

Gun culture

The other day I woke up with a Carpenters moldy-olde ear-worming through my brain: *We've only just begun* ...

Except the words were something like "we only just be guns" because



by
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The author is a retired University of Georgia faculty member who moved to Chico in 2018 to be near her grandchildren.

it was the day after a young man was killed because he knocked at the wrong door; a young woman was killed because she entered the wrong driveway; and a child was killed because she chased a tennis ball into a neighbor's yard.

Then I read about the mass shooting in Dadeville, Ala., which felt awfully close to home since I spent the first 11 years of life in Camp Hill, Alabama, the home town of one of the youths killed.

Lethal mistakes: knocking on a door,

getting lost, chasing a ball, going to a party.

People argue that guns are a remedy for the disease of unease. Self-defense means shoot first ask questions later. We embrace the thrill of a quick response, the loss of

self in struggle. The idea being that we'll all be safer when we're all locked and loaded. That dangerous abstraction flies in the face of active shooter drills in elementary schools, and things get even scarier when a first grader is the active shooter!

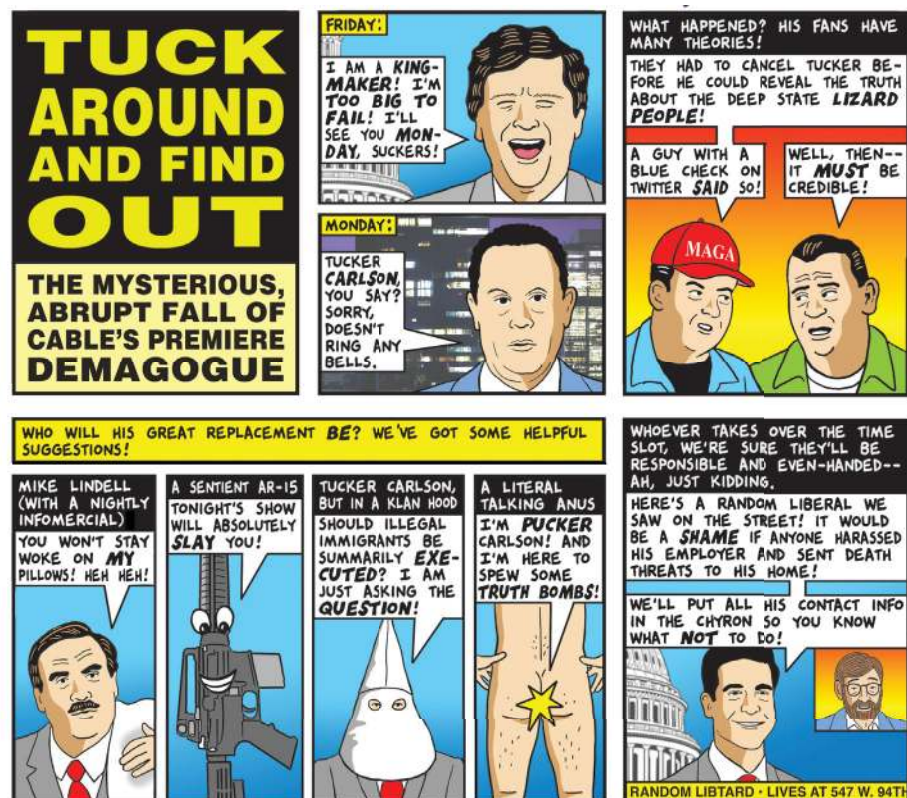
Fear and anger fuel our romance with guns. We make enemies out of helpless people and help people who are our enemies. We warn of triggering. We speak in bullet points. "Make my day" is a threat instead of encouragement. We aim at goals. We target opportunity. We shoot down ideas.

And I am fairly certain that if we do not end our romance with firearms, we will only just be guns. □

**Lethal mistakes:
knocking on a door, getting lost, chasing a ball, going to a party.**

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