

**Episode 36: Beyond, and Behind, the Bullet**



**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255.**

**Music provided by: David “Drumcrazie” Curby**

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**\*\*\*Brady legal music\*\*\***

**JP**

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Please note, this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing. It’s okay! We find it disturbing too.

**\*\*\*Brady musical introduction\*\*\***

**JJ**

Welcome back everybody, to this, Brady’s first episode of 2020! I wish I could say we were starting 2020 off with excellent news, but according to the Gun Violence Archive, in the first 3

days of 2020 there were 20 unintentional shootings, 4 mass shootings, and at least 202 reported gun injuries. We had the slate wiped clean for one, brief moment--and then, well, there it went. We have to make 2020 better. To discuss ways we might do that, JP and I are joined today with writer, producer, director, community organizer, and about a million more things--Heidi Yewman. Heidi is a long-time Brady member, one who has devoted herself to exploring the multiple and complex narratives that surround gun violence. Then, I'll be sharing with you an unbelievable new Las Vegas law that is sure to make you shake your head in confusion. Finally, I'll be wrapping up with a news update for you, that covers a long list of violent New Year's shootings and continued developments on so-called second amendment sanctuaries.

**\*\*\*music plays\*\*\***

**JJ**

Heidi, welcome! It's so nice to have you with us.

**Heidi**

Yeah, it's just so so great to meet you both on this broadcast.

**JJ**

One of the reasons I'm so excited to have you here with us, is, that people have so many different ways of exploring gun violence, you know? And for some of us, that's looking into not only the consequences of gun violence, but also, how and why those shootings happened in the first place. And you do that so well by going behind the scenes, with both your book, "Beyond the Bullet," which explores the lives of victims of gun violence, and your film, "Behind the Bullet," which shows a different side, detailing the lives of four individuals whose experiences we frequently do NOT hear as they are the ones who pulled the trigger and they share the impact that has had on them.

**JP**

So, Heidi, could you tell us a little bit about your story of how you got involved in what brought you to the gun violence prevention movement?

**Heidi**

Well, it really started a little over 20 years ago. I was graduated from Columbine High School 13 years before that shooting. And Dave Sanders, who was the teacher that was killed in that massacre, had been my basketball coach and typing teacher. And I was living in Portland, Oregon, at the time, and I went back for his funeral. And I remember sitting there in in this church looking at my former teachers with red swollen eyes, and in that moment I just something snapped inside of me, and I just couldn't believe that this had happened in this community that I had grown up in, and I decided that I wanted to do something to prevent these kinds of things from happening. And so I got involved in gun violence prevention.

A year after that massacre was the Million Mom March, and I went to that. And what ended up happening was I got interested in all the stories that were out there and saw on the mall at the Million Mom March. All these people with T-shirts that had pictures of their loved one and then

with the birthdate and the death date. And I'd never seen anything like that. You certainly can't, you don't see it at the mall, are walking around town.

And so I wanted to know, What's the story behind that? Who are those people? And then, really, the question that came to my mind is, oh my gosh, after you lose a loved one to gun violence, as a mom, how do you get out of bed the next day? So that really was the question that I wanted to find out. And so that's what that how I came to writing the book because I couldn't find those stories out there. There was no book about victims of gun violence. So I decided to go out and interview people and ask them that question. "How do you get out of bed the day after you find out that your child's been killed or your husband's died of suicide or that kind of thing?" So I interviewed 19 people and came up with the answer. The answer is, everybody is in a different place, and everybody has different coping skills. Some people are just crushed by the loss Some people go on to do incredible advocacy work. I met the most amazing people who came from a place of just horrid, terrible tragedy and they go out every day and they worked their butts off to stop gun violence from happening to other people so that they don't experience what they've experienced, and then other people are just kind of stuck in anger for a really long time. So I guess what I had assumed is that when you lose a loved one to gun violence, then you all react the same way. And what I found is they, you don't because everybody goes into those situations with different life experiences and different coping mechanisms.

**JJ**

And before your 2009 book, you had--and I would really want to talk about sort of your ongoing work and the film and whatnot--but to go back a little bit, with your writing in 2009 you have "Beyond the Bullet" come out. But in 2000 in Ms Magazine, you had a series on you going out and buying a gun and you gaining a concealed carry permit and you carrying it. And it was called "My Month with a Gun." Can you tell us a little bit about your takeaways from getting that gun, why you wrote that piece? How did that come about?

**Heidi**

So the, the, the month with the gun came about with my frustration with this binary conversation that was continuing to happen that you're the good guy with a gun or the bad guy with the gun or you're pro gun or your anti gun and and there...I didn't see a lot of conversation about that came from a place of like, what's it like to be the other person, this kind of empathy. And so, so I started thinking about gun owners when they're talking about, you know, that they have to carry this gun with them all the time. I I became really curious about well, what does that feel like? And what is that duty? And so I really just wanted to know what, what's the impact of having a gun on you do. And then I lived in, lived in the state of Washington, and in that state, I found out you basically pay money, get a permit to carry a concealed weapon. You wait for about a month and then you get the concealed weapon permit and then you can go buy a gun and you don't have to do any kind of training. You don't even have to know how to shoot a gun. You just have to give money and be able to pass a background check.

**JJ**

Which is so interesting to me, because Washington state's concealed carry laws are stronger than many states, some states don't even require permits. , And even then, it

seemed...too easy for you. And, still, there's no instructional component that you have to take, or training--

### **Heidi**

No training, no proficiency. You don't need that. There's nobody to tell you, "oh, if you have kids, you should have your guns in a safe," so there's no onus on you to do the right thing. So I got the gun and then I, I just really wanted to see what it felt like, what did it do to me? And I decided to only do it for a month. And, you know, I found out really weird things like, you can't really put a seat build on when you have a gun on your hip. Like I didn't know that. And so I would to yoga class. I went to church. I went to the bank, I went grocery shopping. I drove around and ran errands, and I had a gun with me, either in the purse or on my hip. And so and it really it really did impact me. One of the biggest things that happened was that I was going to a meeting, and, uh, I was in a garage, a 3 story garage, and I was in the stairwell and I was walking down from the garage down to the first floor and this guy came up behind me and was walking down the stairs as well, and, and I suddenly became really concerned about "oh my gosh, he could totally attack me from behind." And so I was trying to figure out what we're gonna do. What if he has ill intent towards me? And I put my hand in my purse and had my hand on the gun and I was like, "Well, I could turn around and and like, say, "What are you doing? Why are you behind me?" And so I'm having all these panic attacks is of going down these three flights of stairs and we get to the bottom of the stairs. And then he goes to the left to his meeting and I went to the right to my meeting, and I and it occurred to me like what a complete waste of energy and time in my head. I was sweating because I had this fear that he was going to do something to me. But he was just in the stairwell with me going to his meeting.

### **JJ**

And personally, I think that's so interesting because I think a lot of women would feel like that. I mean, I know I would. You know, being alone in a stairwell with a stranger, which is, you know, an issue in its own right and one that some might even consider or argue is a good reason to have a gun.

### **Heidi**

But the gun made me, it gave me this different perspective and it made me think in a more in a more like, um, suspicious way. And so I really didn't I really didn't like what that did to me.

### **JJ**

I do have to wonder, though, if maybe someone who was who was comfortable with a gun would they take more comfort in it? Like, could the unease have been from you being new with it? Or--

### **JP**

Or do you think there's any type of power dynamic that you felt when you were, how you were concealing and carrying that gun for a month?

### **Heidi**

Yeah, I do think there was a power dynamic. I remember going to the grocery store and being really suspicious of people and looking at their waistbands. And it's thinking, who else is armed

here and who in here is might have ill intent and I became like, super sensitive to my surroundings and who was in my surroundings and it did the same thing at night. My husband was out of town often, and I had the gun in a safe next to my bed, and I would lay there in bed, thinking about OK, so if someone breaks into the house, then okay, I'll grab the gun and then... Okay, but if I have to shoot someone than my son is in the next room and how am I gonna protect him from seeing a dead body in our house? And so I was like, doing this, like, constant dribble of thought. And I was doing that instead of thinking about "oh, I need to help my son with his science projects, which is due in two days or what bills didn't I pay," the things that I normally think about in my head that are much more productive? I wasn't...that was taking the, that was taking over that those thoughts and yeah, I think that it also was like this power thing like "I'm in charge here now." So if something were to happen, I would have to be in charge and do this thing. But then I also didn't know that I would be able to because I hadn't been trained. I had no idea what I would do in that kind of a situation. I don't know if I would hide or I would become emboldened or I would freeze. You just can't know that. And then there was a real sense of, once the 30 day experiment was over and I got rid of the gun, there was this huge sense of relief and exhale of like, "Oh, good. I don't have to be in charge of that anymore. And I don't have to worry that my son is going to figure out how to use it and get ahold of it when you know, because his girlfriend just broke up with him" or like, there was a real sense of relief in not having this deadly thing with me that that takes a lot of responsibility.

## **JJ**

I mean, that's got to be why we include more gun owners in the conversations about gun violence--because they're taking on that responsibility, you know? And we need to be there for them, too, and support them. We simply can't end gun violence if gun owners aren't a part of the conversation.

## **JP**

And you mentioned at the beginning of kind of your conversation about your month with a gun that you did it because you wanted to kind of feel empathy for gun owners. How important do you think empathy is in order to be a good advocate? And in order to really understand the issues like gun violence that you're trying to change an end in this country?

## **Heidi**

I think empathy is is really important. I've had a lot of conversations with gun owners with rallies, and I like to...I'm using air quotes here. I like to "disarm" them, Um, by by having a conversation about Hey, we're we're, like, all on the same side, and we all we all want the same things. We're just, we're just...We just think we can get there in a different way. Um, I remember being at a protest through Brady, um, at a Starbucks, we were protesting the fact that Starbucks is allowing people to openly carry guns in their stores. And I talked to this gun owner who had a gun on his hip. Um, and I said to him, I said, well, you know, you seem like a responsible gun owner, and, um, you got your gun there with you and you know how to use it. And I said but the guy over there, and I pointed to a guy across the, uh across the park, and I said he you know, he's a gun owner, too, and he has a gun on his hip. But how do you know he is? How do you know he's not drunk right now or angry or he just had a fight with his wife, you know. He looked at me, said, "Yeah, yeah, I guess I

don't." So that was kind of the point. And so just having these conversations. So we didn't get in a big fight and we didn't yell at each other and tell each other that each side is that they're a terrible person. Um, but it's like finding that common ground. And then that was also what I really liked about the "Asking Saves Kids" campaign was talking to gun owners about storing guns and making sure that our kids, because no matter if you're an NRA member or any kind of gun owner, you you don't want kids playing with guns.. That is a thing we all have in common. And so that was a great place to start the conversation.

**JJ**

I think that's what is so great about your book, how it goes into all the different conversations that need to be had about the gun violence epidemic in the US--from detailing how survivors deal with it, to how those who have shot others handle it. It's very...complicated. But I think all are conversations that are important to have. .

**Heidi**

But I love the work that Brady does. And I love the focus that Brady has in terms of including gun owners in the conversation. Because, you know, we've got 62% of gun deaths or suicides, and that's happening with people who own guns. And so, you know, if we want to bring down suicide deaths, we we have to be having conversations with gun owners and finding solutions with them. And I love how Brady does that.

**JJ**

And why, why do you think that? Sort of that black and white thinking that you referenced earlier this sort of buying every thinking that there's a good guy with a gun and a bad guy with a gun, and there's and there's no space in between. What do you think that that was sort of so common in the rhetoric about gun violence? And do you think it's still pretty common for us to hear?

**Heidi**

Well, I think I think it starts actually, with the gun lobby. There's, there's a lot of they've got to sell a lot of guns and fear is a great way to sell guns, and so I...I feel like that's one of their tools that they've used. And it's worked really effectively. You know, for eight years when Obama was President, they said that he was gonna take all their guns away. Um, where in fact, he's he was, uh, you know, there were a couple gun things that happened that loosened everything up where, you know, people could...through the Obama Administration, they could...you could carry guns in national parks and then also on trains. Um, so there was this myth, but it was a great way to sell guns. Um, and that was effective for them. So I think othering and making the other side seem evil and terrible was kind of I think the gun lobby really honed in on that. Um, and that became frustrating to for advocates like myself where we try to have conversations with folks. And that didn't always work well, because because of this, this thing that was out there.

**JP**

We do talk a lot about what is a survivor of gun violence, what is a victim of gun violence, and so little do we look beyond that.

**JJ**

And then we rarely even talk about the opportunity costs that then people occur of people being out of work because of family members but injured and things like that. But we don't talk about the shooters. How do you go, going from your book from "Beyond the Bullet" to your documentary "Behind the Bullet"?

**Heidi**

Well, again, there's this narrative out there that you could be the good guy with a gun and kill the bad guy. Um, and it's this binary thing.

And so I kept missing the conversation about, well, what happens after you are the good guy with the gun and you shoot the...Excuse me, what happens when you're the good guy with a gun and you kill the bad guy with the gun? So what do you like? Just go on and have a sandwich that and then go on with your life? And I I knew that there was more to the story. And again, like my book, I couldn't find these stories out there. So I thought, Well, I'll write another book. And so I figured out pretty quickly that the book wasn't the right medium because it's really it's really complicated. When you've shot and killed somebody, it's there. As you said, there's not just a the shooter and you're not just the victim. It's really complicated because if it's a family member, there's incredible loss and there's, um, you have to deal with, though not only the loss, but the shame and the guilt and then your feelings you've been also you've taken a life. And so there's this one guy in the film, Kevin, who shot an intruder in his house and up in Washington state, and he's very conflicted about what he did. He the law says that he did nothing wrong because this these people were in this house and they were stealing his things and he felt like his life was threatened. So the losses, you are okay, but he took a life and he's very conflicted about it. And so the film is a great medium because it shows the the micro expressions in his face and his nonverbals about the conflict that he feels, um, which I couldn't have captured in a book.

**JJ**

I think that's such a difficult conversation to have, particularly in the space of gun violence prevention where we work so closely with survivors, families who have lost their loved ones...out of respect we don't focus on the shooter. But that becomes so much more complicated when the person who pulled the trigger was the "good guy" trying to protect themselves or loved ones. And yet there's a lack of discussion about what it must be like to live with the reality that you did pull that trigger and you were responsible for taking a life or serious injury. That's never part of the gun lobby narrative when you hear the rhetoric that guns are supposed to make us safer.

**Heidi**

Yeah, this is so complicated. It's so much more complex than I had thought. And and I think I think the gun lobby does this disservice of of telling Americans that the way we stopped school shootings is by having more guns, because because they're not saying what happens when you use that gun. Um, and I think people we watch movies on, we certainly never see the ramifications of the violence that we see on TV and in movies, and but that but it's really real. What happens to real people? Um, it forever changes them.

**JP**

And one thing that we deal with a lot on the podcast is figuring out how to edit and tell the stories of survivors and victims. How do you go about that? When you were editing the film editing and telling the stories in your books, how do you go about deciding what part of the stories to include in what parts to leave out?

**Heidi**

Well, I think that the first, the first thing was that I felt like for the audience I needed to be honest, and I didn't I didn't want to tell a story that was sort of whitewashed door or made to be pretty. So in the film there's there's a pretty big emotional ending, and, um and I realized that I'm I'm not doing the normal thing where most most films have the sort of ending and then there's kind of a happiness to it of like, hope, and I got a little pushback on that, um, through the editing process with my editor and co producer. But it's I feel like, you know, this isn't a happy ending kind of situation, and I feel like honesty is important. And then, um but But it was also a lot of the editing had to do with "What is it?" I mean, I had to squish a lot of a lot of footage into a short amount of time. Each stories really only 20 minutes. It's all interwoven with each other, all four stories are woven together. But I, um, with that lack of time, a lot of it was about time decisions and then really honing into what is the most important part of this story that the audience will want to see and need to see. And so I've been given advice by a lot of people that when you create these kinds of things, is you want to create what you want to see. And so this I really am proud of this film and I'm I love how it's come out. And I love the editorial decisions that we made. Um, and I'm getting the feedback from people that it is effective in the way I tell the stories. And like a little thing, I don't use music very much in it. I use it sparingly because I don't want to tell the view of what to what to feel. Um, the stories hold themselves.

**JJ**

And I've heard you talk in other interviews, about a story from your book that prompted the documentary film-

**Heidi**

Yeah. There was this one story about this, this guy in California whose daughter was shot in the face after her, she and her friend were at a friend's house and they found the dad's gun in a briefcase and we're playing with it, and this girl was shot in the face and survived. But the dad was just so angry about it, and when I interviewed them for the book, I asked what happened to the girl who shot the gun and they said they didn't know and I hadn't talked to her. But it sort of stuck in my head of, like, wow that like, what's that like to be her and her parents and then all



these tragedies that we see across the country, where children find guns and shoot somebody and kill them like that's amazing that that person has to live with that, a child who probably can't even comprehend what they have done and then the parents, how did they support that child? And and how did they become a healthy adult with such tragedy? Because it's not just the loss of the child, but it's the, um the shame and the guilt around it. So then that's kind of where I started thinking about this for the and then along with the month with the gun. You know, I couldn't eso eso. I wanted to find out about that through, ah, through this film that I created.

## **JJ**

Yeah, I have to say, and we will, of course, be linking, not only your book and writing and the End Family Fire pages that Brady runs on our website at [bradyunited.org/podcast](http://bradyunited.org/podcast), but will also be linking to the film and where people can get access to a copy or where they can try to schedule a screening of it. I think one of the things that does is it takes time to be quiet and just sort of let people tell their stories and speak out, which is one of the things that's a little bit hard on the podcast medium. We've got about 45 minutes. So a lot of times when people are telling their stories, there are silences that are really important, that we have to then cut down or to modify. There's a lot happening there in that quiet.

## **JP**

And I and there's a lot I've been working with some of the Brady chapters and students that we work with to put on screenings of of the documentary, and I know that you've been doing a lot of traveling across the country with "Behind the Bullet," and, it and I'd love to hear some stories of how the experience of having screenings across the country and different communities that have experienced their own forms of gun violence have added an additional layer to the experience of the documentary itself.

## **Heidi**

We have a couple things. So when I was in North Carolina, in Hickory, North Carolina, which is just outside of Charlotte, um, I have this guy came up to me after the screening and he said, "You know, my wife drug me to this film. I didn't know anything about it. I saw the cover and I knew it was about gun violence. And I thought, OK, here we go. I'm gonna have to suck it up and watch this film. It's gonna tell me what to think. It's gonna tell me I should feel really guilty about having guns and that I shouldn't have them. So all right, buckle up here ago" and he said, he said--I was shocked. He said, "that is not what this is, and this is not what it was. And I've never seen a film like this that just lets you hear the stories, gives you some statistics at the end of just, like, four statistics so that you have some context, but it really just leaves you thinking," um and he was just so appreciative of that. And I it gave me, um it made me glad, because that was the purpose of this was to create a film that could create a conversation rather than judgment, and so that that really was the purpose.

Um, And then the other thing was, we were showing this film in Philadelphia. And there, you know, in the throes of urban violence and just every day, all the time shootings. Um, and it's just like hard, hard stuff. And, ah, the audience there was very different than some of the other audiences that I had had, like in Boston and in Portland, Oregon, and in L. A. Where they, the Q and A really was about “how do we stop this from happening?” So they didn't really have very many questions about the film and the film making and editorial choices that I had made. It really was about, like, “how do we stop this from happening? We're tired of of this gun violence” and so I thought so...It's been really interesting how each community reacts differently, Um, to the film. I mean, everybody's tired of gun violence, but some some communities air really struck by it in, ah, hard way.

**JJ**

You know, I would personally recommend that for those interested, to contact your local theater..., your local PTA , your local community center -any organization with ties to your community - about hosting a viewing of this documentary with a panel discussion afterwards. I think the panel part is really important, because, well, this film could be very triggering or difficult, especially for survivors of gun violence. And having a guided conversation after can be really important in unpacking the feelings this can generate. We also recommend that people who are part of book clubs take on this book and video as a special project, You know, get together, read the book,then perhaps watch the documentary to try to get the two sides of this very complicated issue. Interestingly, one of the things that came up when discussing this idea is how many of us know if there are firearms in homes where we meet for things like book club. Do you know if they have firearms? And if those firearms air safely stored?

**Heidi**

Yeah, that's that's true. I remember when my son was in high school and he I had, you know, had asked all the time when he was little, and then I figured out in high school, and he's on the basketball team and they would have their little party at somebody's house before the before the game as a sort of team bonding. And I was like, oh, my gosh, he's in high school. I still have to ask this question. I still got to make sure that the house doesn't have, um, firearms that are accessible to these teen boys, especially especially teen boys, so that, you know, that continued. And I think I think the film can create these kinds of conversations and can create away toe, have the conversation about safe storage and ending family fire.

**JJ**

JP, since you were once a teen boy did your before you went anywhere. Did your parents ever if somebody had a firearm in their home?

**JP**

No, never. I was my parents. Never. I was from Boston. I grew up in Boston in Cambridge, Mass. Two sets, and I think that they just thought that nobody had really firearms in our area, so they never asked.

**JJ**

But Heidi, it's so weird that you mentioned that because I've actually might. So my dad was a police officer. So you think if anyone was going to be the one to ask, he would ask. But it occurs to me he didn't. That was never a question that ever came up.

**Heidi**

Yeah, people, people just sort of make the assumption that it's okay, you know, I wouldn't make when my kids were little. I went to it. I was a teacher and I went to a friend's house, um, up in Seattle and we were gonna hang out with her and I had. The kids were one and four at the time, and, uh, we got there before she arrived and she said, "Just make yourself at home and then when I get home, then I'll, uh, you know, make dinner and we can hang out." So I made sure there wasn't any bleach under the counter. And I was like, oh, yeah, I'm such an awesome mom like I'm really being safety conscious, right? So then that night, after she got home and we've had dinner. Then she said, "Ah, let's watch a TV show" And I said, "Well, I don't really want what have the kids watch what we're watching." We were watching Friends or something like that, and, uh, and she said, "Oh, well, let's have the kids to go upstairs and they could watch a movie." While we're doing this and I said, "OK, great". And her husband turns to her and says, "Hey, we need to move the guns." And I was like, "moved the guns, what guns?" And he said, "Oh, we have two loaded handguns in our nightstands." And I thought back to earlier that afternoon when the kids and I were hanging out of her house and I'm all worried about bleach. But they had been up in that bedroom without me. You know where there are two loaded handguns and the nightstands. And so it really made me think about, oh my gosh, like it never occurred to me to ask if there had been a gun in her home. And the thing about it that I realize is gun owners don't look a certain way. You don't you don't know if someone's a gun owner and gun owners aren't bad. But gun owners have guns and guns can kill people, and so we don't always know how that how they're locked up are secured. And so that was a really big moment for me, where I thought, Well, shoot, I need to I need to start asking this question and make sure that I can't make that assumption that kids my kids air in homes where there aren't any guns or that the guns are locked up.

**JJ**

So you've done a book, you've done a movie, what...what do you do next?

**Heidi**

So I...what I've learned about myself is I'm really drawn to stories that are not being told. And so I'm kind of looking at that, uh, that new, what other stories aren't being told? What, um, and one thing that really comes to mind is you know when when I hear about a school shooting or ah, some kind of mass shooting is. I have been thinking a lot about what's happening to the mom of that shooter. What's happening to the sister, what's happening to the girlfriend? So that's what's coming to my mind. And so I'm looking at exploring that a little bit right now because we know the initial impact of people, and you mentioned it earlier in this podcast about the communities and the schools and the police and how everybody's impacted. But one of the stories that that I'm not really hearing about is is the, uh, the families. Because there, you know, they have the same last name. I'm they're

getting ostracised. A lot of times they have. They had no idea that this person was planning the attack or we're gonna be doing They have nothing to do with it. But then they become villainized by the act of their loved one. Um, so I think that's another part of the gun violence story of the impact that it has on people.

**JJ**

Well, and we're so grateful for you and and all of your amazing work and for you coming on this podcast when you're in the middle of a film tour.

**JP**

Yeah. We appreciate you for joining us. Thank you so much.

**Heidi**

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you.

**JJ**

And where, where can people, if they want to find out more about behind the bullet? Where can they go?

**Heidi**

Oh, behindthebulletfilm.com is where all the information about the film is and it's available. You're going on that website to find out all the places, all the platforms where it's available. So it's like available on iTunes and Amazon and X box and all that kind of stuff. Um, and then also it's on DVD. But yeah, I could just go to the website. That's that's the best place to look, And then you can also, you're a chapter, and you wanna, um, or an advocate anywhere. And you want to post a screening and create a community conversation, whether it's in your living room or or at a local theater or a church or a synagogue. Um, there's a button at the website where you can you can host a screening, and, uh, we can help you figure out the best kind of panel to have that happen. Or you just wanna have, ah, a few friends over and a bottle of wine that could also be a greatest to show it and have ah, deep conversation.

**JJ**

Well, thank you so much, Heidi. This has been great.

**Heidi**

Yeah, thank you.

**\*\*\*music plays\*\*\***

**JJ**

Well, it was so great to have Heidi on to talk about a very complicated topic. But you know what's not so complicated? Things that get reported in our "unbelievable, but" segment. Seriously, sometimes these "unbelievable, but" segments write themselves. The city of Las Vegas has voted unanimously to ban toy and replica guns from the entertainment district, -

okay we've seen enough to know why they might do such a thing, but the city will also maintain its open carry policy of real firearms. So, that's a nay for fake guns, and a yay for real guns. Which.. seems confusing? Granted, this is because the city can't enact any measures that relate to real guns--the city doesn't hold regulatory power over firearms—because that's regulated by the **state** government of Nevada. So, that leaves Vegas in the strange position of disallowing toy guns while allowing residents and tourists to openly carry real ones..

**\*\*\*music plays\*\*\***

As we've talked about, 2019 was a deadly year for gun violence. Sadly, New Year's was no different. Within hours of the new decade, many people had already lost their lives. For example, two men were fatally shot when a gunman opened fire during a 2020 celebration at a club in Orlando, Florida, sending nearly 250 partygoers running for safety, according to local news outlets. At a nightclub in Lubbock, Texas, a gunman killed two men, ages 17 and 24. In Huntington, West Virginia, at least seven people were injured after being shot inside a bar early New Year's Day. And the list goes on, and on, and on.

Meanwhile, near Fort Worth Texas, a gunman killed two people before a volunteer armed security team was able to intervene and neutralize the situation. Texas law permits private citizens to carry firearms in houses of worship for the purposes of conducting security functions.. In related news a a stabbing at a New York rabbi's home left 5 people injured, and led to several members of the community standing guard, armed with assault-style rifles. While calls for greater security at places of worship and other spaces are understandable following an act of violence, they are based on the premise that these attacks are unavoidable. We know they are not.

Yet, hundreds of local counties, cities, and towns across America are continuing to declare themselves so-called "second amendment sanctuaries," where local officials state that they won't enforce new gun laws which they believe are unconstitutional. Despite claims that the new sanctuary laws are largely symbolic, a County Board member from Effingham Illinois said his county's state attorney and sheriff won't prosecute or go after anybody if they are law-abiding citizens. That's right, they will not go after anyone who is breaking the law as long as they believe that an individual is a law-abiding citizen. If you think that doesn't make sense, it's because it doesn't.

**\*\*\*music plays\*\*\***

**JP**

Thanks for listening. As always, Brady's lifesaving work in congress, the courts, and communities across the country is made possible thanks to you. For more information on Brady, or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the podcast, get in touch with us at [bradyunited.org](http://bradyunited.org), or on social @bradybuzz. Be brave, and remember: take action, not sides.

**\*\*\*Brady musical outro\*\*\***

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