

200-a-survivor-on-the-tremendous-responsibility-of-gun-owner...

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SPEAKERS

Dennis Harris, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson



JJ Janflone 00:09

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JJ Janflone 00:22

Hey, everybody, welcome back to another episode of Red, Blue, and Brady, I'm one of your hosts, JJ.



Kelly Sampson 00:43

And I'm your other host, Kelly.



JJ Janflone 00:45

And together we are bringing you this: our 200th episode.



Kelly Sampson 00:51

Queue confetti, queue balloons, queue, I wish we could queue some cake for everyone listening, but you'll have to imagine that.





JJ Janflone 00:57

Absolutely, cake for everyone. And we're really, really honored to be joining you all today, not just because it's our 200th episode, but because in this episode, we're talking about how important it is for businesses to be involved in gun violence prevention, and honestly how companies and new products are being developed all the time to help prevent gun violence. And I find that really encouraging.



Kelly Sampson 01:21

Yeah, and our guest today is someone that we hope that you've heard from because he was in the previous episode, same as Dennis Harris, and he shares about how he's transformed the grief and the anguish that his family experienced after losing their daughter to firearm suicide into a gun lock that will keep so many families safe. So if you haven't heard that previous episode, you got to listen to it.



JJ Janflone 01:50

Absolutely. Go back, listen to 199, and then come join us here talking about all the ways that gun violence continues to impact Americans, but how you can be fighting it.



Kelly Sampson 02:02

So, how did T-lock come to be?



Dennis Harris 02:05

My family, we've always been trying to think of something that we can turn this tragedy around into a positive situation. And so it was really interesting. My son was working in the garage and, I remember this day, it was Saturday, April the 21st, 2018, and we were working, we were both working in the garage and all sudden I had an idea and I brought out an AR-15 and I brought out a handgun and I say Dustin, I said I think I have the solution to locking up these guns the way they should be locked up. Because you know, you'll see these little cables go through the guns and that can be rapidly cut really easy and used. And I said, I think I came up with something that they won't be able to get into and so we discussed it at lengths. And we knew we had a great idea. We were talking about a clamshell lock that would go wrap around the gun, and that it would be specifically designed for that individual gun. So on Monday, October the 8th, we pushed everything forward and we were approved for a trademark. In January, the 24th, we were granted a utility patent and then we started the manufacturing process. And then we tested it. We took a drill. And in the locking mechanism, it's made of stainless steel. So we took a drill, and we tried to drill out the lock, but it has an anti-drill plate so you can't drill into it. We used grinders, we used pry bars. We did almost everything. We were getting close to getting opened up after 25 minutes, but the problem is we're getting ready to destroy the gun at that moment. And so we thought okay, we have pretty close what we call a bulletproof lock. And we thought well, we believe it but we need to send it to somewhere to have it tested. So we contacted the Department of Justice in California.

D

Dennis Harris 03:24

Because we know they have some of the most stringent gun laws and locking mechanisms for locking guns up. And they said well, you know you can send it to the National Technical System, which is in Wichita, Kansas, and if they approve it, then we will consider it. So we sent it to Wichita, Kansas on Monday, March the 23rd, 2020. And they actually approved it with flying colors. Subsequently it was approved by the Department of Justice in California as an authorized gunlock. And so we knew then that we had a robust gun lock that was good for anywhere in the United States. So that's kind of where we're at right now, we've actually ordered quite a few locks. And we're starting off with locking of Glock guns, which we believe is one of the more popular guns. Our next goal is to go to Smith and Wesson and Sig Sauer and some of your more popular guns, so that we can create a gun lock for each of them and to include such guns as the AR 15, which seems to be getting a lot of press lately.

K

Kelly Sampson 03:26

And why did you decide to start in California?

D

Dennis Harris 04:48

And the guns that you're talking about for the gun lock right now, like those are all handguns, right? Just for our listeners.

D

Dennis Harris 05:43

Yes, they're all handguns. The AR-15 is a rifle and we already have the drawings in place for the rifle. It's just a matter of getting that done. Obviously, everything takes money.

K

Kelly Sampson 05:58

Okay, so I'm so curious, how does T-Lock work?

D

Dennis Harris 06:02

It's a clamshell shape. And you can go to our website, and on there, it'll show you the locks. There's a lot of video training on how to use the lock. But basically, what you do is you open up the clamshell, you put your handgun in there, you close it. Now here's the great part, when you close it, it encompasses the trigger, the trigger guard, it has an extruded piece of plastic that goes into the ejection port of your handgun. And then you lock it. And when you lock it, there's two modes, you can lock it on, one is locked and alarmed, the other one is locked and not alarmed. And the reason we had both of those modes is this, if you're traveling, you would want to put it in locked, but not alarmed. Because if you hit a bump, it's going to send a siren off. And it's going to scare you.

D

Dennis Harris 07:01

But in the house, if you have your home, or let's say a police officer or a citizen happens to leave a gun in their car, which I don't recommend, but if they did, you could put it in locked and alarmed. So this is how it works. When you put it when you lock it an alarm, you'll hear you'll hear two beeps. And that two beeps means that it's locked and alarmed. So if you go to grab the gun and move it, it will send off five loud, sharp beeps. Just saying hey, don't tamper with me. But if you continue to mess with it, such as a curious kid, well, it will send off another five beeps followed with an 11 second, 120 decibel siren, very loud. And it will continue doing that until that person places that gun back down. So if a thief breaks into your house, or your car, and starts running down the road, I have a good impression that he's not going to want to hear that siren going off for 11 seconds at a time, he's probably going to toss it, or the kid that's playing with a gun, it's going to scare him enough that he's just going to leave it alone. But we're, we're wanting to take this to another step another step, we have plans of incorporating this with home security systems. That's one of our goals. So that basically if the siren goes off, it would contact the monitoring center. The monitoring center would basically give you, the police department a phone call saying hey, someone's tampering with a gun in your home and that, you know, Mom and Dad's away and there's a child there, that gives a chance for law enforcement to come over the house, assess the situation, and, you know, take the gun or temporarily or whatever they feel is best. And so and then one of the other things we're working on, which we have plans for is a biometric. One of the things that a lot of people have asked is I want to get to my gun a little bit faster than than using a key. Well, we use a unique key, not like any other key, and we give you three keys. But we're also working on the biometric. And I mean, you can open it up within two seconds just using a key, if not faster. But on the biometric side you use, you know, you say your index finger, and it'll automatically pop right open and so we have plans in place for that, also.



JJ Janflone 09:35

I'm curious why, when when you and your son and your whole family, this is like a family endeavor, put this together. You know why you went for the locks instead of you know, like new safe technology or something like that. Was there a reason why you went for the small locks first?

D

Dennis Harris 09:52

Well, here's one of the reasons, is that a lot of the guns that are being used are not in the in the safe. They're actually in someone's car, or it's laying in a drawer in someone's house, or it's in their closet. And you know, as well as I do, people break into cars, and they break into houses, and they're stealing guns all the time. And if you think for one second, your child does not know where you're storing your handgun or rifle, you better think again, because they know absolutely where you're storing it. And if you think that they don't know, they know, the combination to your safe, you better be very, very careful, because kids are smart.



JJ Janflone 10:41

No, I was just gonna say the number of times that my parents had me break into their own

email for them as a child, you know, I think points to that, right, kids, kids find things.

D

Dennis Harris 10:53

Kids are very curious and I'm telling you, they will look over the top your back, and they will see the combination. But one of the reasons we went for the guns that weren't being locked up, you know, there's just there's millions of them, that are just laying in the house or in vehicles, and police officers, their vehicles are being broken to all the time. And if you look into it, yes, they're stealing their long guns, AR-15s, their automatics. They're stealing their handguns. And I would dare say that almost every police department in the United States, they've had break-ins to their vehicles where someone remembers a handgun or rifle being stolen.

K

Kelly Sampson 11:40

And I think, you know, when you combine sort of the anti-theft side with the suicide prevention side, it's really I mean, you're really getting at one of the biggest issues right now in the way gun violence sort of looks in the United States. And you mentioned one fact, which I was taken aback when I first got into this movement, just what you mentioned, which is that there are studies showing that kids do know where, if their parents store the guns, even if the parents think that they don't. And I'm wondering, is there anything else that you wish people in America knew about safe storage?

D

Dennis Harris 12:18

Well, I definitely think that if you have the opportunity to buy a safe, I would highly recommend it. Obviously, you put all your guns in there, but the next thing you need to realize is what am I going to do when my gun is out of the safe? Am I going to the shooting range? Or am I just going to lay it here or lay it there? You know, you have to have a plan, if you're gonna do that, because you're responsible for protecting that gun 100% of the time and so you have to keep it locked up, you have to be very vigilant. And like, say, there's a tremendous responsibility that comes with the ownership of a gun. And that is, you have to think of all these variables, as a husband or wife together, you have to decide how are we going to take care of this. And I would dare say that most people in the United States has a family member or knows of someone in a family that has died by suicide, I want to be correct on that term. That's the term they use today, died by suicide, I would dare say that most people know of someone. Well, I know of quite a few people that have had that tragedy in their family. And I continue to hear of a lot of people that it happens to one of my very dear friends, it happened to her daughter, and she died by suicide. And you know, her and I often talk, you know, about the dynamics and things that maybe both of our daughters were going through. And it seems like a lot of the times it is depression. Just not being able to deal with something, something that you and I may look at that, hey, we can talk through this. We can work through this. But in many instances, parents don't even know that their kids are dealing with a problem. They're holding it inside. And then all of a sudden, you know, the worst case scenario happens.

K

Kelly Sampson 14:29

I think that's another powerful thing that you are doing by sharing. It's even just helping people

... be aware of that, because there's a lot of discussion sometimes around suicide and there's a misconception that there's certain people that it's going to happen to or that are prone to it and then certain people aren't and sometimes we can forget that women are also prone to suicide and suicide by firearm. And you know, even if statistically speaking there may be a differences, it doesn't mean that if you have someone that you love, a woman that you love, and she's struggling with depression, that you only need to think about pills or some of the other stereotypes, but that firearm, you also need to think about firearms too. So I think it's really powerful what you're doing, just simply by sharing the story, because maybe there's someone listening right now, who has, they have a loved one, a woman in their life, who's struggling, and maybe aren't as familiar with the fact that women can also die by firearm suicide. But it does happen. And we know that. So that's another powerful thing I think you're doing.

 Dennis Harris 15:39

It does it. I haven't seen the stats on it. But I know it affects a lot of women. And you know, depression is situational. I think we would agree with that. But some people do suffer with depression most of their life, and they have to take medicine to compensate for it. But again, you know, you just can't take that chance. And if you have a loved one in there that you know, is experiencing that, you know, you just have to take double precautions to make sure that they're not going to get to that gun in any way, shape, or form, without even telling them that. You know, another thing that I think that we failed to do sometimes is I think we need to be, with our kids, we need to create a dialogue with them, routine dialogue, when they come home from school, you know, we just take it for granted, you know, yeah, you know, they, they have homework, you know, they did a lot of schoolwork. But you know, they come home from school, and they kind of get down and stuff like that. And I think it's important for us to gauge that when they come home or try to talk to them, and ask them how they're doing. And, you know, how are they doing with their friends. And, you know, with bullying, being in school today, we know a lot of people have taken guns to school. And you know, we need to make sure that we're on top of our game when it comes to knowing what our kids are involved with, as they attend school.

 JJ Janflone 17:20

I'm thinking even there was a pediatric study that found that like more than one-third of adolescents, you know, so like folks, 13 to 17, right, so they could gain access in less than five minutes to a loaded firearm kept in their home. And that to me was just, that's a wild statistic. And I think really goes to just the point of why locking and storing guns separate from ammunition is so important.

 JJ Janflone 17:43

One of the things I find interesting, too, about T-lock, is that the the price points on a lot of these locks are quite low. Is that intentional, as sort of an access thing?

 Dennis Harris 17:56

Yes, you know, we advertise them for at \$84.47. But we, we also have a promotional code going, also, for a while, and that brings them down with tax to be \$72.48. So, you know, if you're going to buy a gun, you can't buy a gun unless you buy a lock. I just, you have to be responsible. You know, I want to kind of go back to, you know, the Second Amendment, you know, we live in a time that we just have to be very vigilant about protecting our Second Amendment rights. You know, gun control in the 21st century, as you guys know, is one of the top subjects for debate in this country. And so it's paramount that we do our part to further strengthen the Second Amendment by keeping our weapons secure, people safe, and the firearms out of the hands of people who wish to do us harm. And so, you know, we're we're working really, really hard towards that goal. But at the same time, you know, if you're a wife or a husband, and either one of them wants to purchase a firearm, you have to insist that you're not going to buy this unless you buy a lock with it.

D

Dennis Harris 19:12

I'll take it even a step further. Having been in law enforcement, and I've been retired for almost a year. But being in law enforcement for so long, I'm going to reach out a little bit further and talk to all the police chiefs and all the sheriffs. You give your guys bulletproof vests. You give them cameras, you issue them a handgun, you issue them a rifle. You invest in a lot of protective equipment. But you know, liability wise, you can't take the chance of not issuing a firearm unless you're going to issue them a lock also.

D

Dennis Harris 19:53

Now as a Chief Sheriff, you could say well, you know, that's the officers or deputies is responsibility to go ahead and get that himself. But that's not the way it really works. You know, as well as I do, a lot of these officers are living there, they're not making a lot of money, let me put it that way, it would be nice for them to buy a safe, and some of them are able to, some of them have second and third jobs. But if you're going to be over that department, really issue your guys a gun lock with that gun. And I'll tell you why. If someone was to get inside that vehicle, let's say a police vehicle, and let's take it another step, let's say it was in a citizen's vehicle, and they steal that gun, and they go commit another crime. And, you know, God forbid, they kill another person, but it happens all the time. And they kill another person. Can you imagine the liability that rests with that police chief or sheriff? Or that citizen that failed to secure their weapon? And so I looked at this way, if you're going to hire police officers, and you're going to arm them, then arm them with everything that they need including protective equipment, and that includes gun locks. We just donated 150 locks to the Washington County Sheriff's Office in southern Utah. I know they were very appreciative of that. And I, you know, I did that, of course, because I spent 41 and a half years in public safety. And so it's just it's a good feeling, knowing that those deputies have, you know, the gun locks in place.



JJ Janflone 21:38

I do really like how you keep advocating that this is a responsibility that, it's individual, but it's also community, right, that if guns are being put out there into the world that being put out there with them should be a lock when you've been advocating both for T-Lock and then just for gun safety more broadly, have people been receptive? Do you think? How has that been?

D

Dennis Harris 22:01

You know, one of the problems that I have? I don't think I can advertise too well. That's something that I'm trying to get started on and work on. We know that it's probably the best gunlock in the United States. And yes, I am bragging because we have really put a lot into this. But you know, at the same time, I want to make sure that we don't stop and we keep going forward. Can we put a lot of additions to it? Well, that's kind of one of the comments that some people say, "well, I want to get to my gun a lot faster." Well, that's one of the reasons that we are eventually going to incorporate biometrics into it. But I thought, you know, let's just start off with something simple. We provide three keys. And I told the sheriff's office here, I said, we give you three keys, this the reason you give one of the keys to your armor in your office, and the other two give with a deputy or police officer. And that way, if they ever lose two keys, hopefully they don't, then at least the armor that takes care of the weapons for that department will be able to, you know, have another one made or issue that one back to the officer deputy.

D

Dennis Harris 22:02

I think that's huge, because I think of how many firearms we know get stolen from cars are just kind of just get, you know, picked up, right, "they walk away," they go missing. I'm thinking of a piece that was published years ago too, talking about how, you know, there were over 350 firearms that were lost or stolen from DC area police between, you know, 2011 and 2017 alone. So I know that even among trained gun owners like police officers, first responders, like we know that people are human, they make human mistakes.

D

Dennis Harris 23:42

You know, I think if the truth be known that most police officers at some point or another have left their weapon in their vehicle, or has hid it until the next day to put it in in a secure location, you're spot on. There's no question in my mind about that.

K

Kelly Sampson 24:05

That's why it's so helpful that you're kind of willing to talk through and talk about things, take away the shame, and then help people be like, okay, if this is a human thing, this is something that happens, I can get this lock and take steps to sort of protect myself and my family. So I'm wondering, you know, what are your if you could kind of dream up your ideal outcome for T-Lock. What would that look like?

D

Dennis Harris 24:40

My ideal outcome is this. First of all, T-lock custom fits every gun that is out there. Even though we've only made them for Glock right now, we already have the designs for all the others. So, my wishes and desires would be that, number one, we start off with state legislatures, and that they make it incumbent that if you're going to own a gun in your state, you are going to own a

lock, that that's going to be secured with. And police departments, this would be directly from the legislature to the police departments, you know, any weapon that you have will be secured. You know, whether it's in your vehicle, or whether it's in your house, having a mobile locking mechanism, as opposed to a safe is a great way to do it. And that's, that's why I think we took the right direction, is because we knew that out of all the 434 million guns in the United States, many of those are not going to be locked up. Matter of fact. Well, I think it's a high percentage that's not locked up one time or another. And so I, you know, obviously I'd like it to be T-Lock. But you know, I'm going to say, if there's another company that fits the bill for that department, I still say it, they absolutely have to go that direction. We have to go in that direction.

D

Dennis Harris 24:52

Well, I real quickly, I just want to tell my daughter today, thank you very much for developing our website. So, my daughter knew nothing about websites. And everything that we've done has been in-house, and it's been done by the family. And so you're right, JJ, that life just doesn't work out that way at some time or another. You can't tell me, a gun owner that has not left their gun in plain sight to be stolen or taken by, you know, one of your family members.

D

Dennis Harris 26:23

Well, Kelly and JJ, I want to thank both of you very much for having me on. I feel truly honored. I really do. I feel like I'm trying to figure out how best to take this forward. And I, I think this is really a good step. And I really encourage everyone to look at our website, just so that they can see the facts on our gun lock.

K

Kelly Sampson 27:27

I'm going to go bold and speak for JJ and say, we're definitely honored to be speaking with you because we don't take it lightly. Just the courage that it takes for you and your family to kind of take a loss and think about other people and think about how you can serve, it's a big honor to speak to you.

D

Dennis Harris 27:51

Well, you know, I know that we live in a time in life, that seems to be a little unsettled, maybe that's a good way to put it. I know that we are all going through, many of us, I should say we're going through difficult and hard times. And you know, I know that we can do it, as a nation, I know that we need to put all of our differences aside and decide what is important for us as a people in the United States and try to love each other a little bit more. You know, it's so easy to be so critical of so many things. And I think sometimes we just need to step back for a moment and look at what is life really about. And I think what life is really about mainly is our families, that they're number one. And I think number two obviously comes everyone else that is in our life, but we need to love everyone and I know it's a simple thing to say but sometimes a hard thing to do, in light of the fact of what is going on, you know even throughout the whole world, and so that's probably my parting shot, is saying you know, let's work together, because together, we can do anything. I



JJ Janflone 29:26

It's just I think it's so great that you and your family, because this is a family business, have taken on doing this work both in creating a gun lock, both in creating a smart gun lock and pushing T-Lock out there into the world and continuing to develop other gun locks, but also just sharing TaLeah's story, right. That's why it's called T-lock. It's T-Lock, so I just, I'm really appreciative of that.



Kelly Sampson 29:57

Yeah, I think my big takeaway is I continue to hold what Dennis said to heart, which is that, you know, he supports the Second Amendment, but he also believes that if you're going to keep a firearm, that comes with this weighty responsibility to do so responsibly and do so safely. And that those two things are totally aligned. And we know most Americans think that way, based on polling, and it's just this sort of extreme faction that likes to pretend that that's a wild idea. And so I'm just, it's encouraging, once again, to hear Dennis say, you know, no, I support keeping and bearing arms and I also think that if you're going to do that, you have to be really, really, really responsible in how you do that.



JJ Janflone 30:48

I think it's really important too, that we continue to have these survivor voices be focused, not just even on sharing their stories, not just on policy and legislation, but also in sort of expanding and talking back to the industry, right, and saying that these are things, these are products that people want. I think that's really vital, too, because I can talk until I'm blue in the face about the importance of locking a gun up in the home, but I don't think it has the impact to folks who are on the fence and the way that Dennis's story does and so I'm just I'm so thankful to him and other survivors who put themselves in that situation and share you know, their kids lives with us.



Kelly Sampson 31:27

Yeah. And I really do appreciate what Dennis said about how he is doing this with TaLeah. I think that's a really, really sobering and moving way to think about his his mission.



JJ Janflone 31:42

Hey! Want to share with the podcast? Listeners can now get in touch with us here at Red, Blue, and Brady via phone or text message. Simply call or text us at 480-744-3452 with your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever! Kelly and I are standing by.



Kelly Sampson 31:56

Thanks for listening. As always, Brady's life saving work in Congress, the courts and

communities across the country is made possible thanks to you. For more information on Brady are how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the podcast. Get in touch with us at Bradyunited.org or on social @Bradybuzz. Be brave and remember, take action not sides.