

# The Crime Problem in America

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## The Problem

The crime problem in the USA rose in the last years. Many people fear to get a victim of a robbery or getting killed or injured by someone.

Four people were killed and several others were injured on a shooting in a train in New York in December 93. This wasn't the first shooting in the last time, there were several others in the USA, for example in Denver and San Francisco, where people were killed and injured, too. These massacres made many people think about the crime-problem.

People demand a stricter gun control by the government. But tighter gun control would mean more difficulties for the normal people to get a gun for their self-defense. Many Americans are against taking away their rights of individuals to own a gun. The fear of crime has become a cause and an effect.

A complete ban of buying a gun, many fear, would leave them defenseless against criminals. They will always be able to buy a gun on the black market, while normal people aren't able to do the same thing in a legal way.

But even a complete ban wouldn't solve the problem because there are several million handguns in circulation. So the only chance to register or to get all guns would be house-to-house searches.

After the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy the congress passed the Gun Control Act in 1968 which banned mail-order gun sales and regulated the interstate transportation. This produced a new record in gun sales, the sales doubled just before the new law took effect.

The beating of Rodney King and the hurricane Andrew show the Americans that the police couldn't always protect them and that they have to look after themselves in such situations.

The Brady Bill, which mandates a five-day waiting period on handgun sales, passed the congress end of November 1993. Traders of guns saw their chance, and the gun sales jumped dramatically. There were signs on a flea market like "Last chance to stock up" and "These guns are in the senate bill - buy now before they're gone".

Many are afraid that the police will come after a ban and get away the gun. So they are against any registration of the guns. Many of the buyers are first-time victims who want to buy them for self-defense. More and more guns are bought by women.

Another problem are the kids playing with toy guns. They couldn't decide between a toy or a real gun. The rate of gunshot wounds in children under 16 doubled between 1987 and 1990. One parent in 6 knew a child who was found playing with a loaded gun.

Many youth people think that having a gun is easier than getting an education, and so they use the gun to get the things they want to have by violence.

It's hard to believe, but kids are often very dangerous. One of the most published incidents in 1989 was a jogger raped and nearly murdered by a group of youths 14 to 16.

Even younger boys are able to do bleak things. An eleven-years-old boy raped a two-year-old girl together with a 15-years-old. A ten-years-old boy abused three of his four younger sister until he was caught at 16.

The violent kids don't belong only to the lower-class society, they belong to all races and classes. So a young murderer could be a child of rich parents and could be a student. But most acts were made by male youths. But girls are also capable to do vicious crimes. A 16-years-old girl went with three boys on a arson spree. They set up fire in three schools causing a million-dollar damage.

The adolescents often shows no remorse or conscience. They are often proud of what they have done and they brag with their exploits to other peers.

There are different reasons for the aggression of the male youth. There is the hormon testosteron. It rises in the puperty, a period marked by intense sexual desire and strong aggressive tendencies. Rough athletes or violent prisoneers have higher testosteron levels than normal. Sometime violent youths have neurolocical problems, some suffer form paranoia and hallucinations. But the main reason is the society. Many childs grow up in divorced families, or the parents are often drunk. If the parents are at work, they would just have other childs to talk to. They don't learn the real values of a family. So they don't learn to get punished for hurting another person. The gangs become their family, they learn to take drugs, they learn to steel, they learn to have sex.

The entertainment media plays an important role in the formation of values. The comics on TV are dehumanized, machinelike characters play senseless destructive roles. Victims never bleed or feel any hurt. A 16-years-old child has witnessed about 200,000 acts of violence and 33,000 murders on TV. The more violent scenes childs see on TV, the more violent they get themselves. Rock Music often has violent or discriminating lyrics, too.

## **My opinion**

In my opinion the problem of the crime in the USA couldn't be solved by a tougher gun control or by jailing any violent youth. The main problem is the education of the childs by the parents and the social situation in the USA.

Parents often have nearly no time for their childs. They tell their kids to watch TV or to play with other kids (the parents often don't know). The kids get into gangs which become a secondary family for them. There they learn how to drink alcohol or how to take drugs. They want to get the leader of the gang, and the only way to get this position is to be violent. A gun is a status symbol for them. But the

adolescent aren't old enough to carry a gun, they don't have the background how dangerous a gun is and what damage it could cause.

TV is a dangerous media especially for little child who learn there that killing and hurting another is normal. The TV stations shouldn't be allowed to show such brutal comic films (you could see them already in Germany). Horror and similar films should only be allowed after a special time (like here in Germany). Childs should get an interesting and good education program on TV if they aren't in school or kindergarten.

A strict gun ban wouldn't solve the problem because there are already several million guns in circulation. It wouldn't be able to register every of them. A ban for selling would increase the black market. The only way to stop gun criminality is to panalise every abuse of it. Everyboby who abused a gun shouldn't be allowed to have a gun any longer. This limitation should be handled under strict control.