

Marjolijn Bijlefeld

PEOPLE
FOR and

AGAINST

GUN A
BIOGRAPHICAL
REFERENCE

CONTROL

PEOPLE FOR AND AGAINST GUN CONTROL

A Biographical Reference

Marjolijn Bijlefeld

The Greenwood Press "People Making a Difference" Series



GREENWOOD PRESS
Westport, Connecticut • London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bijlefeld, Marjolijn, 1960–

People for and against gun control : a biographical reference /
Marjolijn Bijlefeld.

p. cm.—(The Greenwood Press “People making a difference”
series, ISSN 1522–7960)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0–313–30690–7 (alk. paper)

1. Gun control—United States. I. Title. II. Series.

HV7436.B54 1999

363.3'3'0973—dc21 98–53383

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Copyright © 1999 by Marjolijn Bijlefeld

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be
reproduced, by any process or technique, without the
express written consent of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 98–53383

ISBN: 0–313–30690–7

ISSN: 1522–7960

First published in 1999

Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

www.greenwood.com

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the
Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National
Information Standards Organization (Z39.48–1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Copyright Acknowledgments

The author and the publisher gratefully acknowledge permission to reprint excerpts from the following interviews conducted by Marjolijn Bijlefeld:

Madeleine (Lyn) Bates; Mike Beard; Carl C. Bell, MD; Kenneth V. F. Blanchard; Sarah Brady; Deane Calhoun at Youth ALIVE!; Sandy Chisholm; Katherine Kaufer Christoffel, MD, MPH; Philip J. Cook; Robert J. Cottrol; Preston K. Covey, PhD; U.S. Senator Larry E. Craig; Miguel A. Faria, Jr., MD; Richard J. Feldman; Alan M. Gottlieb; Daniel Gross; Stephen P. Halbrook; Marion P. Hammer; Scott Harshbarger, former Massachusetts Attorney General; Holley Galland Haymaker; Richard Haymaker; Dennis Henigan; Joshua Horwitz; Suzanna Gratia Hupp, DC; Phillip B. Journey; Jo Ann Karn; Don B. Kates, Jr.; Gary Kleck; C. Neal Knox; Dave Kopel; Marty Langelan, Langelan & Associates; Karen L. MacNutt; Carolyn McCarthy; Tanya K. Metaksa; Bryan Miller; Diane Nicholl; Sheriff Jay Printz; Michael A. Robbins; Andrés Soto; Steve Sposato; Joseph P. Tartaro; Peggy Tartaro; Stephen Teret; Lisa S. Thornton; Joy Turner; Linda Vasquez; Robert Walker; Douglas Weil, ScD; Garen Wintemute; James D. Wright; and Michael D. Yacino.

Series Foreword

Many controversial topics are difficult for student researchers to understand fully without examining key people and their positions in the subjects being debated. This series is designed to meet the research needs of high school and college students by providing them with profiles of those who have been at the center of debates on such controversial topics as gun control, capital punishment, and gay and lesbian rights. The personal stories—the reasons behind their arguments—add a human element to the debates not found in other resources focusing on these topics.

Each volume in the series provides profiles of people, chosen for their effective battles in support of or in opposition to one side of a specific controversial issue. The volumes provide an equal number of profiles of those on both sides of the debates. Students are encouraged to read stories from the two opposite sides to develop their critical thinking skills and to draw their own conclusions concerning the specific issues. They will learn about those people who are not afraid to stand up for their cause, no matter what it may be, and no matter what the consequences may be.

To further help the student researcher, the author of each volume has provided an introduction that outlines the history of the issue and the debates surrounding it, as well as explaining the major arguments and concerns of those involved in the debates. The pro and con arguments are clearly defined as are major developments in the movement. Students can use these introductions as a foundation for analyzing the stories of the people who follow.

Greenwood Press's hope is that each student will realize there are

no easy answers to the questions these controversial topics raise, and that those on all sides of these debates have legitimate reasons for thinking, feeling, and arguing the way they do. These topics have become controversial because the people involved have very real, emotional stories to tell, and these stories have helped to shape the debates. Each profile provides information such as where and when the person was born, his or her family background, education, what pushed him or her into action, the contributions he or she has made to the movement, and the obstacles he or she has faced from the opposing factions. All this information is meant to help the student user critique the different viewpoints surrounding the issue and to come to a better understanding of the topic through a more personal venue than a typical essay can provide.

Contents

Series Foreword	xi
Introduction	1
<i>Madeleine (Lyn) Bates</i>	23
<i>Michael K. Beard</i>	28
<i>Carl C. Bell</i>	33
<i>Kenneth V. F. Blanchard</i>	38
<i>James and Sarah Brady</i>	42
<i>Deane Calhoun</i>	48
<i>Matthew C. C. (Sandy) Chisholm III</i>	53
<i>Katherine Kaufer Christoffel</i>	58
<i>Philip J. Cook</i>	64
<i>Robert J. Cottrol</i>	69
<i>Preston King Covey</i>	75
<i>Larry Craig</i>	80
<i>Miguel A. Faria, Jr.</i>	86
<i>Richard J. Feldman</i>	90
<i>Alan M. Gottlieb</i>	95
<i>Daniel Gross</i>	99
<i>Stephen P. Halbrook</i>	105
<i>Marion P. Hammer</i>	111

<i>Scott Harshbarger</i>	116
<i>Richard and Holley Galland Haymaker</i>	121
<i>Dennis Henigan</i>	128
<i>Joshua M. Horwitz</i>	132
<i>Suzanna Gratia Hupp</i>	135
<i>Phillip B. Journey</i>	139
<i>Jo Ann Karn</i>	143
<i>Don B. Kates, Jr.</i>	147
<i>Gary Kleck</i>	151
<i>Neal Knox</i>	157
<i>David B. Kopel</i>	166
<i>Martha J. Langelan</i>	172
<i>Karen L. MacNutt</i>	177
<i>Carolyn McCarthy</i>	181
<i>Tanya K. Metaksa</i>	185
<i>Bryan Miller</i>	188
<i>Diane Nicholl</i>	192
<i>Jay Printz</i>	198
<i>Michael A. Robbins</i>	202
<i>Andrés Soto</i>	207
<i>Stephen A. Sposato</i>	211
<i>Joseph P. Tartaro</i>	216
<i>Patricia Margaret (Peggy) Tartaro</i>	220
<i>Stephen P. Teret</i>	225
<i>Lisa S. Thornton</i>	229
<i>Joy Turner</i>	233
<i>Linda M. Vasquez</i>	237
<i>Bob Walker</i>	241
<i>Douglas S. Weil</i>	245
<i>Garen J. Wintemute</i>	248
<i>James D. Wright</i>	254
<i>Michael D. Yacino</i>	259

Appendix A: A Summary of Federal Gun Laws	265
Appendix B: State Firearm Laws	269
Appendix C: State Constitutional Clauses on the Right to Keep and Bear Arms	291
Appendix D: Profiles Indexed by Pro-Regulation or Anti-Regulation	297
Appendix E: Profiles Indexed by State	299
Appendix F: Profiles Indexed by Profession or Interest	303
Appendix G: Additional Readings, by Topic	307
Appendix H: Resources	317
Index	321

Introduction

The 50 people profiled in this volume are key figures in the gun control debate today. Among them are experts and activists seen or heard when the topic is discussed in the national media, along with others not well known outside their own communities. Major organizations such as the National Rifle Association, Second Amendment Foundation, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, and Handgun Control Inc. each recommended people who had made important contributions to the debate. From there, the volume grew on its own and would have continued to do so were it not for space constraints. Almost everyone interviewed recommended another person with a different perspective or background. Nearly everyone who was asked to participate did so, but a few declined. The author is thankful to all those who allowed their stories to be shared.

This volume tries to put a human face on the often complicated and emotional debate over gun control. People are drawn to the issue for many reasons. Some have seen loved ones injured or killed, or are themselves victims of gun violence. Others see gun rights as a patriotic issue, a unique expression of the American character. To tamper with such rights, they feel, is to reject a part of the nation's history. Exploring this issue means wrestling with questions about individual rights, the role of government and law enforcement, and social issues such as gang violence and the need for safe communities in which to raise families.

Even the most staunch gun control activists don't see gun control as a panacea for society's problems. On the other side, even the most

ardent gun rights activists don't expect that a fully armed society would be immune from all worries.

Adding to the complexity of this debate is the number of different levels where the two sides can disagree. What is the meaning of the Second Amendment? What is the difference between crime prevention and violence prevention? How valid are guns as weapons of self-protection? Can guns be made safer? Many of the people profiled here have spent years trying to answer these questions.

This volume shares 50 stories, each one unique. Expect to experience a range of emotions, and perhaps even have your mind changed several times over. It's hard not to sympathize with Stephen Sposato of California as he describes identifying his wife's body at the coroner's office after she was shot to death. After reading his profile, it will be easy to see what motivated him to support bans on assault weapons and to testify in favor of such laws before legislators in California and Washington, D.C.

Imagine the moment when Suzanna Gratia Hupp crouched behind a table in a Texas restaurant with her mother and father as a gunman methodically shot defenseless people. She would have had a clear shot at him at one point—but her gun was in her car. The gunman killed her parents that day. It's easy to see why gun rights is a priority in her work as a Texas state legislator.

For some, the decision to join the gun control debate was their way of reconstructing a life that had been turned upside down by gun violence. Sarah Brady, whose husband, Jim, was permanently disabled during the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan, is now the chair of Handgun Control, Inc. Before the shooting, her life centered on her three-year-old son and other duties of running the household. She never envisioned the role she'd play—or the admirers and enemies she'd earn.

Dan Gross gave up a successful advertising career to start PAX, an organization dedicated to reducing gun violence following a shooting that left his younger brother permanently disabled and a good friend dead. A lone gunman had stormed onto the observation deck of the Empire State Building and started shooting. Gross was watching a basketball game that February Sunday afternoon in 1997 before his father called with the news. "That was my last moment of sanity," he said, recalling the weeks that followed.

Joy Turner's son, Hank, fell victim to the war on California's

streets—shot to death by gang members, even though he wasn't the intended target or a member of any gang. Turner relives her anguish regularly by taking her story to gang members in jails and to at-risk youth. There's no sugarcoating in her message. She tells the young men in raw, graphic language that their gang wars took her son and destroyed a part of her, too. Through her in-your-face ministry, she encourages them to redeem themselves. If they don't get out of the gangs, she tells them, "take out a life insurance policy. Don't make your mother or family pay for what you're doing. Don't make them have a car wash or go begging for some money to bury you."

Some people recall a moment of conversion, a realization that gun control or gun rights would be a topic to which they would devote much of their energy. For Neal Knox, who went on to play a pivotal role in helping the National Rifle Association become a lobbying powerhouse, the moment came decades before. As a young sergeant in the Texas National Guard, he heard a Belgian American friend tell of the horror of witnessing an entire family gunned down by Nazi soldiers because the father couldn't locate the pistol he had registered. His friend cried as he recounted the story, "Huge tears were rolling down his cheeks, making silver dollar size splotches on the dusty barrack's floor. That was my conversion from a casual gun owner to someone determined to prevent gun laws making such an outrage possible in this country," he said.

Even those who came to the issue through some professional or academic interest probably didn't expect it to become as consuming as it did. Many have had to forego other areas of study because fire-arms policy questions became increasingly compelling and complex.

Four physicians—Garen J. Wintemute, an emergency room physician, Katherine Kaufer Christoffel, a pediatrician, Carl C. Bell, a psychiatrist, and Lisa Thornton, a rehabilitation specialist—grew tired of seeing the shattered bodies and shattered lives caused by gun violence. Wintemute and Christoffel have taken on high profiles with their studies on gun violence, suicides, and unintentional injuries. They have also shouldered the criticisms of gun rights activists who argue that their methodology, conclusions, and motivations are flawed. But they say those criticisms actually spur them on. Thornton plays a less public role, but is no less confounded by Americans' attitudes toward guns. "It makes me angry because I don't understand this love affair with guns. Since I've entered pediatrics, I've

been amazed by how much we hate our children. We give child safety lip service, but when it comes to saving the lives of kids, we're quick to say, 'I love my gun more,' " she said.

Academicians and researchers have entered the debate because they have seen some aspect of it not fully covered. James D. Wright, now a sociology professor at Tulane University, burst onto the gun control scene in the early 1980s. He once favored gun control, but his work studying criminals and the effectiveness of gun control laws made him rethink his position. While gun rights activists often cite his studies as support for their position, Wright calls himself an "agnostic" on the issue.

Indeed, there is room for disagreement even within the two sides of the debate. Some gun control activists are in favor of childproof or personalized handguns, for example. Others say such safety measures will only line the pockets of gun manufacturers. Gun owners also often have their own particular agendas—long gun owners, for example, might have few objections to handgun control measures.

Differences in strategies are also evident. Alan M. Gottlieb can afford to play the loose cannon because the small group he chairs—the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, based in Bellevue, Washington—is so often in the shadow of the National Rifle Association. As a result, he can have a little more fun with the media and the public. For example, in 1996 he issued a press release that sarcastically declared, "Gun Lobby Endorses Clinton," because Clinton's pro-control activities were consolidating gun rights activists nationwide.

Most of these people have made tremendous personal sacrifices to further their cause. That's as true of ordinary people who keep their day jobs and stuff envelopes with legislative updates in the evenings as it is of those who have made the gun control issue a career. Marion Hammer, a Florida grandmother, struggled with giving up precious time with her growing grandchildren to take on the high-stress and high-profile position of president of the National Rifle Association. Jo Ann Karn, a Michigan grandmother, tried to ignore the small voice she heard during a Sunday sermon—the one that eventually led her to start a violence prevention program for teens in Holland, Michigan.

Whatever it was that drove these people to the debate, their commitment to it is clear. Yet as important as they are to the debate, gun control or gun rights represents only part of who and what they are. They are mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters. They are academi-

cians, researchers, engineers, physicians. Some are in it for a lifetime, others for a few years. And some may even change their views over the years.

That's part of the chemistry of the debate. As our impressions of crime in our communities change, so do people's feelings about gun control. We take up the issue when new gun legislation is proposed or when people feel threatened by crime. We turn to it to question why a troubled teenager had such easy access to a weapon used to shoot classmates, or why the United States has among the world's highest homicide rates. There are many questions. The answers are much more elusive.

This volume does not intend to show that one side is wrong and one is right. Instead, the profiles that follow can provide depth to the arguments and introduce new perspectives. And, despite their differences, these 50 people share a common trait: a commitment to making a safer society. But given the variety of ways they propose to accomplish that goal, it's clear the debate is far from settled.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE DEBATE

Nearly every formal debate on gun control at some point comes around to the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It reads, "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." The amendment was based on the English Bill of Rights, which reads, "That the subjects which are Protestants, may have arms for their defense suitable to their conditions, and as allowed by law" (enacted December 16, 1689).

During the development of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, Federalists and Anti-Federalists held conflicting views. Federalists favored a strong and active central government. Anti-Federalists feared that a strong federal government could easily evolve into a tyrannical one. Without a provision prohibiting a standing army, or allowing states to create their own militias, there would be no protection for the common man.

So what exactly did the framers mean when they selected this language for the Second Amendment? That's still debated today. It boils down to a "collective" versus an "individual rights" interpretation. The collective, or states' rights, view is primarily the pro-gun control view. Its interpretation focuses on the words "being necessary

to the security of a free state.” In order to protect themselves from a tyrannical government, states have the right to maintain militias. The right is a collective one, granted to the state, not to individual citizens of the state.

The individual rights interpretation arrives at the opposite conclusion. Militias were composed of common men, therefore the right extends to them. Debaters have taken the amendment and broken it down into its smallest parts. What does “well-regulated” mean? That the militia must be well trained? That it must be under the control of the state? How is “the people” used in other amendments? Does it mean the people collectively or individually?

The interpretation of the Second Amendment continues to be a topic of regular law review articles. Attorney Don B. Kates noted that the conclusions drawn by these articles has changed over the past 25 years. “Today, there is basically no dissent among law professors who have worked in this area that the Second Amendment is an individual right.”

However, observed another attorney, Dennis Henigan, “Just because articles espousing it are published in law journals doesn’t make it right. You don’t decide a constitutional issue by counting the number of articles on it.”

While the Second Amendment debate is a lively one, many people know the amendment only by its second half, “the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.” Gun rights advocates favor those words because they seem so straightforward. But over the years, federal courts have seemed to support the collective interpretation. No gun control law has ever been overturned by a federal court on the grounds that it violated the Second Amendment.

In fact, gun rights proponents have generally moved on to other arguments to beat back gun control restrictions. They argue that the Tenth and Fourteenth Amendments contribute to an individual rights reading. The Tenth Amendment reads, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.” And the Fourteenth Amendment reads, “No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

As attorney Stephen P. Halbrook said, “The Fourteenth Amendment was adopted to protect Bill of Rights freedoms (including the right to keep and bear arms) from state or local infringement.”

State constitutions generally do not contain the ambiguities of the federal Constitution. For example, the Nebraska Constitution states, “All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain inherent and inalienable rights; among these are . . . the right to keep and bear arms for security or defense of self, family, home, and others, and for lawful common defense, hunting, recreational use, and all other lawful purposes, and such rights shall not be denied or infringed by the state or any subdivision thereof.”

Current events add different elements to the historical questions about the Second Amendment. Some argue that whatever the Founding Fathers believed, they could not have predicted a late twentieth-century society in which gangs and guns were so intertwined. Those who hold this position include people like Californian Deane Calhoun, director of Youth ALIVE!, which promotes a training curriculum so that young people can be involved in reducing gun violence in their own communities.

Others believe that the tyrannical government feared by the colonists could still become a reality in the United States today. Cuban-born neurosurgeon Miguel Faria, now of Atlanta, Georgia, wants to ensure that subversion of an unarmed citizenry never happens here.

Attorney Robert J. Cottrol of Washington, D.C., believes that racial oppression is rooted in society’s decisions on who is allowed to own guns. He says there is little doubt that white colonists wanted to keep firearms out of the hands of Africans and Native Americans 200 years ago. And race relations in the past 200 years have not relieved all concerns. With gun regulations that rely on the state or municipality to determine who is allowed to carry guns, he argued, “we’re essentially trusting our protection to the state. Before we do that, don’t we have to ask how benevolent the state is? From a minority perspective, many people feel the state is unwilling to protect them.”

There is, however, general agreement that society needs some regulations on who owns firearms. Federal law prohibits the sale of handguns to children, convicted felons, and those who have been declared mentally incompetent. Few argue with these laws, and people have largely accepted that there are limits to this freedom. There are many gun laws on the books in this country. Some are pro-gun control;

some are pro-gun rights. Both sides are continuing their push to enact or repeal laws they find harmful or to enact laws they believe will improve community safety.

SELF-PROTECTION

Guns can be the premiere weapons of self-protection, say gun rights activists. At the least, Americans should be allowed to choose the means of protecting themselves, their families, and their homes. But many gun control supporters won't concede that point. They argue that guns, particularly handguns, are more dangerous than helpful. The self-protection debate is an intense one within the larger gun control debate.

Lyn Bates of Massachusetts teaches self-defense with firearms through her Massachusetts-based group AWARE. Her primary audience is women. She recalls the stories of women who had taken her courses and later used guns to defend themselves. As so often happens, the mere sight of a gun will cause the attacker to break off the attack and drive away, she said. "That's what self-defense is all about. Being able to stay alive and unhurt through a situation where someone else wants you dead or injured. You have to be able to do it yourself, because attackers are smart enough to choose a time and place when you are alone. Firearms, properly used, give women a tremendous survival advantage in situations where nothing else will work reliably."

A Maryland self-defense instructor, Marty Langelan, disagrees. After years working with rape victims and women in shelters, she decided that weapons such as handguns are a significant risk to women. "If there was a weapon available during an assault—whether the attacker was a stranger or an acquaintance—the likelihood that the male would use the weapon was great, and the likelihood that the woman would be able to get to it, retain it, and use it, was small." Moreover, she argues, the incidence of injury and death increases when a weapon is involved. "In my experience with thousands of women, it's clear to me that we are safer without a gun."

Florida criminologist Gary Kleck decided to determine how often armed citizens use guns to defend themselves. In his study, researchers asked people whether they had ever confronted and threatened with a gun someone committing a crime. "If you used that definition as a minimum standard, there were about 2.5 million defensive gun