



the

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HOLLOW POINT

Hollow point

hol·low point

/ˈhəlō/ /point/

Noun

1. A bullet with a cavity in the nose to facilitate expansion.

| The Uvalde gunman bragged that his expanding, or hollow-point, bullets would open upon impact to cause more damage to their targets.

2. A vapid message lacking important essentials in a discussion or matter; irrelevant to the issue at hand; inaccurate and inappropriate for the purpose or situation.

| Gunmakers try to sell firearms by making the hollow point that the only way to protect yourself from people with guns is to buy a gun.

3. A movement magazine featuring critical thinking about gun culture and consumerism.

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THE HOLLOW POINT

HUDSON MUÑOZ

We're launching a new journal called *The Hollow Point* to start conversations the gun industry doesn't want us to have. We analyzed their advertisements and affiliated social networks, and we think it's clear they want us to talk about guns only in comparison to other guns. They are happy for us to debate the qualities of guns that are best for "everyday carry" rather than question the decision to own one in the first place. *The Hollow Point* is where we'll interrogate the hollow point that guns are inevitable.

Here's my story: I planned to buy a handgun in 2020. I was living alone during the lockdown days of the pandemic. I felt uncertain and pessimistic about the future. Increasingly, I heard friends in progressive circles talk about maybe buying one. I felt like everyone was thinking about buying a gun, so I should consider it, too. In hindsight, I was right where the gun industry wanted me to be — alone and afraid.

Today, an estimated 24 million people are where I was four years ago. As I did, about 16.8 million prospective gun buyers are thinking about buying a gun primarily for personal protection. Like me, over 5 million potential buyers are Hispanic and about 1.7 million identify as members of the LGBTQ community.¹ The only difference between us is that I didn't buy the gun because I talked about the decision with a trusted friend. He said that owning a gun wouldn't change what I was worried about, but that it would change my life for the worse. He was right.

When I didn't buy the gun, I joined the 185 million Americans who have gone gun-free. Gunmakers don't want us to have conversations like the one I had with my friend, because they don't make money when we don't spend it. That's why we think the advertisements and posts we reviewed that were generated by gun companies themselves stuck to generic promotion of their products.

They want us to see guns as normal, neutral, and necessary because their business feasts on the false belief that we can't afford not to own a gun. The most common type of post or advertisement we found typically featured a simple photo of one or more handguns or rifles.



Sig Sauer ad captured by Guns Down America, August 2024

On social media, companies often seemed happy to just show off pictures of their guns. In our first month of data collection, we found that only smaller companies attempted to catch the fear zeitgeist to sell weapons. Big gunmakers benefit when we come to see guns as they do. But that isn't reality. Gun ownership isn't normal — it's toxic.

In this issue, you'll read the response from the Rev. Hope Christensen, CEO of Faith Leaders for Ending Gun Violence, to profane ads by AR-15 maker Daniel Defense that abuse scripture meant for healing. And you'll get our take on how gun ownership transforms mindsets, making people believe their gun gives them power tantamount to judge, jury, and executioner.

You might know someone who is thinking about buying a gun. Don't let them make the decision alone.

HONOR GOD, LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

REV. HOPE CHRISTENSEN

Daniel Defense, maker of the AR-15 style rifle that was used to murder 19 children and two teachers at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, is engaged in a terrible and troubling marketing campaign to Christians. “Honor God, Defend Freedom” is the text that accompanies stark images featuring military-type tactical gear like sniper scopes, ammunition packs, and utility knives. It is, however, the casual depiction of Bibles, and in one ad, a smartphone with Matthew 5:16,* clearly visible on the screen, that turns these already troubling images into something profane.

Recent social media posts feature an insert that says simply, “The Greatest Commandment.” Every Christian should be familiar with the Greatest Commandment, found in all three Synoptic Gospels:** “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

To sell weapons of war, they are twisting the words of the one who is the Prince of Peace. To promote bringing home a tool for killing, they are abusing scripture meant for healing.

These advertisements attempt to pervert the Christian faith, the true fruit of which is joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control, gentleness, and, most importantly, love. Attempts to manipulate, distort, and capitalize on people’s faith and conviction, for the purposes of making money and putting more and more disastrously dangerous firearms into the hands of people who are becoming more isolated, radicalized, and fearful, is an affront to Christian virtue and witness.



Daniel Defense “Honor God” X post, August 2024

In our rapidly changing world, compounding fears and rampant misinformation make attempts at harnessing control through force tempting and even understandable. But a vision of a world where God somehow needs people to take up lethal arms in defense of worldly freedoms is a rejection of the sovereignty of God. It is a rejection of the will of God, which is only ever for flourishing, healing, and wholeness. And it is a rejection of our covenantal responsibility to love as we have been loved by our Creator.

Purchasing and owning implements of death does not honor God. Embracing weapons meant to kill keeps us astray from the path that leads to life. The instruments of violence marketed by Daniel Defense only cause darkness and devastation. So we must let our light shine before others, with good life-giving and life-saving works that give glory to the Giver of Life.

The Rev. Hope A.J. Christensen is a priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. She is Co-Founder and CEO of Faith Leaders for Ending Gun Violence, a nonprofit organization encouraging and equipping faith leaders and their communities to join the movement to end gun violence.

* “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

** Mark 12:28–31(cited), Matthew 22:35–40, Luke 10:25–28

THIS IS OUR COUNTRY ON GUNS

MORGAN AVRIGEAN

“When carrying a concealed weapon for self-defense is understood not as a failure of civil society, to be mourned, but as an act of citizenship, to be vaunted, there is little civilian life left.”

— Jill Lepore, “Battleground America”

The victim was Hazrat Ali Rohani, a 17-year-old who lost his young life to the gun industry’s successful manipulation of the accused defendant, Aaron Brown Myers. Myers could have been a responsible father, neighbor, and community member — but he chose to be a person who bought a gun and gave himself over to gun culture instead.

Burdened and blinded by paranoia, Myers shot Hazrat as the teen headed into a sporting goods store to return a BB gun. This wasn’t an accident; it was intentional. Myers was at the store’s parking lot conducting “overwatch” — a position he gave himself. He owned a weapon and believed it was his duty to use it. Long story short: He was looking for a threat, and he found it in a teenager.

This is our country on guns.

The transformation of guns from hunting tools to a means for self-defense wasn’t causally related to actual threats to people’s safety. It was a deliberate shift propelled by the gun industry² — and we can prove it.

In August 2024, Guns Down America started tracking the social media activity of six major gun companies — Smith & Wesson, Sturm Ruger, SIG Sauer, Glock, Springfield Armory, and Daniel Defense — as well as broader discussion of these brands online. We monitored the social media accounts of major gun influencers for mentions of the target brand, as well as keywords and hashtags commonly used in online discussions

of gun-related issues. We captured more than 13,000 social media posts from Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, X (Twitter), and online forums in August by monitoring key gun influencer accounts and popular keywords and hashtags. Additionally, we individually topic-tagged 400 advertisements or social media posts produced directly by the companies.

Our tracker captured 163 banner advertisements, 117 Facebook posts, and 120 X/Twitter posts from accounts controlled by the six companies. Across all owned channels, the most popular themes were those emphasizing the importance of having an “everyday carry” gun, which often coincided with the promotion of a gun’s concealability. Tied for the top spots were ads or posts promoting generic “buy a gun” messaging, typically featuring pictures of the company’s latest products.



The takeaway: Would you run your dishwasher every night even if it wasn’t full? No, probably not. A 2020 ad campaign from Cascade wants you to do just that, though, since it means you use their product more.³ The idea is the same here. More gun use means more sales, which is better for the industry. The industry says practicing with a firearm is responsible behavior, but it’s not. It’s not about your safety or freedom; it’s about raw consumption, and it’s part and parcel of a broader shift in the gun business that gets pretty absurd.

An ad by Glock put their pistol in what appears to be the bow of a kayak with the copy “Weekends are for exploring, Share this post and let us know which GLOCK pistol you’re bringing with you!” The post has more than 800 comments and 100 shares. As far as we can tell, none of them asked, what good is a pistol in a kayak? As a kayaker myself, I can’t imagine choosing to interrupt my peaceful paddle with paranoia, looking for any opportunity to pull a trigger and missing out on the view ahead.

On X, the hashtag #edc garnered more than 4 million impressions from 302 mentions, and #concealedcarry got more than 2 million impressions from 115 mentions.

The gun industry feeds on the misperception of danger to sell guns, telling owners that engaging with their products makes them responsible and safe. The reality?

It makes them consumers and puts the rest of us at risk. Former arms industry executive Ryan Busse testified that the marketing of guns took a dark turn in the early 2000s, intertwining firearms with political fear and conspiracy, boosting sales under the guise of self-defense.⁴ This campaign was a success, and we’ve seen its harmful impact grow over the past two decades. In 1997, a survey noted that 46% of gun ownership was tied to personal protection.⁵ In 2023, Pew reported that 72% of U.S. gun owners cited personal protection as the primary reason for owning a gun.⁶

Fear of the “other” is now the primary driver of gun sales. No matter the current violent crime rate and the fact that it has declined over the decades,⁷ the perception of danger persists, driven by a narrative that emphasizes personal armament as the solution while ignoring its role in the problem.



Glock “Weekends are for exploring” Facebook Post, August 2024

Dr. Firmin DeBrabander says it well in *Do Guns Make Us Free?*:

“We are back to the point where gun rights advocates are just those people who decide they will live under the influence of fear. They will recognize the dangers that surround us, even while criminologists say those dangers are diminishing. No life, no individual is ever absolutely free from danger. But here is the problem: this ‘armed resolve’ of gun rights advocates creates dangers where few existed before.”

Guns delude people into believing they cannot rely on public safety systems. Myers believed he couldn’t afford to wait for the police, echoing a sentiment shared among many gun owners who see themselves as the first line of defense.

The truth is that our institutions and our society work not because of gun owners but despite them. Though their purchase may make them feel equipped to protect and serve, the reality is that armed citizens rarely shoot criminals;⁸ instead, guns are more likely to escalate conflicts,⁹ turning minor disputes into lethal encounters, or result in suicides. Ownership of a gun turns the individual into judge, jury, and executioner.

The myth that gun owners can enforce law, unsurprisingly, is also a product of the gun industry. The NRA's former CEO Wayne LaPierre, who retired in disgrace, repeated the sentiment of vigilantism for years, spewing emotional but unfounded comments like "Instant responders can prevent tragedy that first responders can only clean up,"¹⁰ and "We're on our own,"¹¹ to name just two.

In court, Hazrat's father shared that his family immigrated to America from Afghanistan in 2016 for a "happy and prosperous life." While Aaron Brown Myers had the "Everyday Confidence" to shoot a teenager and is now free on bail, Hazrat's father reports that his surviving children and nephew "do not have the courage to go to school because of fear and do not feel safe."¹²

When the concept of freedom is packaged and sold in the form of a gun, our chances of happiness and prosperity decay exponentially.

That's what they're selling. Are you really buying?

"When the concept of freedom is packaged and sold in the form of a gun, our chances of happiness and prosperity decay exponentially."

**SUMMER
FREEDOM DAYS!**

**\$50
REBATE**

Shield™ (1.0 & 2.0), Shield™ EZ®, Shield™ Plus, Equalizer™
OVER 150 QUALIFYING SKU'S

**\$75
REBATE**

M&P® M2.0®, M&P® 22 Magnum, M&P® 5.7
OVER 150 QUALIFYING SKU'S

**BUY A QUALIFYING PISTOL AND GET A
PRE-PAID CARD* WORTH EITHER \$50 OR \$75!**

*Terms & Conditions Apply

Smith & Wesson "Summer Freedom Days" ad captured by Guns Down America, August 2024

What's *not* in your pocket?

Springfield Armory®
@Springfield_Inc

Designed to offer the best of both worlds, the Hellcat Pro delivers full-size performance in a concealable, EDC-ready package.

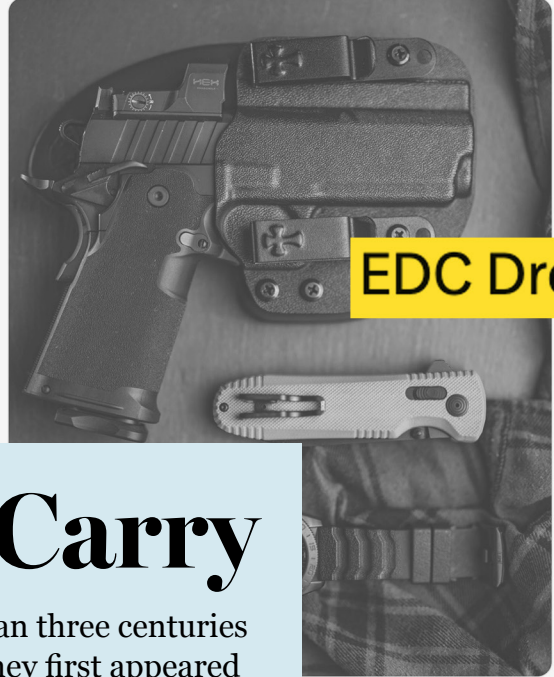


EDC-ready package.

11:06 AM · Aug 23, 2024 · 14.7K Views

Springfield Armory®
@Springfield_Inc

EDC Drop.



EDC Drop.

Everyday Carry

It took the gun industry more than three centuries to discover pants pockets after they first appeared on fashionable clothes in the 17th century. Now they want to fill them up with #EDC. That's "Everyday Carry," shorthand for the little pistols they make to fit in pants pockets.

Smith & Wesson Inc.®
August 2 · 🌐

The new EDC



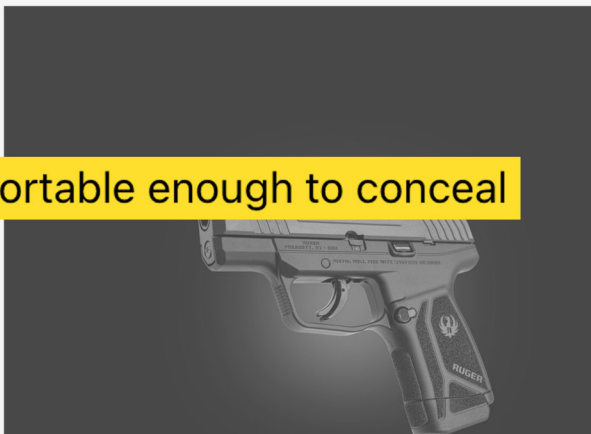
The new EDC

3.1K

Ruger
August 23 · 🌐

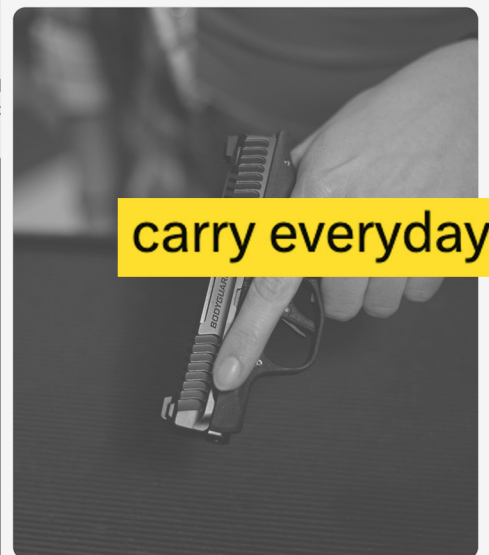
Comfortable enough to conceal in an inside the waistband holster or pocket holster, this micro-sized pistol has it all - without compromising on capacity features. Rugged, reliable, affordable - the Ruger® MAX-9®.

Comfortable enough to conceal




Smith & Wesson Inc.®
@Smith_WessonInc

carry everyday



carry everyday

12:30 PM · Aug 31, 2024 · 46.4K Views



What turned us into a society with more guns than people?

Reckless and relentless marketing from the gun-pushers. For decades, gunmakers have been telling us what to fear and whom to hate. They use marketing campaigns to get close enough to sink their claws into us when we are at our most vulnerable, only to sell us more guns. It's working.

The gun-pushers have convinced too many of us that buying a gun makes you a protector, a patriot, a principled citizen. The reality? It just makes you someone who bought a gun.

The Hollow Point exists to shine a spotlight on the convergence of consumerism and gun culture. The fact is this: Demand for guns is manufactured. It can be dismantled.

This is our nation. This is our space.

We're taking it back.



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- 6** “For Most U.S. Gun Owners, Protection Is the Main Reason They Own a Gun,” Pew Research Center, [August 2023](#).
- 7** John Grammlich, “What the data says about crime in the U.S.” Pew Research Center, [April 24, 2024](#).
- 8** David Hemenway, Sara J. Solnick. The epidemiology of self-defense gun use: Evidence from the National Crime Victimization Surveys 2007–2011. Preventive Medicine. 2015. 79:22-27.
- 9** Hemenway, David; Miller, Matthew; Azrael, Deborah. Gun use in the United States: Results from two national surveys. Injury Prevention. 2000; 6:263-267.
- 10** Remarks by Wayne LaPierre at NRA’s Celebration of American Values Conference, Louisville, Ky., National Rifle Association, [July 10, 2008](#).
- 11** Remarks of Wayne LaPierre at NRA-ILA Leadership Forum, CNN, [April 25, 2014](#).
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