

Episode 122-- Military Veterans on So-Called "Militias"

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SPEAKERS

Dr. Kyleanne Hunter, Timothy Ryan, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson, Jason Crow



JJ Janflone 00:08

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JJ Janflone 00:38

Hey, everybody, welcome back to Red, Blue, and Brady. And wow, this week has been rough.



Kelly Sampson 00:43

Yeah, it's, it's been pretty terrible.



JJ Janflone 00:46

Yeah. I mean, it's hard, right? When there's, there's seven mass shootings in seven days. A lot of them very high profile.



Kelly Sampson 00:52

Yeah and that's just the high profile mass shootings. You know, beyond that, there's that constant drumbeat of gun violence every single day that's present in our country. And that has not slowed down.



JJ Janflone 01:01

Yeah, I mean, shootings never stopped during the pandemic. I mean, even just for the numbers we have from 2020. That was the deadliest gun violence year in decades, even though we didn't see a ton of the big public shootings that make national headlines, probably just because people weren't out and about, you know, there were still a lot of mass shootings where four or more people were shot.



Kelly Sampson 01:19

There was actually more than 600. 600 in 2020, according to the Gun Violence Archive. And at the same time, we've seen the rise of so called gun sanctuary cities, folks pushing for open carry laws, and even the carrying of assault style weapons in public places, like the Michigan State Capitol building where they have no business.



JJ Janflone 01:38

And that's why today, we're talking with some great folks who have served their country, and now fight for gun violence prevention, who are well aware of these problems.



Kelly Sampson 01:47

Yeah. And before we get into that, we have a special message, right?



JJ Janflone 01:50

Yes. So one of our guests, Jason Crow. He also represents Colorado Sixth Congressional District, which encompasses Aurora and parts of Adam and Douglas counties. And so this week was a tough one, as we saw the shooting take place in Boulder, Colorado, and we just want to let him and his constituents know that we're thinking of them. We're fighting for them during these terrible times. I know that, you know, I have a lot of friends. I did my grad school in, in Denver, I lived there for five years. So I have a lot of friends who live in these areas, and this really, this hit the community hard.



Kelly Sampson 02:21

Yeah. And I'm so thankful that we have people like Representative Crow out there. He's continuing to serve his community and speaking out against this violence, just as he did after the, the insurrection on the Capitol in January, attempted insurrection, I should say.



JJ Janflone 02:33

Which is actually, that's a great segue, because today, we're specifically talking about armed extremists. And these so called militia groups, who have increasingly shown up at protests, government buildings, like you mentioned, Kelly, and even polling locations, openly carrying assault style weapons and other guns. Some folks dressed in army fatigues, even when they're not military. Just the whole thing.



Kelly Sampson 02:53

Yeah, I mean, it's chilling. And we couldn't help but wonder what veterans and members of military communities who actually have signed up to protect and serve thought of these demonstrations, especially when so often the people carrying the same weapons that they as members of the military carry while they were in war zones.



JJ Janflone 03:10

And that is exactly why today we're speaking with three great folks. As you know, Kelly and I, you and I, we're civilians. So we went to three folks who know that answer directly. Kyleanne Hunter, TJ Ryan and Jason Crow. These are individuals who know all about gun ownership, the Second Amendment and weapons used in warfare because all of them are military vets.



Kelly Sampson 03:32

Can you please introduce yourselves?



Dr. Kyleanne Hunter 03:34

Yeah. Hi, thank you so much for having me. Again, my name is Kai Hunter. I'm a retired Marine Cobra pilot, as well as former Legislative Liaison Officer. I am currently a professor of Military and Strategic Studies at the Air Force Academy and the inaugural Sarah Brady Fellow at Brady.



Timothy Ryan 03:50

My name is Timothy Ryan, you can call me TJ. I have just under 13 years of military service from 2005 until November 2017. Within that time, I had 8 combat deployments, three to Iraq, four to Afghanistan, and one to another location. And I was released or separated from the military due to complications with mental health. And those mental health complications stem from a lot of my service in the military and whatnot.



Jason Crow 04:24

So Congressman Jason Crow, I represent the Sixth Congressional District of Colorado, and I'm a former Army Ranger, served in the 82nd Airborne Division in the 75th Ranger Regiment and three combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan prior to my time in politics.



JJ Janflone 04:41

Well, before we get started, I need you and TJ to promise you're not going to, you're not going to form like a Ranger alliance and gang up on Kai.



Jason Crow 04:49

What, you know, soldiers ganging up on Marines that never happens.



Dr. Kyleanne Hunter 04:53

Never, never at all.



JJ Janflone 04:57

So, TJ, I think you started us off actually by, by starting to get into this, but I'm wondering if you all are comfortable, if you can tell us a little bit about your service, why you, why you entered the military in the first place.



Dr. Kyleanne Hunter 05:08

Okay so I actually decided to join the Marine Corps because I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and figured they would figure it out for me, which they did very well. That over, oversimplifies it a little bit like I knew I wanted to work in service. I actually went to, went to Georgetown as an undergrad at the school of foreign service, took the Foreign

Service exam, passed but got put on a 18 month waiting list to actually be able to start Foreign Service Officer training. And so I had no idea what I wanted to do and literally was out for a run one day, saw the Silent Drill Team practicing was like, I bet their job isn't boring, so maybe I should be a Marine. I didn't know anything about the military, anything about military service, this is pre-911 too, so there was, that, that wasn't necessarily a motivating factor. The officer, Selection Officer oh, he knew a lot about military service and probably was not going to let me leave until I actually started OCS at, at that time. Yeah, long story short, became a Marine ended up as a cobra pilot, which is its own whole crazy story, how I came in, in that world. And it, quite frankly, was the best thing I ever did in my life. I miss it every single day, I, the choice to return to civilian life wasn't 100% mine, I became medically unqualified to fly because of some illness that I had. And so the decision was essentially made for me to to return. I have been fortunate to have stayed, stayed involved and connected with the military in a variety of different ways throughout my my civilian life.



Jason Crow 06:51

Yeah, so you know, I enlisted in the National Guard after high school, really, primarily, initially to help pay for college. I came from a working class family and started working very young at McDonald's and Arby's to help make the ends meet. And I did well in school, got into college, but didn't have a way to pay for it. So I actually did two things. I started working in construction. I'd work 20 hours a week in the mornings, and in the afternoon, take the, take the boots off and take a quick shower and go to classes in the afternoon and evenings. And then I had enlisted, so my military career actually started as a private. I was Private Crow, started at the very bottom of the rung. And on weekends would do the weekend warrior thing, as we used to call it, and this was before 911. Right? This is when the guard really did that weekend stuff. And then the two weeks of drill during the summer. So that's how it started for me. You know, during those weekends, when I put that uniform on and go to those guard drills, I discovered how much I liked that. I liked being a part of something bigger than myself, I love wearing the flag on my shoulder, standing there in formation with people feeling that, that solidarity, that sense of team, and that higher purpose of giving back to the country and community. So I actually decided to join ROTC, so I was going through this thing called the Simultaneous Membership Program where I was enlisted in the guard. And then after my second year of college, I started to do ROTC classes as well and was doing both so I was both a Cadet and in a Private at the same time and ended up deciding to go active duty. So 911 happened we were a nation at war and I had originally a National Guard contract but decided that I wanted to go active duty so I transitioned to an active duty contract. I graduated as the distinguished military graduate of my ROTC class, so I was able to help choose my, my branch. So in my infinite wisdom, as I now say, when I was 23, chose infantry, and then asked for Airborne Training

and Ranger Training, which of course, the army was happy to oblige all three of those requests. Next thing you know, you know, after I go through all my training, and finish Ranger School, I was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division and three months later was invading Iraq with my platoon. So it was the rifle platoon. The invasion of Iraq, came back from Iraq at the end of that year, and went into the 75th Ranger Regiment, became an Army Ranger, and served two more combat tours with the Special Operations Task Force in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2005, and then left the service and worked hard to get my veterans benefits. I actually had a hard time getting my veterans benefits and that turned me into a veterans advocate and then spent the next decade, spending a lot of volunteer time advocating for veterans both at the policy level and individual veterans, helping them out mentoring and making sure that we're making it easier for, you know, my brothers and sisters as they tried to make the transition as well.

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Timothy Ryan 09:57

Yeah, as far as what I joined the military for, I would have to say it was family. It was the initial, it was the initial reason. I wanted to be in a real job, a real occupation and you know, working at a time or, you know, minimum wage job wasn't cutting it to get married in my mind or whatnot. So I jumped into the military, I always had some inner drive to be, you know, a part of something, something bigger than myself, you know, I had that, that dream that I was meant for something else. And the military fit that, that thought so my love, or, you know, it sounds corny, my appreciation for my country was there. My initial, when I first initially joined, my appreciation of country was different than when I got out, but still a factor in me joining nonetheless. When I entered in, I was a Wheel Vehicle Mechanic. So working on diesel engines of all sorts, once I got, you know, through my entire training process into my first unit, it went from wheel vehicles to generators, so anything that had an engine or a motor. My training path was similar to any other Initial Entry Soldier, where I had basic training AIP. But I had a baby on the way and when my orders came to me in AIP, they were sending me to Korea. I luckily, was doing well enough to where I could compete for a slot in airborne school, eventually went there, completed that and then while I was waiting to go to my next duty station, I was approached for part of a auditorium filled with kids wanting to be a part of Rangers and a guy up there, you know, selling the good, you know, being a good salesman, and, and then I signed up for that, because they kept me here in the States, and I wanted to be here for my daughter's birth, you know, check airborne, I was gonna not have to go to Korea, I'll stay here, she'll be born and then able to be here for a majority of her, hopefully, majority of her childhood. It didn't turn out that way, a majority of her childhood, that's what I was thinking though, you know, the Ranger Regiment was that check. It wasn't until after I got into it that I heard all the, you know, the hula hula stories, the cool guys stories and the hype about the, about the Ranger Regiment, you know, but my yeah, my, the reasons for

all that came from, you know, you know, my daughter, more or less.

K

Kelly Sampson 12:27

Thank you so much for sharing your experiences. I think it's so interesting that you all mentioned service, and it's importance to you. And I wonder what you thought when you first became aware of these so called militias?

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Dr. Kyleanne Hunter 12:38

I mean, it's unfortunately, I guess, is the best way to put it something I've known about for far too long, probably I have family members who are very engaged in these sorts of movements and have been for a very long time, you know, I think it's, there's a lot of prominence around them. Now, you know, especially after January 6, then even before that, you know, a lot of more discussions around Proud Boys, and all of, all of that, you know, I won't say I grew up with it. They weren't family members I was super close with, but what was really interesting was, after I became a Marine, I don't come from a military family. So I was one of the first to, to join, to do anything like this, the way they started to, started to come out of the woodwork around, you know, oh, what guns do you get to play with? That was always the first thing that would come up too like, you know, what guns do you get to play with? How much do you go shoot? How, you know, and then, you know, post-911 when I was heading off to Afghanistan, and later for the invasion of Iraq, the way that they framed that, that service, the way that they framed, what we were going to do in terms of, you know, aren't you glad you get to go off and like do the killing stuff that, that is there which I think any of us who have actually spent time there, that's the last thing you're actually thinking about, about doing. It's, it's not the motivation of someone who's actually joined the service to, to serve and to, to have to go do the real hard business of doing violence on behalf of the country. It is not done to, you know, get excited to go kill people. I mean, we can have a whole other conversation about the rhetoric we use to actually get through the day to get the job done. But that's, that's not it. And so, it's something that had sort of peripherally existed around my, my life for the past 25 years, 30 years that they've really started to come out of the woodwork. I think it has really been in the past probably like six, half a dozen years or so that it seemed just how prominent it is. And like it's not some isolated event. I can't just write it off as like my crazy family members anymore, that there was really a lot more to it. I think seeing how you how extensive it actually was, is, is tough, I mean and that really opened up for me I was, I was working in Central Oregon when you know the Bundys took the wildlife refuge. And it, that was a big click for me like, oh, this is like everywhere. This isn't again, not something that can be dismissed as like just crazy uncle who does something, but it's a real deep seated national problem.

J

Jason Crow 15:20

Yeah, for me, you know, I grew up in the upper Midwest, I was born and raised in Wisconsin. And, you know, the upper Midwest has areas that has a very long tradition of, kind of, militia involvement, actually, and that, you know, some of that goes back to, you know, Ruby Ridge and Waco and other things, but even precedes that. And actually, the first time I really became aware of it, and that it impacted my personal life was I had a, I had a lot of odd jobs growing up, I did a lot of like, you know, I mentioned working at Arby's and McDonald's, but I also did things like I was a blackjack dealer for a corporate party company, once on the weekends and nights. And I worked in a carpentry shop and worked in construction. And one of my, one of the odd jobs I had was, one summer in high school, I had this job working for the Department of Natural Resources, capturing endangered snakes, rattlesnakes, and turtles, because they were doing a study, and bear with me here, because there's, this is going someplace, we had to capture these endangered turtles and rattlesnakes, so they could do the studies on. But what was interesting is that, when we were being briefed and trained, there were areas where we weren't supposed to go, there were areas as you know, state employees, we weren't supposed to go. And if you saw certain flags and emblems on houses, or properties or ranches, you weren't supposed to go with them because it was it wasn't safe for you as a, as a government employee. And that was really interesting to me that kind of first, to have that experience. And then you know, I kind of moved on from that job. And I think it was out of sight out of mind for a while. But of course in the last four years that's come back on our radar, as we've seen extremism in many different shapes, being given licensed and romanticized and given permission by folks like Donald Trump and others, you know, and folks, you know, that with the highest levels of our government, in official positions that are giving permission for these radical movements to be mainstreamed. And of course, it's taken a much more sinister and broad form.

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Timothy Ryan 17:23

Well, to be honest, I didn't start hearing about, you know, these, these groups, the so called malicious until, you know, our last president took office, and then they, you know, popped up here and there and then I didn't know or cause myself to do as much research into them, or be like, so obsessed on what they're about or why they are that way, until probably, you know, this last year, the 2020 startup. I also interacted, saw pictures online, you know, but there was a gentleman just down the road from me at the convenience store, or whatever, with a long rifle, an AR of some sort, just hanging outside the 7/11. And that was my first personal interaction with seeing someone that had a weapon, not a pistol on their hip or whatnot, but a, a weapon that was one a weapon, a tool of war that I had personally used myself or something similar to it. And I, I was taken aback. I mean, I paused and stuttered and all I could say to the guy was, you know, hey, how you're doing

or whatever, just normal conversation, but I couldn't stop thinking about it for the rest of the day. Then with a lot of stuff that the last president was hyping, as far as, in my opinion, hate speech, started to bring to my attention more of these so called militia groups, like, you know, Proud Boys, and Patriot Prayer and all that. So I started to look into like, what made them feel like so gung ho or so militarized, or feel like they were able to claim the, why they claim the term of militia? You know, why do they feel that they are of that when you're a group that started because we were drinking buddies, like, let's, we only want to talk about guns and drinking stats, you know, we can go all day, or whatever. But yeah, so aside from my personal experience, with the gentleman right down the road here, and there's that and the, my recent obsession with trying to understand these gentlemen, they're mostly male, that's why I say gentleman, so.



JJ Janflone 19:37

Do do y'all have any thoughts on, on why we're seeing a rise of these groups or people joining these groups?



Jason Crow 19:44

I think it's emblematic of something different is what I think I mean, I mean, you think back I'm a student of history, and, you know, the time of the writing of the Constitution, you know, militias, at that point, was basically what we think of as like the National Guard Reserve right now. You know, these were, you know, well regulated as the, as the Constitution says in it's wording that, you know, drilled and formed together and had some structure and some cohesiveness to it. And you know, and these, these groups like, you know, these three percenters and Boogaloo boys and these others that kind of self styled themselves, oathkeepers that self-style themselves as militias, you know, these folks are not looking at upholding the Constitution and defending rights. I think there's a variety of reasons and motivations behind their involvement. Some people are, are just kind of wayward and looking for a, you know, some group to belong to, some sense of belonging, some sense of purpose. I think there you see bullying and intimidation happening, much like you know, you would see a bully on a school yard. And then people kind of using that as a, as a source of bullying as well. But these certainly are not, you know, well regulated militia's right, you see these folks running around wearing Hawaiian tshirts. It's not in any way what you know, Kai and I experienced that, when we had the training, the background, and actually served our country in uniform, carrying these weapons for a very specific purpose.

D

Dr. Kyleanne Hunter 19:58

Yeah and I think to, to add on, on to that, you know, I think Jason really mentioned you know looking for this sense of belonging in, in a lot of it. And I think that that's, that's an important aspect that we can't, it sort of gets dismissed often when we're talking about these groups of like, well, why would someone join, we're looking for a sense of belonging, and, you know, so much of these, these, these groups try to emulate some of the militaristic experience. I mean, I think they, they bastardize the military experience and like it, personally to me, I think I hate when people refer to them as becoming militant or militarized, because a big part of what you do when you join the military and part of that initial training is your sense of individualism is really stripped down and taken away so that you can take on the cloth of the nation, and serve and support others. Like that's, that's an essential component of what it is to become a Marine soldier, sailor, or airman like that's, that's a big part of the identity. It's it, none of it is self serving. And I think when you look at what these groups are trying to do when they cosplay military, they're doing it for selfish reasons, but they're looking for that sense of belonging. There is this sense going out, I mean, part of when you look at, at being in the military is like, you go out, and you do really hard things. And that's what, your training is really hard. And it's intentionally very hard to learn how to work together and become part of something bigger than yourself because you can't do any of it alone. Like nothing, nothing with being in the military is a individual sport, as it were, it's 100% team. And I think what you look at these groups, and how, especially how the rhetoric is around them, especially how politicians have emboldened these groups, it's all self serving. It's the rhetoric of I alone can fix these things, I alone, am the one to do these things, I alone, am the really way that we move forward that they're supporting, and that is 100%, antithetical to wearing the flag on your shoulder and bringing home your dead friends who died for not a person, not a individualistic idea, but for ideals bigger and better than, than themselves. And so it's, there is this sense, I think you know as, as people, we want to belong to something. We want to find our, our tribe, our group. I think those, those of us who have served, experience this in, in ways that a lot of other people haven't, but the way that these groups are trying to bastardize that feeling is completely undermining anything that anyone who's worn the cloth of this nation has sacrificed for.

J

Jason Crow 21:22

And can I, can I add to that, as well. And I share my view about, about this sense of belonging, and you actually see these groups specifically targeting veterans. People leaving the military, because, frankly, a lot of veterans are vulnerable to that, you know, that the, the, the, the transition from military to civilian life is a very difficult transition, you go from being very mission driven, and a part of something bigger than yourself, and then one day, you take the uniform off, and you're thrown back out into the world, and you're

kind of fending for yourself and finding your way. And that's hard, and not a lot of people make that transition well. And then when you're offered, you know, that sense of belonging again, it's very compelling for folks. But I also want to add that that's a, that's a, that's probably the most generous interpretation of what's going on with some of these extremist groups, because there is a far more sinister and dangerous element, because there is white supremacy. There is, you know, Naziism, neo nazis, there are skinheads. There is white nationalism, that is a very real part of this movement. And these are dangerous people that are using this movement to further very dangerous ends.



Timothy Ryan 25:07

I think it'd be hard to kind of classify it or define it to one type of veteran that is, you know, the type that would, you know, join these so called militias, I think there could be the veteran who, let's just say the veteran who has a real bad ideology for hate, or whatever, because they exist, they're out there. But let's say there's one who's just really avid gun supporter and thinks that's where it's at, or where they need to be a part of to, you know, assert their right as they're, the, you know, whatever gun laws are coming up or whatever, there could be some that believe that militia term is there on those boats. So then maybe that's where I'm supposed to be, or that's the next step for me. Because, you know, they decided against law enforcement, or they can't get into something else that's like the go to for military debt, or, you know, maybe influenced by a member of the so called militia to come and train because they're always doing these survival, whatever war type things you hear the stories of like, they're, like, the bad ones about Waco, where they had like, the little training camp sessions, or whatever they called it, but like and have, like military service members, veterans come and provide that kind of training. Yeah, so I don't think, I think it's hard to define what one type of veteran would be the type to join that. But I will tell you that it makes me really sad and upset when I do see any veteran presence as a part of these organizations, because it makes me feel that they've went from an organization that truly did support what their idea is of, you know, country, honor, duty, and, and respect to something that's very, very, if this was an apple tree, the apple, you know, it's not, this is a pear that's sitting next to the apple. They're not even, they're not close. So it's disappointing to me to see servicemembers joining the ranks of these, these folks.



JJ Janflone 27:01

No, I think that that brings up a really interesting point, because all of you either have been or are currently gun owners and, and I wonder how you feel reacting to these folks who, who say that they're, you know, out there speaking for the Second Amendment and for gun rights.

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Timothy Ryan 27:17

My experience or my use of weapons makes me feel semi comfortable in being around an environment where people are carrying around weapons, military style weapons. The slight discomfort that I do have is keeping in mind the training and everything that was all the money that was spent on me to train me to understand, you know, these, these tools, you know, these devices are not on some of these, you know, gentlemen, no military service, but military surplus store frequenters, you know. They confuse patriotism with nationalism. They, they, they fly that patriot term all over the place. But really, they resemble just a nationalist view on me, myself and I. And then a lot of them, I feel are just more misinformed, and don't really take the time to have the sensible conversations or whatnot. They, like, you know, myself at some point in my life, they hear that first idea, the fire's set, and then they take off with it. And that becomes more dangerous when you add weapons to it. So,

J

Jason Crow 28:41

Well, it makes me angry on some levels, you know, I have a very different relationship with firearms, with guns than most people do. You know, a gun for me is, it's a tool, right? I grew up a hunter, a sportsman. I'm a gun owner now. I, yeah, guns were things I used to hunt. Things that I use to do my job to defend the country, to accomplish my mission. Those other folks, a lot of them use guns as a prop. Right? It's, it's, it's a, it's a toy, it's a prop for political theater in so many ways. It's a very different relationship. And because guns are a tool and something I use for work, I have a very serious relationship with guns. They're, you take care of them, you hold them in the right way, you store them in the right way, you, you respect them, you don't point them at other people, you know, loaded or not. There are rules that govern the use of that tool, that that have governed my relationship with guns. And that's what responsible firearm ownership is about. And frankly, that's what so many Americans grew up with. Right, that's, that you know, so we talk about the heritage of responsible firearm ownership in America. You know, that's part of that heritage, that when you, when you, I started when I was 12. You go to, the first thing you do, before you ever pick up a gun, is you go to a hunter safety course. And you'll learn all these things. Right? You learn how to clean it, you'll learn how to disassemble it, you learn the safety rules on a range. And somewhere along the line, we lost our way, right as a country and having that heritage of responsible firearm ownership where it became this tool, this prop this thing that just anybody could, could, with a credit card could go and do and parade in the public square. It's very strange to me, and it's very alien, from what I grew up knowing.

D

Dr. Kyleanne Hunter 30:37

And so I think pretty similar. I mean, I started shooting competitively when I was in seventh grade. And, and so it was a, very similar to Jason like it, the first thing you did was go and learn, learn how to take care of this tool. Like for me, it was a tool for, you know, competition, but it's a tool nonetheless, and then hunted quite a bit, still do. And then went downrange several times as a Marine, and I think there's really two things I see. And one sort of echoing Jason's talk here about guns being props to these people. I think another part of it is like, for me, the lethality of firearms is in no way theoretical. It's, it's not a, something that is you know, we, we think about, you know, just isn't like, this might might be something, some simple tool, like no, it's real, real the lethality is real. I, you know, watched, my best friend die from a AK 47. It's the way, it's a thing that happens to us when we are downrange And so, they're not toys, they're not props, they're not political theater, they are, they are real serious things that have real serious purposes.

T

Timothy Ryan 31:53

I can understand people being angry. I can understand wanting to be validated, because I've had those feelings, all human beings, we have those feelings. And I think that's what a lot of the screaming is about. But where they get, you know, confused, and is is like their their ideology on what patriotism is or their ideology on what war is these. It's a very, very false sense of war, that some of the folks in these groups have, you know, the ones who have not seen it personally. And it's false, because they speak about it so, so freely, that they don't understand, so freely, that they're not really grasping what the consequence could end up in. And I'm going to use their favorite go tos, Waco and Ruby Ridge, bringing a gun to a gunfight is never the answer because more people die that way. If I brought my pistol to the gentleman down there who was standing at the convenience store, he and I could have probably gotten into a shootout because I don't know I might have farted or something. And he got scared and started shooting. There's a lot of things that don't go wrong. negotiations, conversations, compassion and empathy are always, always, always, always better than your so called militia. Stop saying militia, right militias existed way back, you know, in the times of Francis Marion the Swamp Fox and Revolutionary Wars and stuff like that. The militias don't exist now. We have, you know, armed forces that number in the thousands that do that, that, that, that job that the militia used to do. The militia turned into the armed forces, they turned into the army. All right. And that's where they stopped. They don't, they don't exist anymore.

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Kelly Sampson 33:44

One of the things that is great about this podcast is we do have a wide variety of listeners. And so there's a chance some folks who are in or interested in joining militias, may be

listening to us right now. So is there anything that you would want to say to those people?

D

Dr. Kyleanne Hunter 33:58

Yes, absolutely. And I would, I would love the chance to talk to them. First. If you really want to go run around in tactical gear with guns, call me find me, I can get you in touch with a recruiter who can help you do it to actually defend our country. The, the next is to really implore them to have a, have a real hard self introspective conversation about what it is that, that they are defending. There are times that you know, for those of us who have been called on to go do the hard things for this country, there have been times that we have had to have like, real deep introspection about why, why we were doing what we are doing what it actually means, like what we are defending because I think you know not to get into, again, completely off topic there. There are times we've disagreed with why we've had to go in and commit violence, but we have worked it through the proper channels to, to get there. So I think have some introspection as to what you're actually trying to, to defend. And then the other thing that I would, I would take time to say is to go take some time and talk to somebody who disagrees with you on this. And because insurrections is not how we solve problems in this country, we have institutions to solve, to solve these problems, we have institutions that help people's voice, voices get heard. We, you know, that's, that's something that needs to be a part of this, you know, it's, violence isn't the way that we solve it, like your politicalization of, of guns isn't the way you solve it. And then I think the other thing, just sort of like point blank to say to them is, you know, if you are in this because you're some ardent Second Amendment supporter, if that really is your driving rationale to be a part of this, you're hurting your own cause, because every time you make some ridiculous show, you know, of again, this sort of like Rambo cosplay out there, all you're going to do is drive, drive wedges, between you and those of us who continue to own guns and want to continue to hunt and shoot competitively, all, all of those things, all you're doing is driving wedges between us and reducing the likelihood that you'll, you'll have responsible gun owners on your side. And, and that's, you know, if, if really it is if you're saying that this is because I support the Second Amendment, you're shooting yourself in the foot. I mean, you probably might be shooting yourself in the foot for real too, because I've seen your trigger discipline, and it's awful. And so I wouldn't be surprised if you actually shoot yourself in the foot. But this isn't how you achieve, you achieve this goal. And this isn't what the framers intended, you know, if you actually want to be a part of a militia, to stand up and support, that's why we have the National Guard, it's well organized. It's well regulated, and you get to go be a weekend warrior, so go do that. That's, if that's your intention?

T

Timothy Ryan 37:07

I, I would, I understand, one of the things that I miss about the military is probably one of the few things is camaraderie, you know, and I can see the draw to something, whether it be competitive sports, or any kind of team of some sort or club, you know, that where, would be, you know, a draw to that camaraderie, to that like mind. But that, that, in several terms is just, you know, putting yourself deeper into an echo chamber. And those echo chambers feel so good, they're comfortable. Everybody likes you, everyone's laughing and smiling. And it's hard to bring an opposing argument into that environment with not either being afraid of, you know, everyone else coming down on you, or worse. So, I would ask them to maybe do the unthinkable or, or try to be strong enough to be that opposing argument. First with themselves before they involve them deeper into any echo chamber, because that opposing argument is something that I didn't learn until late into my military career. And it totally took my whole world and, you know, put it in a different perspective that I really appreciate because it, it humanizes me. And it also makes me feel, you know, in line with good morals and values. My own ones, you know.



Jason Crow 38:31

And I apologize, I have to go to vote. I don't want to miss a vote in wherever see voting on gun safety stuff. Right now, and background checks. Here in Washington, but it's been a very real pleasure having this discussion. And obviously, thank you for having me on.



JJ Janflone 38:48

Thank you so much. And go vote.



Jason Crow 38:53

Thank you.



JJ Janflone 38:54

Well, I'm going to take this as a sign from the government that it's time for me to let all of you free. So I want to thank you all so so much for, for coming on. This has been a wonderful discussion and I, and I really hope that it is just the first of many, to engage folks on a very wide spectrum. Alright, so Kelly, I think you've seen this photo already. It was definitely making the rounds here at Brady. And it's about a not so toy gun.



Kelly Sampson 39:19

I'm really glad we could talk about this because I saw the picture and I didn't have a chance to read the article. And I think you're referring to the gun real gun disguised as a Nerf gun, right?



JJ Janflone 39:29

Yes. So in North Carolina, the Catawba County Sheriff's Office performed a raid and in the process turned up you know narcotics, cash, 20 firearms and pistols. That in itself, not super, you know, different, but one gun was extra special. And I'm wondering Kelly, can I, can I have you explain that? Describe it to our listeners since we're not in a visual medium.



Kelly Sampson 39:49

Yeah, so you know those super soakers or like an early 90s Nerf gun for those of you who are old enough to remember that. The ones that look like they're plastic and it's blue and orange with a nerf logo and it looks a lot like an ordinary Nerf gun and especially because the bright colors like why would you think it's anything else? But here's the deal. So it's a longer gun, like a Nerf gun. And then the part that you hold, the grip is actually a real gun, that you can detach and pop it out from the bottom of the longer gun. And then that detachable part is just a regular handgun, except for it's bright blue and orange. So it's very strange, very terrifying and bizarre.



JJ Janflone 40:35

Yeah, and it's definitely when I look at it and I see like the colors of it, it's that blue and orange that like just screams my, my childhood. Like, it's that very particular like very vibrant blue and orange, like I go, yeah, like that's a Nerf gun. Like I probably had that Nerf gun as a child. But in fact, this is not a Nerf gun. It's a converted Glock Model 19 pistol that has a 50 round drum magazine. And it's all been altered to resemble a toy Nerf gun. And it looks super realistic.



Kelly Sampson 41:04

I mean, yeah, it really does. And it's interesting, that it looks realistic for a Nerf gun, but it doesn't look realistic for a real gun, which it actually is. And I'm just wondering, how did they do that? Did they find that out in the raid?



JJ Janflone 41:17

Okay, so well, I mean, they found it in the raid and I think the cops probably I mean, this is just my artist's rendition of that being like what, but from what, what I found out from just doing some internet research is that this was apparently done with what's called a pistol to carbine adapter. Now that's basically, for folks who aren't familiar with this, it's an add on for your firearm, it acts like a brace. It straps around the user's forearm and that, that bracing, it gives you more control if you're shooting over the firearm, which makes your shot more accurate. Now in this case, not only does the adapter brace look like the Nerf gun itself, so somebody painted and modified that, the actual pistol then, as Kelly talked about, kind of just pops up into that brace. They actually painted their, their pistol as well. And I do want to add on to here, you know that these type of adapters are illegal in some states in different forums. So that's just an extra layer of bad.



Kelly Sampson 42:10

So that's the how, they're still why, why would you want to make this look like a Nerf gun? That's so dangerous.



JJ Janflone 42:18

Yeah, I mean, it's like, it's one thing to make cosmetic modifications to a firearm. And we've actually talked on here in these sections about people making like other cosmetic modifications to firearms for fun, which you know, can have its own issues, but like separate topic, but I don't think it's a wild opinion to not be able or to not want to make them look like toys for children.



Kelly Sampson 42:36

Yeah, and I mean, we've covered so many stories about kids finding firearms, picking them up, that this level of camouflage and making them look like a toy or something that kids actually are allowed to touch and handle is extra concerning. Because why are you trying to disguise the firearm and make it more enticing to a child in the first place?



JJ Janflone 42:58

Yeah, exactly. 100%. And for folks who are listening to this and want to see it, you know, there's always a link in the description of this episode or a photo of this on social media, so you can see it yourself and be equally horrified. And now here are some highlights

about what's going on in gun violence prevention news this week.



Kelly Sampson 43:17

On the 23rd, the US Senate Judiciary Committee met for a hearing on gun violence prevention measures, the first such hearing in the 117 Congress. It comes just two weeks after the House passed legislation to expand and strengthen background checks on gun sales, and less than 24 hours after a gunman killed 10 people in a Colorado supermarket. In the past week, a shooter also killed eight people at three different locations in Georgia, and there was a mass shooting in Chicago that injured 13 people and killed two others. During the committee meeting, numerous senators called upon their constituents to show support for gun violence prevention legislation, including the two bills that Brady is pushing for the Senate to take up and vote on, HR 8 and Senate 529 and HR 1446, both of which passed the house with bipartisan support. For more information on these bills, please check out our previous episodes on background checks and the filibuster.



JJ Janflone 44:16

Hey want to share with the podcast? Listeners can now 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.



Kelly Sampson 44:31

Thanks for listening. As always Brady's life saving 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](https://bradyunited.org) or on social at bradybuzz. Be brave. And remember, take action, not sides.