't really think so, no. If the question is based on crime and mass shootings, mentally ill people are not going to take a safety class; criminals aren't going to take a safety class. Most hunters and shooters have probably taken a safety class and those aren't the problem. What we really have a problem with is if you look at all the instances of people involved who have had mental health issues. Starting in the 1960s in the U.S. we dismantled our mental health, all of our apparatus, what we called insane asylums, and now the hospitals have limited venues for those with mental health issues. If you do buy a weapon through a background check, it asks if you have had mental health issues, and I think writing that into the commercial exchanges for firearms is just fine. I don't know any gun person who would disagree with that. As an example, it is against most current privacy laws to notify government branch of someone who is violently unstable. I think those laws should be looked into.

Right now, a physician is prohibited from notifying the state police and the state of Oregon that does the background checks that somebody is violent or violently unstable or a threatening, menacing person. So, the mental health laws notifications are the first things that should be changed, rather than restricting law-abiding sporting people or target shooters. I shoot target with an AR. I'm not a violent person, but it's the most accurate weapon in the world right now. I shoot paper with it.

The communities with the most restrictive gun laws are the major crime centers in the U.S., so we are talking about D.C., Chicago and Detroit. Virtually no law-abiding citizen can purchase a firearm in those communities. They are the highest in gun crime. So the criminals know if they attack a law-abiding citizen, he is not armed, he is helpless. If we look at all the mass shooters at schools and everything, those are gun-free zones. If we look at Israel, educators in schools are armed. They have armed people on premise. Nobody goes in there because usually a mentally unstable person wants to inflict harm, not receive harm. Obviously, a lunatic who would shoot up a school wouldn't go into a gun show or a sheriff's department or a police station and do a mass shooting because that's not their focus. So the mental health issues in the U.S. need to be reformed first because all of these people are sick. It's really hard to restrain a person with mental health issues. It's terrible. Usually 48 hours is all the law allows, so we need mental health issues resolved before we infringe on the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens that are doing legal activity and harming no one.

The NRA said, "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."

That's absolutely true. It's been proven in a lot of shootings. There was just a shooting at the Clackamas Mall here in Oregon and a guy went in there and shot two people, when he was confronted with a civilian with a concealed carry permit, who drew his weapon — it wasn't really reported on — when the assailant was confront by an armed citizen he ducked around the corner and shot himself. Now, he had lots more ammunition and would've shot up a lot more people. When he was confronted with someone else taking his life he did what all shooters do in these instances and took his own life.

If someone is shooting innocent people, I have a concealed carry permit and I have been trained. If someone is shooting innocent people, I will shoot them.

