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Armed

By Gary Kleck



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The gun control debate is often obscured by strong emotions and unproven assumptions. According to conventional wisdom accidents with handguns account for a significant number of deaths among children, gun owners endanger themselves more than they ward off potential criminal assailants, and there is a widespread legal consensus that the Second Amendment does not support the individual right to bear arms. All of these assumptions, and many others, say researchers Gary Kleck and Don Kates, are contradicted by the weight of criminological and legal evidence. Hoping to disentangle myth from reality, the authors summarize the results and policy implications of recent state-of-the-art research on guns and violence in accessible, nontechnical language.

Among the topics addressed are media bias in coverage of gun issues, the distorting effects that a covert prohibitionist agenda has on the debate over more moderate measures for reducing gun violence, the frequency and effectiveness of the defensive use of guns, and a close analysis of the Second Amendment.

This well-argued and scrupulously researched volume is essential for any full understanding of the complex gun issue.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Kleck, a professor of criminology at Florida State, and Kates, a lawyer, fire a lot of ammunition in this screed against gun control. They argue that, contrary to popular belief, gun control will not reduce violence. They make a provocative case, supporting with scholarship and statistics many of the traditional claims of gun owners and the National Rifle Association. They offer evidence, for instance, that accidents involving guns are few and that guns defend people against violent crime. Unfortunately, the authors' hyperbolic rhetoric undermines their case. In one chapter, they dissect the methods of the gun control movement and conclude, perhaps with some reason, that the limited gun control measures currently being sought are part of a strategy toward banning all handguns. But this position is derided as the result of the "absolutist" and "prohibitionist" views of "anti-gun zealots." The authors argue that this zealotry has pushed the NRA into opposing even moderate gun controls, such as licensing and registration, for fear of eventually losing their right to own guns. Their attack on the "liberal media bias" may convince some readers, but the authors take it to a ridiculous extreme: the media's depiction of gun owners is a "bigoted stereotype that would be recognized and denounced as such if directed against gays, Jews, African-Americans or virtually any group other than gun owners." This volume will only fan the familiar flames of a longstanding ideological division.

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From [Booklist](#)

The gun-control debate continues . . . Criminology professor Gary Kleck, of Florida State University, and attorney Don B. Kates seek to dispel myths, too--myths they believe constitute the conventional wisdom about guns and gun violence. Like John R. Lott (*More Guns, Less Crime*, 1997), the authors argue that what people think they know about guns is "inconsistent with criminological, legal and other scholarship." Kates provides an introduction, a section that holds that the extremism of gun haters prevents passage of reasonable restraints, and a closing philosophical analysis of "The Constitutional Right to Arms: The Ideology of Self-Protection." Kleck authors sections on the "public health" approach to guns, the "Prohibitionist Intentions of the Gun Control Movement," media distortion, "The Frequency of Defensive Gun Use: Evidence and Disinformation," and "The Nature and Effectiveness of Owning, Carrying, and Using Guns for Self-Protection." *Mary Carroll*

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Review

"the authors have a superb command of the literature and make a powerful case for gun ownership..." --
Choice

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Harold Baughman:

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