

# [***Opinion: After the Super Bowl parade shooting, nothing is unthinkable when it comes to gun violence***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBN-CJM1-DY7V-G001-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; For the second year in a row - the third time in five years - fans crowded into the heart of Kansas City, Missouri before dawn to hail their victorious Chiefs. Schools closed for the day on Wednesday to give the Super Bowl-winning team's youngest fans a chance to cheer for their NFL heroes.

Some of the Kansas City Chiefs also celebrated their latest championship, which they won on Sunday, by [*chugging beers*](https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/travis-kelce-chugs-beer-cardboard-170656215.html) along the parade route and loudly proclaiming their love for Kansas City. By early afternoon, the number of revelers had swollen to [*about a million*](https://www.cnn.com/us/live-news/kansas-city-chiefs-parade-shooting-02-14-24/index.html), as the massive outdoor party reached a sun-soaked crescendo.

It was, in other words, a simply perfect day for residents of this heartland city, until gunshots crackled through the air and this uniquely American celebration ended as a distinctly American tragedy.

Officials said on Thursday that [*a dispute among various people*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/14/us/kansas-city-chiefs-rally-shooting-thursday/index.html) attending the event appears to have set off the violence. According to authorities,  [*23 people were wounded by gunfire*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/14/us/kansas-city-chiefs-rally-shooting-thursday/index.html) at the parade including one person, identified as Lisa Lopez-Galvan, who died of her injuries. Lopez-Galvan was [*a local DJ*](https://www.kshb.com/news/crime/woman-killed-in-chiefs-rally-shooting-identified-as-kc-dj-remembered-as-beautiful-person) who went to the parade with her husband and adult son. Several of the shooting victims were children who required hospitalization.

A Chiefs fan visiting from Nebraska, Paul Contreras, was credited with [*tackling*](https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/nebraska-man-says-he-helped-tackle-suspected-chiefs-kingdom-champions-victory-parade-rally-shooter-to-the-ground)  a person running through the crowd with a gun - one of [*three people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/15/us/kansas-city-super-bowl-shooting.html) police detained in the immediate aftermath of the shooting - and helped pin him to the ground until the arrival of the police. Two of those individuals, identified as juvenile teens, were [*still in custody*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/14/us/kansas-city-chiefs-rally-shooting-thursday/index.html) late Thursday.

To live in America is to seek out moments of celebration and community while balancing the inner fear that a horrifying act of gun violence could occur at any time - on a parade route, at a [*July Fourth celebration*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/05/us/victims-highland-park-illinois-shooting-fourth-of-july/index.html) on a completely [*ordinary day at a school*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/04/us/parkland-school-shooting-reenactment/index.html) filled with high school students. Nothing is unthinkable anymore when it comes to gun violence in this country.

If something as unfathomable as a mass shooting can happen at a Super Bowl parade, an event that brings people together like nothing else in Kansas City, then we have indeed passed an unsettling new threshold. "Parades, rallies, schools, movies, it seems like almost nothing is safe," Kansas City mayor Quinton Lucas [*said at a press conference*](https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2024/02/14/mayor-security-kansas-city-chiefs-parade-shooting-vpx.cnn) Wednesday, giving voice to that sentiment.

Some members of the Chiefs tried to provide aid after Wednesday's shooting and to comfort distraught fans. Head coach Andy Reid [*comforted a frightened teenager at Union Statio*](https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/crime/article285498677.html)n. Wide receiver Marquez Valdes-Scantling [*offered to provide assistance to children who had been injured in the violence*](https://twitter.com/MVS__11/status/1757910472966406341). Defensive back Justin Reid [*posted words of despair on*](https://twitter.com/justinqreid?lang=en) Twitter/X, but also expressed hope that America one day would solve its gun violence epidemic: "I pray our leaders enact real solutions so our kids' kids won't know this violence."

Kansas Citians are no stranger to gun violence. The city experienced a record number of homicides in 2023. A [*particularly grim mass shooting*](https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/crime/article276733946.html) last June led to the deaths of three Kansas Citians, including a mother of two who'd been celebrating her 28th birthday. Some attempts by Kansas City to crack down on guns have been met by resistance from the state government of Missouri, a state with some [*of the most lenient gun laws in the country*](https://giffords.org/lawcenter/resources/scorecard/?scorecard=MO). In many cases, the state preempts local municipalities from developing gun stricter laws.

The state of Missouri has an unusual relationship controlling law enforcement in Kansas City, which doesn't have authority over its own police force. In a unique arrangement for a large city - one that [*dates back to the Civil War era*](https://missouriindependent.com/2023/01/10/state-control-of-kansas-citys-police-has-roots-in-the-civil-war/) - a board dominated by appointees selected by the governor [*has oversight*](https://nul.org/news/urban-league-greater-kansas-city-lawsuit-moves-forward) over law enforcement matters.

Despite [*a lawsuit from the Urban League*](https://nul.org/news/urban-league-greater-kansas-city-lawsuit-moves-forward) of Greater Kansas City and increased activist pressure the last few years, the state has not relinquished its control over the city's police department. "If that's not colonialism, I don't know what is," Gwendolyn Grant, president and CEO of the Urban League of Greater Kansas City, told me in 2022. "It's unconscionable."

It's unconscionable, but for the foreseeable future, it appears unlikely to change. And with Missouri's strong gun culture as entrenched as ever and rampant crime involving firearms showing no sign of abating, that's a shame.

When I've interviewed Kansas Citians about their team, they describe the Chiefs as an equalizer, a conversation topic that bridges divides of ***politics***, class and race. The team also provided a respite, a refuge from the cares of daily life - like crime and gun violence.

Few things make Kansas Citians feel better about their city and their neighbors than their football team, especially when they contend for championships. Going forward and perhaps forever after, the boundless joy they felt will be tempered by a twinge of fear, as they recall the shock and violence of this saddest and most tragic Super Bowl celebration.

Opinion by Mark Dent

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