

MEDIA'S EMOTIONAL REACTION TO GUN TRAGEDIES FUELED 2ND AMENDMENT DOC



by KRIS KOENIG (/COLUMNISTS/KRIS-KOENIG) | 26 Nov 2013 | 14 |
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When Anita Ingrao and I started to create *Assaulted: Civil Rights Under Fire* (<http://deadpatriotfilms.com/>), it was to be produced for local television and not a feature-length film. We never intended to take on the history of the 2nd Amendment and the debate on guns in our society, but our production timeline intersected with the tragic events of Aurora and Newtown shootings.

The emotional reactions of the media and those by government officials surrounding events directly related to mental health problems illustrated the need for a logical, fact-based film on guns in America.

The genesis of the film came during the production of a regional film dealing with the problem of urban street gangs invading rural California. I was doing ride-alongs with our local Sheriff's anti-gang unit when we came in contact with a gang member who really didn't like being filmed. After the encounter, the deputy asked if I had a concealed carry permit (CCW) and I told him I didn't and he responded that I should consider getting one for my own safety.

Over the course of obtaining my permit, I learned that not all Californians are equal in the eyes of the law.

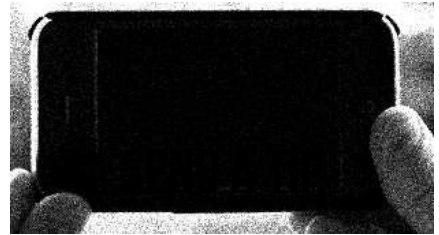
Residences of rural counties can easily obtain their CCWs, however, those of urban areas like San Francisco, San Diego and Los Angeles cannot. The issuance of CCWs on a county-by-county basis at the discretion of the individual sheriffs just sits wrong with everything I believe is fair and right. How can a single mother that is trying to protect her children and her home in East LA have fewer rights than a rice farmer in Northern California?

Logic supports that those living in a high-density, high-crime area have a greater need for obtaining a permit than those of us that reside in the sticks. Further investigation revealed that those who have been issued permits in these urban communities are rich and politically connected.

The whole process smacks of elitism and worse--it's a total disregard of the civil right ensured by the 2nd Amendment, so we set out to tell this story and ended up creating a feature on the 2nd amendment in our society.

We crafted a treatment in the spring of 2012 after we held a launch meeting with experts on civil rights, firearms and history, but we needed funding to actually bring the film to fruition. The CalGuns and the Second Amendment Foundations both provided seed money for us to develop a funding strategy and operate for the first few months of pre-production.

Later we received funding from supporters via the CalGuns.net forum and from several individuals that would later be executive producers of the film. A major portion of our funding came from two Kickstarter funding campaigns that raised a combined sum of



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We had to go back to the well due to the expanded scope of the film that was generated by the Newtown massacre. By the end of April 2013, we had our interviews in the can and the script completed.

Jon Fischer, our editor, assembled a great postproduction team that would end up working four weeks straight of 18-hour days editing b-roll and archival footage to support the script and meet our deadline. Eric Katzenberg, our co-producer, helped us secure Ice-T as the narrator and he also worked with the post team and us to polish the film to completion.

When the film was released in theaters it got better reviews than we expected from the critics, although the New York Times and the Washington Post panned it as expected. I was also surprised when gun owners in Texas refused to see the film due to AMC Theater's no gun policy.

Audiences' reactions have been wonderful to watch. I've seen the film at least a dozen times in theaters and I always enjoy the end result. Gun owners thank us for bringing the facts to the debate and several individuals have experienced evangelical-type conversions, coming up after the film and asking what should be their first gun.

I think everyone involved with the film is proud of the end results. *Assaulted: Civil Rights Under Fire* has since been released on DVD, cable TV pay-per-view and all the major iVOD platforms like iTunes, Amazon, Google Play, Vudu and Xbox. Our hope is to generate a grassroots push from individuals and groups that believe that the 2nd Amendment is as meaningful today in our society as it was to the Founding Fathers who wrote it.

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As a participant in those Kickstarter campaigns, I have to say thank you to Kris and Anita.