



# Living with Guns: A Liberal's Case for the Second Amendment

*Craig Whitney*

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Newtown. Columbine. Virginia Tech. Tucson. Aurora. Gun violence on a massive scale has become a plague in our society, yet politicians seem more afraid of having a serious conversation about guns than they are of the next horrific shooting. Any attempt to change the status quo, whether to strengthen gun regulations or weaken them, is sure to degenerate into a hysteria that changes nothing. Our attitudes toward guns are utterly polarized, leaving basic questions unasked: How can we reconcile the individual right to own and use firearms with the right to be safe from gun violence? Is keeping guns out of the hands of as many law-abiding Americans as possible really the best way to keep them out of the hands of criminals? And do 30,000 of us really have to die by gunfire every year as the price of a freedom protected by the Constitution?

In *Living with Guns*, Craig R. Whitney, former foreign correspondent and editor at the *New York Times*, seeks out answers. He re-examines why the right to bear arms was enshrined in the Bill of Rights, and how it came to be misunderstood. He looks to colonial times, surveying the degree to which guns were a part of everyday life. Finally, blending history and reportage, Whitney explores how twentieth-century turmoil and culture war led to today's climate of activism, partisanship, and stalemate, in a nation that contains an estimated 300 million guns—and probably at least 60 million gun owners.

In the end, Whitney proposes a new way forward through our gun rights stalemate, showing how we can live with guns—and why, with so many of them around, we have no other choice.

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