

# 129: Some Conversations About Gun Ownership We Need to Have

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

firearm, safety, talking, motorcycle, conversation, gun, people, safe, locked, west, failed, brady, question, nra, shooting, podcast, concealed carry license, literally, rifle, walking

## SPEAKERS

Music, Ted Bonar, JJ Janflone, Kris West, Kelly Sampson



JJ Janflone 00:08

This is the legal disclaimer, where I tell you that the views, thoughts, and opinions shared on this podcast belong solely to our guests and hosts and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please note, this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing. It's OK, we find it disturbing, too. Hey everybody, welcome back to another episode of Red, Blue, and Brady and one where I, alas, am all alone. Kelly is on vacation, which is great, but I am sadly not, just as the cicadas come back from Virginia looking like little creepy aliens. But they're kind of cute. Luckily, before she left, Kelly joined me for a great chat with frequent podcast guest and director of Brady's End Family Fire program, Ted Bonar, along with firearms instructor and gun safety advocate, Kris West. West was absolutely amazing, walking us through the differences between safety and security, how to better talk about firearm ownership, and what happens when you fail your own mom for a concealed carry permit.



Music 00:25

Transition Music Transition Music



JJ Janflone 01:19

Ted, Kelly and I are so glad to have you with us. I feel like we shouldn't have you introduce yourself anymore. People should know you at this point. You've been awesome, and your beloved. So Khris, can you introduce yourself to all of our followers, hopefully making yourself as beloved as Ted?



Kris West 01:36

Hopefully, yeah! It's a high price to be able to pay, but I think it's worth it. But my name is West, just like as the direction is, and I'm a father of two rambunctious boys. I was prior military, but I do mention the military part because that's one big distinction of - a lot of times that military card is played - but then really what does that mean? I feel like it's a bittersweet thing of value that's put into the military card or the veteran card that's played. But really, what's the experience? You know, what have you done with that experience? Because while in the military, did different things as far as like a level two certification for anti-terrorism and fancy word of, operational security, which is looking at those different details to try to prevent or reduce harm, risk and whether that is physical, or electronic, or cyber. On that, I'm a huge firearm advocate. But really a big thing of stepping into this space, the overarching, is really trying to reduce rhetoric. And I know sometimes that's seen as a bad word. But really, if you can define what people are talking about, then you can make conversations better and more progressive. Because we might be saying the same thing, or we might be saying things totally different, but I'm hearing you saying what you're not saying, or what you are, but I'm not hearing that.



JJ Janflone 03:02

So West, I wonder if you could explain, as a firearms advocate, what actually brought you into your interest with guns?



Kris West 03:11

So mine's kind of a interesting roller coaster becoming a gun owner, where through my later childhood, grew up with my grandparents. And my grandfather in years, decades ago, worked as special police for department stores and carried a revolver, carried a service weapon on on him. But for what I knew him as, he was just your good old, blue collar, General Motors retiree. But he had firearms in the home, but I really wouldn't consider our household a firearm household, or you know, we didn't own... My grandfather possessed them, but they really never were any kind of presence, though, it'll probably come up a little bit later, I always knew of my grandfather's, what they call a

crackshot hog, rifle - which is a one shot for 22 long rifle caliber - but a rifle that I, unfortunately, played with. And it wasn't till years later that I was able to mentally connect the dots of like 'Oh, there was this rifle that was in the closet' and realizing all the ammo that was on the top of that dresser, if I would have put those two together, that would have been bad. But, like I said this will probably come up later, where that was not good. And I really wasn't tied to firearms, but it was more of an out of sight, out of mind that I use in my personal and volunteer professional way. And so really, I had a paintball gun when I was a teenager, where I was safe as I could be of that of shooting each other with paint balls. But actually when I went into the military, first time I ever shot a firearm, was qualifying. And then it wasn't until actually, years later even through my different friends and coworkers would take me out shooting. I never was a firearm owner until actually I purchased a firearm out of a family member, where it was his old service weapon, and he was getting a new one. I looked at it, price was right, everything looked great. But really, even after I got it, it was what they call a safe queen, which means it just stayed in my office safe, and it was locked up in there. And I never really used. I wasn't really active until then kind of years later, after getting married, and actually getting my concealed carry license, that emboldened as a gun owner and researching that and being active, really making it a lifestyle, the difference of being to me not just possessing a firearm - because I think a lot of people possess firearms - but there's a difference between actually owning and operating a firearm.

K

Kelly Sampson 05:52

Thanks so much for walking us through that. I was wondering if you could continue telling us about your journey with firearms by sharing a little bit about how you went from being someone who owned and understood them to becoming a firearms instructor.

K

Kris West 06:05

So it was actually after I got out on the military, and I had my concealed carry license at that time, and then through different little interventions, ended up actually deciding to start teaching concealed carry. And that was kind of on two different levels: One, the things that I learned, knew, as a concealed carrier, even the special things that I learned that even most military, or even government civilians, what we know about that actually would prevent the use of having a firearm through our structure. And that was how I would answer 'Why me? Why as a private instructor? How am I really different than the big box stores, the gun ranges? They're fully accredited, and have a full staff compared to West, as an individual, single instructor.' And that's where I came to where I was different, because I had small class sizes, where my mother was actually my first student, my NO. 1 student, and actually she's the only student I've ever failed. But, through that, why I failed hers, the

phrase 'Couldn't hit the broadside of a barn' was completely true. And so it wasn't till when I started looking and trying to do all the fundamentals of trying to get her to be shooting the paper. And I realized because of her carpal tunnel, when she was shooting, her wrist was canted down and she was almost hitten really low and wasn't hitting anything on the paper. And I even went to where I was thinking ahead, and had what you think your desk size calendars, to where they're, 10 inch by 20 inch, and still was hitting thing. And so I realized 'Oh, that's the things I need to think about.' But, I did. I seriously failed her. Now she was the only student I ever failed, and that was where I would start my classes off and going and really emphasizing attitude. And so that was very important. That's one of the credentials to be able to certify somebody is if you could hit the wings off of a gnat, but if your attitude isn't there, I'm not going to put my name on it. I'm not going to put my name, my life, my reputation on the line, just for somebody that can be the expert shooter, but I'm not gonna have that name on it, unless I see the attitude that goes with that.



JJ Janflone 08:30

I want to know what life was like after you fail your mom.



Kris West 08:34

Well, the Cinderella story is she ended up coming back to my class, another class, and she passed. I was able to help her in understanding. It wsas funny, where it was a bittersweet thing of failing my own mother, but two things: One, that set up my mindset to ask 'Oh, does anyone have any limiting factors? We're gonna be standing for a long time. I need to know if you've got back problems or knee problems, ao we can adjust. But again, how different shooting positions that still show that attitude, but if you need to sit with with a bench rest and be able to rest the firearm on a shooting back to be able to shoot and take that weight off of you, yeah, let's do it.' So my mom came back, and I was able to help her out and passed her flawlessly and of my conscious and actually was unmeaning to, no one wants to fail their mother. But, it's like asking a cop 'Would you give your mom a ticket?' 'Yeah I'd give my mom a ticket. She sped, she ran a red light. Sure.' But that set a precedent that, literally, I failed my own mother. So I have no problem telling you if you're showing that you don't have the competency, you don't have the attitude, I'll fail you. I literally failed my mother, and I'll fail you. That was interesting. That actually came up in a gun violence forum that was at a local library. And they were talking about, so carelessly, just pushing people through and I was like 'Hold on. Timeout. I literally failed my own mother.' So to say like 'Oh, they're just pushing people through' - well it's an insult to the advocacy and a passion of a firearms instructor. 'I'm going to fail my own mother.' But there's redemption as always. She passed. She never got her concealed carry license, but

she enjoyed the experience.



JJ Janflone 10:20

It doesn't still come up in letters or phone calls 'You need to come and visit more and also that time that you failed me' ?



Kris West 10:27

Oh, well, she brings that up, but it's in a positive light. We even had a conversation, she's been around them, she's like 'Hey, he even failed me. That's how serious he is'. So it was always in a positive light, a little bit of joking 'You failed your own mother?' 'Yeah, I did.



Kelly Sampson 10:45

I was wondering if you could share with listeners: What is the attitude that you like to see from your students?



Kris West 10:53

So one definitely is safety. Like I said, I'd be teaching somebody who was even afraid picking up a firearm to people that were three-gun shooters, they were excellent shooters, that attitude that I had to see what was really based upon showing evaluated safety for what was being taught, especially when we'd be getting to shooting firearms and trying to find that line of praised mercy of like 'Hey, keep your finger off the trigger, keep it pointed downrange,' but it was kind of the overall until, literally, I'm signing the certificate, I had to see that attitude was all about safety and the safety of not only themselves but the safety of others, and how they were handling themselves.



Ted Bonar 11:37

What I'll share with the listeners is the reason that West than I know each other is because I had a private lesson with West as a couple years ago. So I'm a clinical psychologist, I work in suicide prevention, and I had not fired a weapon. Right. But, I'm asked to talk about weapons and this factors for suicide, and I talk with people in a suicide crisis. So I've had the conversation for years, but I also knew that 'I'm missing an experience.' And so we connected and arranged for a private lesson with West. And West, graciously, hosted us at his range and learned the basics and fired weapons, a number of different of his firearms, of different types and sizes. And what I remember more than

anything that day is West's meticulous attention to safety. There wasn't a missed second where safety wasn't the first thing he was thinking about, and talking about, and discussing. It was ever present in everything we did. So I wanted to mention that, first of all, to introduce why I know West, and that it's a pretty unique experience that I've had. And then I want to ask West, this is the lead up to the question, I want to hear from you your thoughts on what I observed and your quick answer about safety, as compared to the cultural conversation and the great divide between those of us who are not firearms owners and those of you who are firearms owners and your value of safety. I would love it if you could talk about how wide that gap is and what your understanding of it.

K

Kris West 13:33

That's a very broad question. So your question - to make sure I'm understanding and answering - is you're asking 'What is the safety divide or safety gap that a non-gun owner might look at a gun owner and say that's safe and not safe?'

T

Ted Bonar 13:49

A little bit, I'm acknowledging that that exists. I'm acknowledging that the cultural conversation that we have that guns are dangerous. So the cultural conversation is that guns are dangerous, but my observation and interaction with you is that safety is first for you. So I want to know what it feels like for you and what your thoughts are about why that gap exists. and what can we do so that we can close that gap?

K

Kris West 14:19

First and foremost is just identifying a firearm, even down to a 22, isn't a Nerf gun, is not a BB gun. It is a potentially harmful or deadly weapon. But that's by design. So to say 'Where is a dangerous thing?' is also any kind of high-risk activity. And so it's always getting around that wording and the intent and purpose. If you've got a Corvette that goes 1,000 miles a minute but blows a tire, that's a malfunction of that. But a firearm that operates in the way it's designed, if it's more coming to how somebody operated, is that it was not a same thing of using - I always try to stay away from examples and parallels - but always trying to figure out the right way to say that is kind of like fire. So that's why I always try to go back to the fire thing. It's non-triggering. Fire, fireplaces, great, fire can be dangerous but fire in a fireplace in that correct environment is great. There's lots of benefits from it. There's a lot of things that can be used and done with fire, but me putting fire in my lap right now would be very dangerous, very harmful. And so figuring out where that safety divide, I think, unfortunately, gets to - and I hate using the word 'pet peeves' - but my pet peeves of rhetoric and how things are presented. And unfortunately, who's

saying it. Because I could say it one way and you could say it the same way. Or I could say, I could say a phrase, and you could say a phrase, and someone will disagree with me but agree with you. So I think, unfortunately, sometimes it is who saying it and how it's presented, also what labels or what credibility is giving offense. Are we talking 99 times, safety was done right, or someone did something safely, and then one time they did not, where are we focusing and where not only are we focusing on? Because OK, we should identify where some safety concerns, but what resources are we putting with that, and how often is that actually happening? What is the mental picture being painted? And also facts versus truth set up further conversations of what is the facts versus the truth and identifying the difference in facts and truth. So, hopefully, I answered your question about safety and where, where that gap and divide is.

T

Ted Bonar 17:02

So how we talk about it matters, how we talk about fire or a fast Corvette matters, if you're driving a Corvette in the city, and you're under the speed limit, etc, then you're OK. And if you're going 1.000 miles a minute, that's dangerous, right? So what are some examples of that for for you as a firearm owner? What does that sound like? What would it sound like for a firearm owner?

K

Kris West 17:27

So for me the big thing that I always try to get to, that starts tearing down the walls of understanding is also the perception of safety and what is safe and not. So if I'm walking around with a firearm on my hip I wouldn't consider that unsafe. But some people would see that as like 'Oh, that guy has a gun. That's unsafe.' And then also really tearing that down is I go into my kids' school, and I put that firearm away, in a safe in my car, locked it up, secured. It's safe and secured. And I think most people would agree that's a safe measure I'm doing but also identifying that when I'm doing that, to be able to lock up my firearm, I'm still handling my firearm. I'm still having to take out the magazine, empty the chamber, put that away. So figuratively and literally, where I'm handling a firearm, a potentially harmful and deadly firearm, I'm having to handle to unload and put away, versus if it just stayed on my hip, literally well, I mean, for me and my everyday carry, it comes out of my safe, in the holster on my belt, and back off. I never have to load it. I never have to handle it other than literally putting it on, like I'm flipping my phone in my pocket. And that might seem 'Well that's too easy,' but literally the same concept of if you imagine a cell phone holster clip on your belt, it's the same way I'm doing mine. And so the example where someone's doing that in a car, and another and child walk by, and all they see is West handling his firearm, loading it or unloading it, depending on what stage I'm in of coming back to my car, and I'm loading up the car - it looks like I'm loading up the final

car. And that's what I'm literally doing. But then it's a perception of safety and also realizing that in that direct and indirect, I'm literally handling a firearm in a confined space, potentially with or without my kids in the car. And also understanding that, if following the law, I'm putting my firearm away to be able to go into the school, go into the church, go into that business that has chosen not to have a firearm in their place. And that's their right, private property, that's their right, but also understanding what that ripple effect is versus the perception of not safe or a firearm just being on my hip at all. The only thing I've ever done to handle that is: It's coming out of my pistol safe, onto my hip and back off, versus if I had to go to school, church, business, and I'm loading and unloading my firearm three or four times in my car, in a confined position, realizing that's not the safest way. But the option I chose is I chose to carry a firearm. And following the laws, those are the steps I'm happy to take. So there's a perception of safety and a utility of safety.

T

Ted Bonar 20:36

Do you feel vulnerable when you're doing that? Meaning, do you feel vulnerable of the perception that it's dangerous, even when you are attempting to do everything to be safe? I'm not suggesting you're not being safe.

K

Kris West 20:50

No, I understand.

T

Ted Bonar 20:52

Do you feel vulnerable to the perception that we're talking about, that somebody would would experience you or your firearm as a danger, even though your intention is to be fully safe and compliant with everything?

K

Kris West 21:05

Right. I would say yeah, there's a vulnerability because if you're at a school, and a person walks by, and they see you handling your firearm in a car, in the school parking lot, understandably, even I would have thought of what that looks like. That's a perception of 'What the hell is that guy doing with a gun at a school?' But then looking at the perception - I have a fire on my hip and walking around. There's still always the perception of - you're asking about the vulnerability of would someone say something? Would somebody potentially call the police to say 'Hey, there's a guy walking around the mark with a firearm on their hip.' Someone could look at me and go 'Oh, that's, that right



wing, radical NRA, gun nut gun guy and be totally weirded out.' And another person's like 'Oh, is that the new Glock so and so?' 'Oh, what holster's that?' And they're going to geek out about it. You're going to have two different reactions.

T

Ted Bonar 22:10

West, I appreciate that you talk about how somebody could look at a firearm on somebody else's hip and geek out about it. I think it's something that we don't talk about too much, about the different types of people and gun owners and non-gun owners and how they react to things differently. My metaphor that I use is motorcycles. My use of a motorcycle puts me at more risk than people who don't ride them. And I know that people have thoughts about me on a motorcycle. I can talk to a stranger, and geek out about a motorcycle. Totally. And it's something that I have to be aware of. I have to make sure that I'm doing the best I can to be safe. Because I absolutely know that I am at greater risk riding a motorcycle than if I'm driving the car, or if I'm walking, that there is a risk of danger when I'm using something that is dangerous, or that is potentially dangerous, as you said. I think that's a good distinction. And so there are people who will ride motorcycles, and not wear helmets, and not wear boots, and not wear their protective gear. And so this comes into the idea of how to prepare for safety. So from my personal perspective, through the lens of motorcycles - which is not what this podcast is about - my personal lense is I make sure to wear my helmet. I make sure to drive well and ride well. So that's my transition into how do we talk about safety with firearms? And how do we have the conversation with firearm owners about safety with their firearms? And the reason I'm asking it that way is because the research pretty clearly says that firearm owners value safety, and firearm owners are aware that they are owners of potentially lethal weapons, and that they are aware of the increased risk of owning firearms, and that they will mostly attribute that risk to other firearm owners, not themselves. And I think that's totally natural because I get on a motorcycle, and I feel safe. So I do understand that perspective. My question for you, this absurdly long metaphor about motorcycles, is how do we turn this conversation about safety into an effective conversation where we can collaboratively understand one another about safety procedures, the ideas of safety, the risk of safety for firearm owners?

K

Kris West 25:02

So when approaching a firearms owner - and I'll back up to add to your analogy to really put all of this together, is I don't own a motorcycle. But I if I went out today because I'm like 'You know what? Ted has a motorcycle, I want to ride it up and go riding with him.' If I bought a motorcycle today, I definitely shouldn't be acting like I speak on the motorcycle community tomorrow. As I was, honestly, preparing for this, through many edits, of figuring

out how to say this right, correctly. And how I'm trying to say it is, and alluded to it where my personal branch was growing up my household of firearm and firearm safety, if you would have asked me 'Does your family own firearms?' my initial reaction would have been to say 'No,' because we weren't in a mindset of a firearms home, though there was possession of firearms. And so when approaching somebody about safety and go 'Oh, yeah, I'm a gun owner, and you own granddad's single-shot hog raffle, you possess a rifle, sure, but are you really a gun owner? Just like would I really be a motorcycle owner? I possess a motorcycle, but if I'm coming to you and saying 'You know, I think we should change this and that with motorcycles,' I think that's where we would lose a connection. Because I'd be coming at you. 'Well, I've got my Totem, I got my Totem of my motorcycle, so now I can speak about motorcycles.' And it's almost a credibility is the big factor that I think goes back to it. Now, if I came to you, and vice versa, whether we're putting motorcycles or firearms in this, is to me, it's the same road of travel. If I came to you and said 'Hey, question about motorcycles, what's the best way to operate these correctly?' And so I think it's a coming of always questions, of one coming of gaining knowledge, and then also asking you if you're aware of that, of talking with someone with firearms about what's their story. So, one, getting that connection so that you can then understand that level of safety, because you might be talking to the guy who invented the latest and greatest safe and you're thinking 'He's not safe with his.' So one of understanding where somebody is coming from was safety, so that you're working individual level. So we'll chew this up of individual safety is the biggest thing of when you're talking with someone know what their story is. And that way, one, you don't assume, you're always asking questions. Questions invite conversation versus a statement. And so then working - OK, if you're talking to me, and you're saying, when we went shooting that I had all my files locked up, I had cable locks in there, you're seeing a little bit of proof. But if you didn't see that, and if we had just met and you had never seen credibility of that, of how to address safety is onelike I said, is learning their story and also finding out what they know while they're available, and then seeing where there's come together. Because I think sometimes we get a safety divide. I'll kind of pick on my upbringing of that unloaded rifle that was tucked away. That wasn't the right thing, but I think if I would have approached my family about having that locked up, I think that would have been conversation that would have been taken well, because it would have been grassroots. It wouldn't have been coming from a legislative government policy mindset. It actually came from getting that locked up. And that's where, when looking at safety and really looking at what do we mean by 'safe.' Because if we're talking 'Here is a cable lock And this is a great safety device that prevents the firearm from being loaded, prevents the firearm from being discharged.' I think one, figuring out what are we talking about with safety. So we're talking the direct line of preventing somebody from hurting themselves, then there are great programs, within your National Shooting Sports Foundation for Project Child Safe that works with law enforcement in getting those locks handed out, I think it's a great avenue to start the

conversation. But I think a lot of times where I find, no matter what different organization is, I think a lot of times it's 'Hey, here's a gun lock,' and then there's not a follow-up. 'Hey, here's a gun lock' but there's not a 'Hey, have you thought about how to secure it?' Because if you have that gun lock n there, that's a great safety. But, my children could still bring me my firearm, though it has a cable lock on it and safe, but it's now a paperweight that, directly, would only hurt your toe if you dropped it. But still, I don't like even the thought that my children would bring me my firearm, or that nosy uncle finds my firearm, is messing with though it's locked up with the cable off. So that's the next step in figuring out what that divide is and how to not look at it from the extremes of either it's not locked up, cable lock, or giant safe and seeing everything in between - the different style cases that are kind of an increasing safety - but then getting into security that even a good, hard rifle case, if you put a cable on it that you could attach to a secure point, would be then starting to get into your steps of security. So it's safety and security. And then also to really give some good meat for talking about different safety devices of understanding - hopefully this answer the questions because I never like dancing around questions - but of safety is learning story, and they say, 'Well, hey, this is where I'm at. And I want to be able to have my loaded firearm in my nightstand in case I need to use it.' And I'd say 'Oh OK, cool. What kind of safe do you have it in' I didn't assume what they do. I asked them what kind of safe they have. I'm already assuming it's unsafe. And if they go 'Oh, it's just in my drawer' not to say like 'Oh, you ever heard of Hornady Rapid Safe or a portable safe, so you could still keep that firearm loaded, in a holster, or even some of them have a integrated holster, and still have that firearm blocked up. But still quick access.' So identifying what they're trying to do in their mind of being safe and where you're identifying where you feel like 'Well, I don't think having a loaded firearm just sitting on your nightstand is safe.' And I agree. I wouldn't say that safe either. But understanding what their story is to be able to have that conversation, and where it's not a lecturing conversation, but a 'Have you heard about this?' Because I've had personal experience - when I was doing the Be Smart presentations when trying to work with Moms Demand Action - I saw that, ddoing a booth we had a guy walk by and as soon as he saw the booth immediately glazed over. And I knew there had been no conversation. But I reached back and grabbed my Hornady Quick Access Safe and opened it up. And he was like 'Wait, what is that?' He hadn't even heard of it. And so not only was that cool, because it was 'OK, I get an organization that's trying to do it well. And I'm understanding where you get somebody that just walks by you and dismisses you but also understanding why they were dismissive of things. But also seeing 'OK, you can be that light in the darkness of here's the safe.' Not only was he was excited about it, he came back later in the festival and brought his buddy with him and was like 'Hey man, show my friend how you open that up with a quick era with a combo.' And he was enthused, he was so enthusiastic about it. And so I think that's where it comes with safety is: One hearing person's story in conversation and then really getting into more of that serious conversation of how they

have the firearms locked up. Because, one, when it's especially direct conversation, always give him the benefit of the doubt because some people haven't transitioned in their lifestyle that if they've chosen where they live alone, and they don't have anybody that visits, and they've chosen how to have their firearm loaded on a nightstand, whether disagreeing or not. But then if also they have family coming over 'Hey, we're coming to your house for Thanksgiving.' Hey, quick question. I know you got firearms. Do you have them locked up?' Because some people it might not even have been a thought. And approaching it from just asking a question and giving the opportunity for a change, or an evaluation, in how their lifestyle changes. And I mean, even the same thing. If you've got somebody who goes from a second story apartment to living a house and where the dynamics of how you might be handling that firearm could change because now you're on ground floor versus a basement or second floor, and where safety's always evolving. And you have to look at that, people you're living with, when you have kids, to be able to see how safety changes based upon needs, and desires, and lifestyle. I appreciate that, West, thank you.

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Kelly Sampson 34:58

One of the things I'm picking from you is the importance of having conversations that are openminded and non-judgmental. And when I think about conversation, obviously, the words that you use are important. And you pointed out the importance of language, and of using the proper terms, and explaining the terms that we use for things related to firearms. I'm wondering if you could talk about why so important to do that?

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Kris West 35:24

When talking with, especially firearm owners, of what terminology and to where it shouldn't be necessarily a conversation stopper, but if you're using, also in rattling off a fully semiautomatic, 30 caliber lever action assault rifle, and using all the terms that aren't correct and together, and you're already losing the credibility with that and where that shouldn't be a turning over conversation, but unfortunately, if you somebody's being approached and all of a sudden different little indicators, or red flags are going up, someone's not understanding what they're asking about, it already breaks down the conversation. And so where terms are very important with that of understanding what are we we talking about? And what are we trying to get to into that conversation? Because, unfortunately, different words are a trigger to what the term you meant, and what you're trying to say, actually then spawns things, like if you're talking about someone saying 'assault weapon' or if you're talking about high capacity magazine, when some people are aware 'Oh, that's a modern sporting rifle. And that's a standard capacity magazine,' that you go from a 30-round magazine, that's the standard, fastened down to a 10-round, you

have a reduced capacity.' And so those terms and being able to talk with folks, is, I mean, it's just very paramount to be able to have: What terms are we talking about? And are we are we saying the same things? And what we what are we getting on? Unfortunately, just sometimes different terms are indicating of either ignorance that someone doesn't really know about, or what is their agenda? And, unfortunately, the conversation sometimes you get so polarized, and that's unfortunate. I mean, I can admit it, it's unfortunate when conversations get polarized to where it's a 'This side or that side' and not seeing what's in the middle. And that to me is, and I purposely keep using the word of 'rhetoric,' of what are we referencing? Because things on themselves should be significant enough to talk about without things being lumped together?

K

Kelly Sampson 37:51

I hear you talk is that you're in a pretty important position because you know so much about firearms, and carrying, and safety, and you also are involved in gun violence prevention. So I'm wondering if you had advice for other people who are in similar positions, where they enjoy firearms, they shoot them, they understand them, and they also really want to work on preventing gun violence?

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Kris West 38:16

So I would say definitely looking at whatever your city, county, district, or even state, different community, whether independent or government-related community intervention programs, what there are around you. Because I know, personally, where I'm involved with the Montgomery County Atimus, which is, for those who don't know what Atimus is: alcohol, drug addiction, mental health services, and that's for McHenry County, Ohio, and their committee, and that's how I got connect with them through doing a gun safety table. So I was actually at a American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Out of the Darkness suicide prevention walk, I actually had a gun safety table. And so that the thing that I did. The first year I did it, I was the only firearm safety table, second year there was a second farmsafe table, which they thought I was that organization, and so we and I showed - tying into your question and giving the big picture - in reality, the second year I did it, where I had my table set up, learned good, bright colors and seeing that they came up and said 'Hey, are you here for the Smart table?' And I said 'No, no, this is my independent table that I have.' And they're like 'Oh, OK.' They were like 'Hey, I'm gonna be working at a gun safety table. How does a gun cable work?' And immediately, I had a split-second thing of going 'How are you going to advocate or tell people about a gun safety cable and you don't even know how it works?' But like I said, it was a split second, and I went into my presentation mode and went through how my table was set up. 'Hey, thanks for for taking this cable lock. This is how it works, and then here's a soft side of

case, a hard-sided case, a metal case, a big old rifle case,' that I had with me, knowing that sometimes you're going to meet people that don't know. That's where you will hopefully start seeing the light of that's why you're there to help and be able to help people understand, if you're trying to get gun locks sent out to the community, this is how to procure them, what places to go through, of talking about if you're trying to reach out to gun ranges of what the different methods are. Is it a public range? Is it a private range? And how to actually reach out to them to be able to then know what their needs are. And I think that's where, as a firearm owner, you can help fill in that gap of knowing those quick resources, knowing those agencies that people might not know of, and being that beacon in light and knowing that yeah, you're going to run into people that don't know, maybe even anything about a firearm, even which way it should be pointed, but that's why you're there. And you know, it's going to be a labor of love, but it's worth it. I mean showing proof of how I'm here on this podcast is reaching out and literally of always having that open invitation to be able to take somebody to the range, to teach them about firearms, because that's what led to Ted being able to be introduced was that open invitation, and being able to willingly teach people and to be able to take people out to the range. Because sometimes that's that fear of the threshold is just stepping into, again, somebody that will come with me, they're gonna teach me and this is what we're gonna be talking about and what we'll be shooting helps ease nerves and to be able to fill in that gap. So there's a lot of community organizations that are nonpolitical, nonpartisan, they're just there to help. And I think that's the big thing of knowing that they are proven this isn't policy or legislation, or programs that are trying to actively reduce gun deaths, and that just would love to have you to come help them. And one thing I wanted to just put in there is really talking about safety. For me, living and breathin firearm safety can and should be starting before, especially with kids, before actual live firearm is introduced, talking about Nerf guns and BB guns. I mean, for my household, those are locked up. And even when playing with Nerf guns my boys have eye protection on. Even my youngest son's pet lion Lionel had safety glasses on we were playing with the Nerf guns. You can definitely be teaching kids about firearms ,and it's a literal parent-child relationship. If you are the parent, you are to be in charge of that, and how you decide to actually teach your kids firearms is definitely your choice, but it's, once again, the conversation of the different thoughts and resources of locking up the Nerf guns and locking up the BB guns and not having them as taboo. But when my kids are hopefully one day shooting 22 rifle, and other firearm, there's no break in transition. Even right now the Nerf guns are locked up in a hard plastic case. It's ammo case has its own guards in there, and the BB guns are locked up my safe. And so there's there's not a break in 'Well, these are real guns and these aren't' - understanding, we're not we're in hearing protection with a BB gun for instance, but we're still being playful about it. But still, safety is in mind, and that way it's not a forced, hard transition. So then that way, it's kind of testament to the safety of that can be. And then also if I had somebody that was coming over to my house to have a

playdate with my boys, that's an easy conversation to be able to show this is where safety is key and is paramount.



Ted Bonar 44:29

Your comments a minute ago, I just want to say how much I appreciate them. West and I know each other, because he just said it. We know each other because of this common cause that we have. And I know that West is actively out in the community as an advocate and a firearm instructor with a focus on suicide prevention, and he is out there with American Foundation For Suicide Prevention, and the other programs he's been in, to provide the education of safe storage, and security of firearms, and teaching people about the methods, and I just think it's so important. And I know that you have helped me help the clients that I've worked with. I mean, there's just no question about that I have greater confidence and greater facility and speaking about firearms, in the context of suicide prevention - which doesn't mean I'm an expert in firearms. But in the context of suicide prevention, I've been able to do so better because of your willingness to have conversations and teach me. It's hard to describe how important that is. West and I have not agreed on everything. Right. A But that's cool, because that doesn't take away how much I appreciate you, West, and how much I've learned from you. And I've got nothing but great thoughts and appreciation for you, and your efforts, and your willingness to participate here. And what we've talked about means a great deal to me and us. And I've learned more in this conversation. I want to appreciate you. So, thank you



Kris West 46:00

That's amazing.



JJ Janflone 46:06

I appreciate so much you coming on and being willing to come on and chat about your experiences, because my cultural competency in this area is lacking. So I just it's so nice to be able to have you talk, and also now I've been very cute image in my head of a stuffed animal with safety gear.



Kris West 46:51

It was pretty cute.



JJ Janflone 46:52

It's gonna carry me through the rest of the weekend. So I want to say thank you so much for coming out. We love to have you back. I like to ask people to have them back when they're on air, so that then they feel that social pressure to say that they'll come back again. Definitely, I think these are more more conversations to be had in the future.



Kris West 47:13

Transition Music



JJ Janflone 47:15

So for this week's moment of unbelievable, I'm very glad to be flying solo because I think this one might have broken Kelly. In Norfolk, Massachusetts, students got on their school bus to find a loaded handgun just sitting on a seat in the back of the bus. Thankfully, these kids were smart and alerted their bus driver, but the bus driver walked to the back of the bus, picked up the gun, simply put it in his pocket, and then went back to driving. He didn't report the incident or say anything. But, of course, the kids did. I can just imagine them getting home and telling their parents about finding a gun on the bus. I know I would be livid, and at least one parent was shook up enough to report the incident, leading to a police investigation. Ultimately, the police discovered the gun belonged to the bus driver, who said it just must have fallen out of his pocket while he was cleaning the bus. No answers, however, to why the driver thought bringing a loaded gun onto a bus of schoolchildren was a good idea, or why he was just keeping a gun in his pocket as opposed to something like a holster. The driver was arrested and charged with reckless endangerment of a child and carrying a firearm on a school campus.



Music 48:20

Transition Music



JJ Janflone 48:22

Luckily, we have exciting news this week. U.S bankruptcy judge Harlin Hale has ruled that the NRA, aka the National Rifle Association, cannot use bankruptcy proceedings to reincorporate in Texas and escape investigation by the State of New York, meaning that the lawsuit from New York Attorney General Letia James is set to proceed. For those of you who are unfamiliar with that lawsuit, I highly recommend our podcasts on the topic,



as I always do, but in general. For years, there have been really clear signs and explicit statements by former NRA employees that have indicated the NRA leadership has been abusing their positions and their authority as fiscal stewards of the organization, which is in violation of its 501c3 exempt status. The former chief of staff to NRA CEO Wayne LaPierre had detailed that LaPierre routinely abused his position and misused and refunds for his personal benefit. In October 2019, Brady filed a complaint with the IRS, seeking an examination into, and ultimately a revocation of, the NRA's tax exempt status as a nonprofit. To date, this petition has received over 150,000 signatures. In other news, the Biden administration has issued a proposed rule to regulate ghost gun kits and parts as firearms. President Biden had announced his attempt to do so in April. This action, when in effect, will have an immediate and tangible impact on the effort to stop the proliferation of ghost guns and prevent gun violence. The proposed rule will require that unfinished frames and receivers be serialized in their sales subject to a background check from a licensed dealer. Again, if the phrase 'ghost gun' is new to you. I highly recommend you check out a few podcasts episodes from that great little podcast Red, Blue, and Brady, where we detail what a ghost gun is, and really break it all down for you.



Music 50:05  
Transition Music



JJ Janflone 50:07

Hey, want to share with the podcast? Get in touch with us here at Red, Blue, and Brady via phone or text message. Simply call or text us at 480-744-3452 with your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever. Kelly and I are standing by.



Music 50:19  
Transition Music



Kelly Sampson 50:21

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 at [@bradybuzz](https://twitter.com/bradybuzz). Be brave, and remember, take action - not sides.

