


In These 11 Cases, a Firearm Saved the Owner or Others

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COMMENTARY Firearms

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COMMENTARY BY



Almost every major study on the issue has found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times a year. RichLegg / Getty Images

Key Takeaways

President Biden used his first address to a joint session of Congress to push for major gun control initiatives, often using blatant lies and mischaracterization.

The examples below represent only a small portion of the news stories on defensive gun use that we found in March.

The president should share the facts about how often Americans use their firearms in lawful defense of themselves or others.

Late last month, President Joe Biden used his first address to a joint session of Congress to push for major gun control initiatives, often using blatant lies and mischaracterizations in the process.

One of Biden's more egregious mischaracterizations was the common trope that the nation is experiencing a "gun violence epidemic."

The plain data simply does not support such a claim. The rates for gun homicides and nonfatal gun crimes remain far lower today than in the early 1990s.

This is so even though gun sales have skyrocketed and many states have loosened restrictions significantly on the right of ordinary citizens to carry firearms in public.

Biden also neglected to explain what the data does support—a reality where Americans routinely rely on their Second Amendment rights to protect themselves from crime.

Almost every major study on the issue has found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times a year, according to a 2013 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We have good reason to believe that many of these defensive gun uses aren't reported to police, much less make the local or national news.

For this reason, The Daily Signal each month publishes an article highlighting some of the previous month's many news stories on defensive gun use that you may have missed—or that might not have made it to the national spotlight in the first place. (Read accounts from 2019 and 2020 [here](#).)

The examples below represent only a small portion of the news stories on defensive gun use that we found in March. You may explore more by using The Heritage Foundation's interactive Defensive Gun Use Database.

- **April 4, Pikeville, Kentucky:** Police said an ongoing property dispute took a violent turn when five neighbors attacked a man and his wife. The confrontation was caught on a surveillance camera, which appears to show three women and two men begin to assault the couple before the homeowner draws a handgun and shoots one attacker in the arm. Police arrested all five of the homeowner's neighbors, who now face assault charges.

- **April 6, Alamogordo, New Mexico:** When a man stole a cab from a hotel, the cab company used the car's GPS system to track the thief's movements through the rural county. Police said two of the company's owners used their own truck to chase down the stolen cab, forcing the thief to pull over and run. The owners chased after him with guns drawn, then detained him at gunpoint until police arrived.
- **April 7, Jeannette, Pennsylvania:** A mother used her firearm to successfully defend her teenage son from another teen, who shot him in the hand during an altercation. Police said the teen fired several rounds at the woman's son and continued to chase him with a gun as he ran away. The boy's mother returned fire, hitting the shooter in the thigh and causing him to flee. Police said they arrested him and charged him with attempted homicide.
- **April 11, Wilmer, Alabama:** A man fatally shot his father after he began assaulting the man's stepmother. Police said the father was armed with a handgun during the altercation.
- **April 12, Alkol, West Virginia:** A naked intruder who police say may have been high on drugs broke into a residence around 2 a.m. and was confronted by an armed homeowner. The homeowner fired his shotgun at the intruder, wounding him. The intruder was expected to face burglary charges, police said.
- **April 17, Beech Grove, Indiana:** A good Samaritan with a firearm came to the aid of a Walmart security officer after a suspected shoplifter threatened the officer with a gun. A man who had a concealed carry permit drew his firearm and shot at the suspect, who fled. Another witness tackled the suspect outside and detained him until police arrived.
- **April 18, Lakehead, California:** A man on a boating trip with a friend heard gun shots and screaming. Police said someone with a handgun had approached a group of others, used racial slurs, and opened fire, wounding two. One person in the group pointed out the shooter as he walked away; the man and his friend used their own firearms to detain the shooter until police arrived. He was being investigated for hate crimes.
- **April 23, Hartsgrove Township, Ohio:** A homeowner used his firearm to fend off an armed man who showed up with two others and demanded that the homeowner turn over property. Police said the would-be robber fired first and the homeowner returned fire in self-defense, wounding the robber.
- **April 26, Walled Lake, Michigan:** Just after midnight, three intruders, armed with a club and a knife and accompanied by dogs, tried to kick in a family's door while shouting racial slurs and threatening to kill the residents—a mother and her two young sons. One son called 911 as his mother, who is black, retrieved a gun and fired at the intruders through a bedroom window, sending them running. Police said all three were arrested and face hate crime charges. The woman's husband, at work at the time, told reporters that his wife "did what she had to do" to protect the family.

- **April 28, Tucson, Arizona:** Police said a woman was physically assaulted by her boyfriend in a bank parking lot but was able to run away and approach a bystander for help. He allowed the woman to get into his vehicle as the boyfriend approached and, in the resulting confrontation, he drew his handgun and fatally shot the boyfriend.
- **April 30, Colorado Springs, Colorado:** After a man began strangling and threatening to kill her, a woman retrieved a firearm and shot and wounded him. Police said the two knew each other, but did not disclose their relationship to protect the woman's identity.

Rather than mischaracterizing the facts on shootings as a way to push for more restrictions on the right to keep and bear arms, the president should share the facts about how often Americans use their firearms in lawful defense of themselves or others.

We certainly can do more to address underlying factors of shootings in America, especially when it comes to suicide using a firearm. But as the stories above show, ordinary law-abiding Americans have a lot to gain from exercising their constitutional rights.

This piece originally appeared in The Daily Signal.