

# Owning a Gun: Not as Easy as it Looks

I am a nurse practitioner living in the South; I am also a concealed carry permit holder and an NRA pistol instructor who competes. I own an AR15; it is *not* an assault rifle—it's just a rifle.

I often see articles about the “ease” of purchasing a gun, but this is just not true. Even with the laxer gun control of the South, obtaining a concealed carry license entails going through both the FBI and local police, a review of mental health records, a long questionnaire, and an eight-hour class that involves shooting. So, yes, I can purchase a gun in 30 minutes—but only because I've already been through this process.

If I wanted to purchase a gun without a permit, I would have to go to the courthouse and be fingerprinted and run through the system before I could get a one-time purchase permit. I could not get a permit if I had a mental illness, had ever been arrested or accused of domestic violence, etc.

My heart breaks every time a mass shooting, like the one at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, happens. Guns have been around in our area for many, many years. High school kids used to mount a shotgun in a rack on the top of their truck

to hunt before school; they didn't think of using it to hurt a person. I believe the problems we face today are multifaceted: a lack of parenting, absent fathers, people not getting the mental health services they need, and HIPAA! Mental health professionals are afraid to call authorities for fear of being sued.

I truly believe we need to stop politicizing this issue. Let's quit blaming the guns themselves and work on real solutions. For

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example, parents have an obligation to lock up *all* firearms! Kids should never have access to guns from their own home. In my house, when we have visitors—even if they are adults—we lock our guns in our safe. Security at our schools should mimic that at courthouses, with metal detectors, armed security personnel, and limited entrance/exit areas.

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