

## My Perspective

I am Walter Gibson. I bring to the gun rights/gun control debate what most people consider to be a unique perspective. I am the son of a murder victim. I am a gun collector.

My father was murdered in October of 1979.

At the time of my father's murder, he and my mother were in the midst of a divorce. My father had girlfriends. My mother had a boyfriend. Coincidentally, my father and my mother's boyfriend worked at the same steel mill, the US Steel Homestead works. Despite the vastness of the steel mill, it was not quite large enough to ensure that there was no interaction between these two men. When they encountered each other, they would argue. When they would argue, they would fight. When they would fight, my father would win. After suffering an embarrassing defeat at my father's hands, his murderer obtained a gun and waiting for his opportunity to exact his revenge.

One night, my mother and her boyfriend stopped at a neighborhood watering hole for a date. My father also stopped in at this establishment. In an attempt to prevent an argument or a fight, my mother decided to leave. On her way out, she and my father began a conversation. During the course of this conversation, her boyfriend sneaked up behind my father and shot him in the head.

My father died a matter of hours later in a local hospital.

I only mention this to illustrate the personal connection I have to such a tragic act of violence, one might even choose the term "gun violence" but I do not think of it that way. I just regard it as violence. If his murderer had used a knife, a bow and arrow or an automobile, my father would be just as dead. It is my belief that the perspective of the Pro-Second amendment survivor of the victim of violence is far too often ignored and the perspective of the Pro-Second amendment African American survivor has thus far been completely ignored.

This is an image of Page 5 from the 10/23/1979 issue of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette.

### ***Coroner's Hearings***

**Michael Johnson, 25, of 210 Kenyon St., Turtle Creek, faces a coroner's hearing at 11 a.m. today in the shooting death of Walter Gibson, 27, of 2601 Harmony House, Duquesne. The shooting occurred in Whitaker during the weekend following an argument in a bar, police said yesterday. Toni Michelle Jones, 25, of E26 Talbot Towers, Braddock, will have a coroner's hearing at 1:30 p.m. Friday in the shooting death of Charles W. Freeman, 22, of 74 Prospect Terrace, East Pittsburgh. She is accused of shooting Freeman and his brother, Robert, outside the apartment complex following a disturbance.**

## Terminology

Surrounding the gun control debate, some people deliberately use inaccurate or misleading claims as justification for their position. I'd like to discuss some of this now.

One of the claims that it often made is that we should ban guns that are "Military Style", "Military-Grade" or "Designed to Kill".

In essence, all guns are "Military Style" because all guns have been derived from a military gun.

I'd like to illustrate this visually.

This is a soldier with an M16A2 rifle.



This is a Colt AR-15.



I do not wish to discuss the numerous differences between the two, I only wish to illustrate that they are similar and that one is a derivative of the other.

Even people who are not particular will versed in the gun history can plainly see that there is a similarity between these two rifles but what is rarely discussed is that all guns have such a similarity to a "Military" gun.

The American hunter with his lever action rifle is an iconic image every fall in states like Pennsylvania with a rich heritage and long history of deer hunting.

This is a Winchester Model 94. It's a rifle that is common and popular among American deer hunters.



This is the Henry Repeating Rifle 1860 Model



This is the Winchester Model 1866



The Henry Repeating Rifle was a highly coveted piece of equipment during the Civil War. It was one of the battle implements that helped the Union prevail over the confederacy.

Now, more than 150 years later, it is easy for us to overlook what a leap forward in technology this was but in its day, the Henry Repeating Rifle was a revolutionary piece of military equipment. It was so disruptive a technological leap on the battlefield, that there is an account of Confederate Colonel John Mosby who referred to it as (please excuse the language but this is a direct quote) “That damned Yankee rifle that can be loaded on Sunday and fired all week.”

The Winchester 1866 was used by American soldiers, French Soldiers and Ottoman Turkish solders.

This is a Remington 700



This is Mauser K98



This is a Springfield M1903



This is a Mosin Nagant 91/30



The Remington 700 is a common and popular among big game hunters. Hunters of bear, elk and moose often use rifles like this to take their game.

The Mauser K98 was the standard rifle of German infantry.

The Springfield M1903 was an American infantry rifle.

The Mosin Nagant 91/30 was the standard rifle of the Soviet/Russian infantry.

I have used these examples to illustrate something that some of the people who discuss this issue do not seem to understand.

When politicians and pundits make statements about how “military weapons” or “weapons of war” shouldn’t be available to every day Americans, we recognize that such language means that they’re looking to ban all guns because as I have illustrated, all guns have a military lineage.

## **Unintended consequences:**

In January 2010, in the Homewood section of the City of Pittsburgh, an 18 year old man named Jordan Miles was walking between his mother’s house and his grandmother’s house one night. A lone car approached and Jordan stepped back into the shadows. This car, with no distinguishing characteristics stopped and three men wearing street clothes exited. They ordered Jordan to come to them. Jordan, not knowing these men attempted to flee. They chased him, caught him and began their attempts to subdue him while demanding that he give them his guns and drugs. Jordan had no drugs. Jordan had no gun. Unbeknownst to Jordan, the three men who attacked him were police officers. Michael Saldutte, David Sisak and Richard Ewing were tasked with getting illegal guns and drugs off the the streets of Pittsburgh. Witnesses testified, contradicting the officers’ version of events and Jordan was cleared of all criminal charges.

In June 2018, there was an attempted Drive-By shooting in the North Braddock suburb of Pittsburgh. A witness gave a description of the suspect vehicle to the police and within 8 minutes, an officer had located and pulled over the vehicle. The driver was ordered to exit the vehicle and was detained by the officer. The passengers in the car were then ordered to exit the vehicle. Antwon Rose II and Zaijuan Hester exited the vehicle and before the officer could detain them, they ran away. Officer Michael Rosfeld opened fire, Antwon Rose II was struck three times from behind and killed. Antwon was 17 years old. Zaijuan Hester escaped and later turned himself in to the authorities.

If the legislature makes any of the discussed steps to tighten this state's firearms restrictions, they will be empowering the police officers of the commonwealth with a pretext to harass, assault and kill young black men.

## **Conclusion:**

Any discussion of an issue as serious as the right to keep and bear arms should be handled with honesty. We cannot allow anyone to be cavalier with the facts or the concerns that peaceable Americans have about an intrusive government coming to strip away their rights when they have not done anything wrong. The vast majority of this discussion centers around advocacy groups like The National Rifle Association, CeaseFire PA, Moms Demand Action, Firearms Owners Against Crime, Gun Owners of America & Every Town for Gun Safety because they have financial resources and sympathetic agents in the news & entertainment media. I want to remind the legislature that the concerns of everyday Americans, like myself, are important too and we should be included in every conversation on this issue.

## **References:**

Antwon Rose case

<https://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/timeline-of-events-in-antwon-rose-shooting-and-protests/Content?oid=9097296>

Jordan Miles case

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