In the United States and other nations, more and more people are recognizing that victims have the best chance of survival when they can be the first responders. Fewer people now believe the line from former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s spokesperson Shannon Watts that successful armed self-defense “never happens.”

Let’s take a look at an event that Watts says “never happens”—when a good guy with a gun stopped a rampage.

**Attack In The Heartland**

Thirty-year-old Alton Nolen called himself “Jah’Keem Yisrael.” His Facebook site included pictures of Osama bin Laden, the 9/11 attacks and a beheading. He had been sent to prison in 2011 for assaulting a police officer, and was released in March 2013.

On Sept. 25, 2014, Nolen was suspended from his job at Vaughan Foods in Moore, Okla., because of a confrontation with a female employee. Later that day, he returned to the facility armed with an 8-inch knife that he had used for chopping fruits and vegetables. Near the main entrance of the plant, he decapitated 54-year-old grandmother Colleen Hufford. He then entered the building and stabbed and tried to decapitate 43-year-old Traci Johnson.

That was when a good guy with a gun showed up. Mark Vaughan is the company’s chief operating officer, and also a reserve deputy with the Oklahoma County Sheriff’s Office. He had an AR-15 rifle in his vehicle, which runs contrary to the advice of the Bradys.

After retrieving the rifle, Vaughan fired three times, stopping the attack. Nolen survived and is awaiting trial for murder and attempted murder. The time from the beginning of the 911 call, made by an office employee right after the attack began, to the first defensive gunshot was a little over three minutes.

Oklahoma’s laws foster a culture of safety. Businesses can allow defensive arms in a workplace. Employees have the right to keep their guns in cars in a corporate parking lot. Responsible adults with safety training and a background check can obtain a permit to carry a handgun for lawful protection.

The safety culture saved lives in Moore.
Australia’s Shame

In contrast, during the past two decades Australia has posted no mass shootings. The nation has very tough gun laws that actually created a safe zone for armed predators. And some are taking advantage of it.

On Dec. 15, 2014, Man Haron Monis (birth name Mohammad Hassan Manenti) walked into the Lindt Chocolate Cafe, located in Martin Place, in the heart of Sydney’s financial and legal district. He took the 17 people inside hostage.

Monis was armed with a shotgun that isn’t supposed to exist in Australia anymore. All semi-automatic long guns were banned in 1996, and registration lists were used to enforce the mass confiscation of about one-sixth of Australia’s firearms.

Monis had entered Australia from Iran in 1996 seeking political asylum, which was granted in 2001. He proclaimed himself a “sheikh” and wrote venomous letters to the parents of Australian soldiers who had died fighting in Afghanistan. He was convicted of “using a postal or similar service to menace, harass or cause offence.”

As Levyhjelm pointed out, all of the hostages were prohibited by law “to have a knife, a stick, a pepper spray, a personal ‘Taser, machine, anything like that for self-defense.” As Australia and Great Britain illustrate, gun-free zones and gun-free lobbies don’t just hate firearms—they hate the very idea of self-defense.

“What happened in that cafe would have been most unlikely to have occurred in Florida, Texas, or New York, or Alaska in America, or perhaps even Switzerland as well,” Levyhjelm noted. “That nutcase who held them all hostage wouldn’t have known that they were armed, and bad guys don’t like to be shot back at.”

Indeed, in the United States, almost all the locations where mass homicides take place are pretend “gun-free zones.” In these artificially dangerous places, law-abiding citizens are forbidden to carry, so would-be mass murderers know that they can kill with impunity—until the good guys with guns arrive.

Israel Under Fire

Unlike Australia, where Prime Minister Tony Abbott reacted to the Syrian siege by annexing treaty obligations, the Israeli government should impose even more terror threats. The Israeli government moved toward more gun freedom after a deadly attack.

At 7 a.m. on Nov. 18, 2014, about two dozen people were praying at the Kehilat B’Nai Torah YESHIVA Synagogue in the Har Noof neighborhood of Jerusalem, Israel. Cousins Uday and Ghasan Abu Jamal attacked with a handgun and axes, murdering four rabbis, three of whom were American, one British. Seven more people were wounded.

Police arrived 11 minutes after the attack began and killed the two attackers. Two police officers were wounded in the shootout, and one of them, Zidan Saif, later died.

After the attack, Public Security Minister YitzhakAharonovitch promised, “In the coming hours, we will take more restrictive actions on carry permits.” He followed through, making gun carry permits more readily available to Israeli citizens.

“The decision to ease the restriction stems from recent events and the need to strengthen the sense of security among the general population and due to the recent terrorist attacks that have struck us,” he explained.

After high-risk areas, carry permits will be issued to reserve officers of the Israeli Defense Forces, as well as to lower-ranking former soldiers who served in some specialized combat units. Noonan will allow anyone to apply for carry permits. Additionally, security guards will not be required to turn in their guns at the completion of their daily work.

These reforms were long overdue. Back in 1994, Israel had it as long as long as the United States, where the government should impose even more gun restrictions to keep the streets safe.

Back in 1974, Israel had it as long as the United States, where the government should impose even more gun restrictions to keep the streets safe.

In these artificially dangerous places, all the locations where mass homicides have actually created a safe zone for terrorists pose to good and decent Muslims. Two suspects—François Henry and his brother Ayoub Benislam—were arrested.

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Right’s Russia?

Of course, the chances of being attacked by an apoplectic criminal are much greater than the risk of being attacked by somebody acting out an extremist ideology. That’s why even in Russia firearms laws are being reformed.

Russia has a serious crime problem. The homicide rate is nearly three times the U.S. level, and most homicides go unsolved. Only 46 percent of Russians feel safe walking alone at night.

So Russia now has a gun rights organization, “Right to Bear Arms” (http://rongu.ru/). It is led by Maria Butina, a young woman who grew up in the mountains of Altai, Siberia, and who now lives in Moscow. For several years her group has been pressuring Vladimir Putin’s government to allow defensive carry of arms.

While it was already legal to carry “cold” weapons (e.g., self-defense sprays), the group argued for the right to carry firearms.

The Putin regime has long resisted the calls for reforming the laws. But in late 2013, a regime accorded, and one of the longest-standing handgun bans in the world was repealed. Carry permits will be available for handguns and for long guns, so that Russians can “protect their lives, health and property.”

“The fact that even a dictatorship with a façade of democracy is moving toward respecting the human right of armed self-defense internationally and due to the direction global public opinion and related policy is moving.”

Attitude Shift At Home

Here in the United States, we have detailed data about public opinion trends. According to a Gallup poll, in 1959 three out of five Americans supported handgun prohibition. Today, only one in four do.

Since 1993, the Pew Research Center has been asking people whether it is more important to protect the right to own guns, or to control guns. From 1993 to 2007, the pro-control side held a comfortable lead—sometimes by a margin as high as 37 percent. Since 2008, however, the two sides were more or less tied, and now the pro-gun rights side holds its largest lead ever at 52 percent.

What is much more important than what people think about gun politics, however, is what they think about guns. In 2000, Gallup asked the question, “Do you think having a gun in the house makes it a safer place to be, or more dangerous place to be?” In 2000, 53 percent said “safer” and 51 percent said “more dangerous.” Since then, public opinion has shifted decisively to the pro-gun view. In 2014, 63 percent of Americans support the Second Amendment and only 37 percent “more dangerous.”

This doesn’t mean our battle to protect our rights is over—far from it. Anti-gunners will always push for reform. But once the public has been educated, and after seeing the cost of what happens when the public is educated, and after seeing the cost of what happens when a gun rights group is held to account, they will understand that the gun rights movement is the only path toward respecting the human right of law-abiding citizens to protect themselves.