

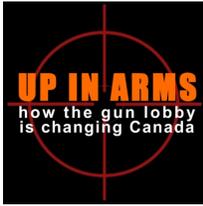


## **MEDIA KIT**

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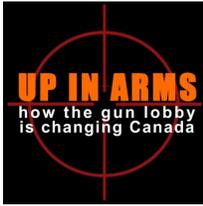


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**[Watch the Trailer & Download Press Photos](#)**

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## LOGLINE

**Up In Arms: How the Gun Lobby is Changing Canada** reveals how gun owners are building a powerful lobby in the image of America's NRA (National Rifle Association), and what that could mean for some of Canada's most at-risk communities.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

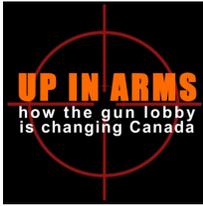
Since the repeal of Canada's long-gun registry, gun sales are up, gun clubs are booming, and a once silent minority is coming out of the closet. **Up In Arms: How the Gun Lobby is Changing Canada** takes viewers inside our country's evolving gun culture to witness the evangelical zeal with which gun owners are winning converts and building a pro-gun lobby in the image of America's NRA (National Rifle Association). Meanwhile, in Toronto's marginalized neighbourhood of Weston-Mount Dennis, the film follows youths involved in a program designed to keep them away from guns, gangs, and drugs. In these strikingly different communities, connected only by the gun, perspectives are set against the backdrop of disturbing statistics about the relationship between gun deregulation and gun violence.

## FULL SYNOPSIS

Tired of the stigma associated with owning guns and emboldened by recent wins in the gun control battle, Canadian gun owners are on the offensive. Since the demise of the long-gun registry in 2012, Canada's gun lobby has been pushing for more deregulation.

**Up In Arms: How the Gun Lobby is Changing Canada** takes viewers inside a gun subculture that is just now coming out of the shadows. With an estimated 10 million guns in Canadian homes, Canada ranks 13<sup>th</sup> among gun-toting nations. For every one hundred Canadians there are 24 firearms. This new feature documentary follows gun enthusiasts John Evers who, with evangelical zeal, is winning converts and building a pro-gun lobby in the image of America's National Rifle Association, and Tony Bernardo, the man behind the defeat of Canada's long-gun registry and the recent passage of The Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act.

But what impact will the pro-gun lobby's legislative wins have on Canada's urban centres, where a growing number of at risk communities are plagued by poverty, crime and gun violence? In Toronto's marginalized neighbourhood of Weston-Mount Dennis, we follow youths involved in a program designed to keep them away from guns, criminal gangs and drugs, all of which threaten them and their community. Each of them knows someone who has been shot, or carried a gun for protection. Their reality is juxtaposed



against the gun lobby's call for reduced gun control legislation, and the views of law-abiding gun owners.

In Hamilton, Paulette Langlois's gun shop has been selling guns for almost 30 years. She's at war with her neighbours and politicians who want to hamper her business. Amidst the gentrification of Locke Street, her store, Al Simmons Gun Shop, is a beehive of activity with four salesmen on the floor and a gunsmith in the basement. Paulette's customers run the gamut from doctors and lawyers, to retired police officers and seasoned hunters. Her neighbours want her gone, but Paulette's more inclined to stay. Each year she sets up a side-walk booth at the Locke Street Fair displaying her guns to parents and children alike. Despite vandals and break-ins, Al Simmons Gun Shop is not about to close its doors.

**Up In Arms** follows the unfolding stories of our characters within these strikingly different communities. Their perspectives are contextualized by disturbing statistics about the relationship between deregulation and gun violence. Convicted gun trafficker Ricardo Tolliver offers a chilling explanation about why more than 70 percent of Toronto's crime guns come from the United States, and it has everything to do with gun laws. But, recently, more and more crime guns are originating in Canada. In Toronto, half of all guns used in crimes are now being sourced from Canadian gun stores or gun owners.

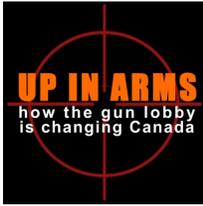
Canada is one of the few countries in the world repealing gun control legislation. The result has been a steady increase in the number of gun sales and sport shooters. At the same time, gun violence is escalating in Canada's most vulnerable communities.

Is this where Canada is headed? A world of two extremes, divided by the gun, and motivated by fear?

### **TIMELINE OF RECENT GUN LAW IN CANADA**

**1995** - The 1995 Firearms Act introduces new licensing, storage and transport requirements. It also requires the creation of a long-gun registry. The government predicts the registry will cost taxpayers \$119 million.

**2001** - The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST) is created to support law enforcement in combating gun trafficking.



**2002** - The Auditor General reports the cost of the long gun registry will reach \$1-billion by 2005.

**2006** - Conservative Leader Stephen Harper becomes Prime Minister; vows to end the long gun registry.

**2008** - Canada enacts three year mandatory minimum sentences for a first offence of possession of a loaded prohibited gun, five years for a repeat offence.

**2010** - The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association and the Canadian Association of Police Boards appear together before Parliament to defend the long gun registry.

**2012** - The federal government abolishes the long gun registry and all registration records are ordered to be destroyed.

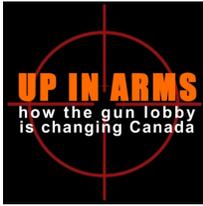
**2013** - The Ontario Court of Appeal rules that the mandatory minimum sentences for possession of a prohibited gun introduced in 2008 are unconstitutional.

**2014** - The Supreme Court of Canada upholds the Ontario Supreme Court's decision; striking down the federal government's mandatory minimum sentence for gun crimes.

**2014** - The RCMP reclassifies several restricted and non-restricted semi-automatic firearms as prohibited. The Canadian government grants amnesty to gun owners already in possession of these firearms.

**2014** – Bill C-42, The Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act, requires mandatory safety training for all new licensees, abolishes Authority to Transport permits, and gives the Minister of Public Safety authority to classify firearms.

**2015** - The House of Commons passes The Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act on May 29.



## **QUICK FACTS ABOUT GUNS IN CANADA**

There are an estimated 10-million privately-owned guns in Canada.

For every 100 Canadians there are 24 firearms.

Gun sales are growing in Canada at about 10% a year.

There are about 300 gun shows a year in Canada, where gun owners buy and sell firearms.

The global small arms market is forecast to grow from \$4.1B to \$5.3B by 2020.

66% of U.S. gun exports come to Canada.

More many years, 70% of gun crimes in Toronto were committed with guns smuggled from the U.S. Now, 50% of Toronto crime guns are sourced in Canada.

“Straw purchase” refers to guns legally bought by a licensed individual and then sold on the black market. Straw purchasers are responsible for 30% of all crime guns in the U.S. This method of obtaining illegal firearms was seen for the first time in Canada in 2013.

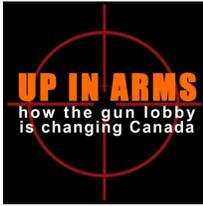
50% of gun murders in Canada are gang and drug-related.

In Toronto, guns have been used in half of all murders since 2000 - up from 25% in the 1970s.

90% of gun murders in Toronto since 2000 have occurred in low-income neighbourhoods.

There are 3,000 to 4,000 police reports of one or more stolen guns each year in Canada.

In 2014, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, the Parliament Hill shooter who fatally shot Corporal Nathan Cirillo, used a non-restricted Winchester lever-action rifle.



## QUOTES FROM “UP IN ARMS”

*“I like to think of us as NRA North.”*

**John Evers**, pro-gun activist, Ontario Regional Director for the Canadian Shooting Sports Association

*“I do see a trend here of piecemeal changes to firearms control in Canada to more resemble the firearms regime in the United States.”*

**Chris Wyatt**, Ontario Chief Firearms Officer OPP Superintendent (now retired)

*“The idea that firearms in your society cause crime is no different than the idea that flies cause garbage. The two of them are not related to each other.”*

**Tony Bernardo**, gun lobbyist, Executive Director, Canadian Shooting Sports Assoc.

*“Without Tony (Tony Bernardo – see above quote) and his advice, I wouldn’t be able to do what I’m doing. ... He’s been the brains of the outfit. I might have been the mouth but he’s been the brains.”*

**Garry Breitkreuz**, Conservative MP for Yorkton-Melville, Saskatchewan, whose private member’s bill abolished the long gun registry

*“The biggest seller now would be handguns. In part because they’re afraid of the Liberals if they get back into power, taking them away from them.”*

**Paulette Langlois**, Hamilton, Ontario gun shop owner

*“See here on the street [Kentucky], you can get them anywhere from 50 to 100 bucks in good condition. Which would be a lot easier and a lot cheaper and you would be able to go to Canada and sell them from anywhere from 1,500 to 2,500, depending on what kind they were and who you’re selling them to. So whatever that system they had has seemed to have worked. Because I never one time met anyone that got a firearm from a gun store in Ontario.”*

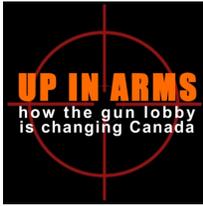
**Ricardo Toliver**, former gun runner, now incarcerated in a U.S. prison

*“We’ve only seen it in Toronto in the past two years. We had two individuals who went out and acquired... about 30 and even 50 guns. Acquired them quite legally and then disposed of those guns, ground the serial numbers off and then sold them on the street.”*

**Bill Blair**, former Toronto Police Chief

*“When you’re from the hood, you can get anything. Anything possible. You can get a gun any way, how. It doesn’t even matter. It’s so simple. All you’ve got to do is ask a person.”*

**Alex**, an 18-year-old former resident of Regent Park in Toronto



## **THE INTERACTIVE WEBSITE: “UP IN ARMS: WHAT DO YOU THINK?”**

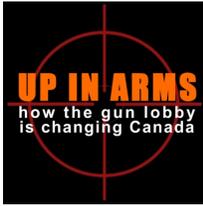
Starting August 28, 2015, visit the **Up In Arms** interactive website at <http://upinarms.ca/>. **Up In Arms: What Do You Think?** invites users to share their opinions about issues related to gun control and public safety. Through a guided 10-15 minute, rich interactive experience, users will have to weigh the viewpoints of police chiefs, lawyers, gun instructors, and gang members – before answering questions about what *they* would do to curb gun violence. At different points in the experience, users will be able to compare their own views to the current laws in Canada and abroad, as well as with other Canadians. Included among the 10 interactive experiences are simulated video and text chats with Bob Rich, Chief of Police in Abbotsford, B.C., who questions about whether civilians should be allowed to own handguns; Saskatoon Police Chief Clive Weighill, President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, who weighs in on the value of background checks; and Ontario gun owner Ian Thomson, who makes an argument for being able to use his gun in self-defense.

## **UP IN ARMS – CHARACTERS**



**JOHN EVERS** bought his first gun at 19 and now owns more than 65. A passionate advocate for personal firearms ownership, John takes a special interest in introducing youth, the next generation, to shooting. As Ontario Regional Director for the Canadian Shooting Sports Association and past President of the East Elgin Sportsmen’s Association, he’s raised his own kids with guns in their hands. A ball of energy with a salesman’s

patter, this preacher will take his pulpit wherever there’s an audience, pitching the pro-gun cause to one, two or a few at a time – whether at his club’s open house, a gun show or a university classroom.



**PAULETTE LANGLOIS** owns one of the busiest gun stores in southern Ontario. Al Simmons Gun Shop has anchored Hamilton's Locke Street South since 1969, through the neighborhood's evolution from a district in decline to trendy restaurant row. Viewed as a social blight by some of her neighbouring businesses and residents, Paulette is targeted by hostile critics and brazen criminals alike – but Al Simmons is here to stay. What began

as a single rack holding 10 long guns has grown to a store with nearly 300 firearms on display.



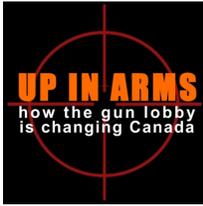
**TONY BERNARDO** is the Executive Director of the Canadian Shooting Sports Association and a full-time Canadian firearms lobbyist. The man behind the destruction of Canada's long-gun registry, his focus now is shepherding the federal government's Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act through Parliament. With the clock ticking towards a federal election, one of the most high-profile shootings in Canadian history dominates the headlines, and

threatens to kill the bill. But with access to the backrooms of Parliament and the highest levels of the NRA, Tony is a powerful force in shaping Canada's gun laws.



**ALEX** grew up surrounded by drugs and crime in Toronto's Regent Park mourning close friends lost to gun violence. Now, at 18, she's out of her old neighbourhood and trying to put the street life behind her. She's joined a community program for at-risk youths in Toronto's Weston-Mount Dennis neighborhood, another area stigmatized by poverty, crime and gunfire. All of the youth in the program have been impacted by the presence of

guns in their community. Back in school and determined to be a role model for her younger siblings, Alex takes the first tentative steps toward a better future.



**RODERICK BRERETON** the co-founder of Urban Rez Solutions, draws on his own experiences with crime and poverty growing up in Scarborough to connect with his young clients. Combining street smarts, a sociology degree and the youth cred of his career as an urban music artist, Roderick thinks outside the box. His program, Take Back Your World, Navigate Your Life, searches for the best hook that will keep each young participant out

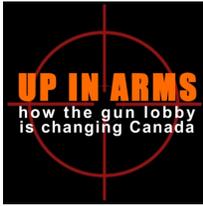
of jail and on the way to a safer, more successful future.



**BILL BLAIR**, a policeman's son, grew up and raised his family in Scarborough, a Toronto suburb that's seen more than its share of crime. Bill began his 10 years as Toronto's Police Chief in 2005, a time when the city was experiencing crime and violence at levels that hadn't been seen since the 1970s. His community-based policing approach won both praise and criticism. He believes the best defense against gun violence are laws that control

the accessibility of guns -- and he makes a dramatic comparison between two cities, one American, one Canadian, to prove it.

**RICCARDO TOLLIVER** is an American who came to Canada to buy marijuana, and ended up masterminding the largest cross-border gun smuggling operation in Canadian history. A bright and charismatic university graduate who was once headed for law school, he is now serving a 32-year prison sentence in a U.S. Federal Penitentiary. He offers up the smuggler's perspective on how gun laws impact the illegal gun trade and whether authorities have a shot at battling the black market.



## UP IN ARMS: THE FILMMAKERS

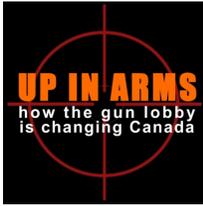
**Nadine Pequenezza**  
**Director, Writer, Producer**



Nadine Pequenezza began her career as a broadcast journalist working with Canada's flagship news and current affairs programs – CTV's *W5* and CBC's *The National*. For the past 17 years, she has created award-winning documentaries for Canadian and international audiences. Nadine's HitPlay Productions strives to tell character-driven stories that captivate, entertain and educate. Her work has screened at festivals around the world from Toronto, to Milan, to Prague to Sichuan. She is a four-time Canada Screen Award Nominee in both directing and writing categories.

Among her feature documentaries are ***15 to Life: Kenneth's Story***, about a 15-year-old sentenced to life in prison for armed robbery and his quest for redemption following a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision. An Honouree at the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Awards, the film aired across the United States on PBS in 2014. For her documentary series ***Inside Disaster Haiti***, Nadine spent six months embedded with International Federation of Red Cross relief teams after the devastating 2010 earthquake, earning a Gemini Nomination for Best Directing in a Documentary Program, a Special Jury Award at the Sichuan Film Festival, and Official selections at the One World International Human Rights Documentary Festival and Milano Film Festival. In 2005 ***Aristide's Haiti*** won a Gold Plaque at the Chicago International Film Festival and was Gemini nominated for Best Writing in a Documentary Program. ***Raising Cassidy***, the story of a crack-addicted mother trying to regain custody of her child, was an official selection at Hot Docs Toronto International Festival and Rencontres Internationales du Documentaires de Montréal.

Nadine's upcoming projects include the story of an international movement that's bringing together big capital and charity to create innovative social programs, and the future of legal euthanasia in Canada.



**Stan Barua**  
**Cinematographer**

Stan Barua's work in documentary and drama has attracted accolades and awards on five continents. Born in Poland where he earned his MA in Cinematography from the National Film School in Lodz, he also lived and worked in Kenya before moving to Canada in 1998. His credits include ***Baba's House*** (Best Cinematography Award, Yorkton Short Film Festival; Eastman Kodak Cinematography Award, Houston International Film Festival; Best Canadian Short Drama Award, Atlantic Film Festival), ***Rain*** (Best Atlantic Canada Short Film Award, Atlantic Film Festival), ***Forgotten Places*** (Best Cinematography Award, Warsaw Terra Film Festival), and ***The Seas of Zanzibar***.

**Denis Takacs**  
**Editor**

Denis Takacs has worked in the Canadian documentary film and television industry for the past 25 years. His projects include the National Film Board of Canada's ***House Calls***, the touching story of a physician who photographs his patients to highlight the lack of adequate home care for the elderly in Canada. *House Calls* won Best Social/Political Documentary at the Gemini Awards; ***Speakers for the Dead***, winner of Best Documentary, Reel Black Film Awards, for revealing black history once lost beneath an Ontario potato patch; ***Raising the Kursk***, Gold Medal winner for Best Science Documentary at the Columbus International Film and Video Festival; and ***Kivalina vs Exxon***, Best Documentary, Whistler Film Festival.

**Ricardo Acosta**  
**Story Consultant**

Ricardo Acosta, C.C.E., immigrated to Canada from his native Cuba in 1993. He is a Sundance alumni and has edited award-winning documentaries, including ***Herman's House***, which premiered at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival and won an Emmy; ***Marmato***, for which he won Best Editor in a Documentary from the Canadian Cinema Editor Awards, ***Sembene!***, which premiered at Sundance and screened at Cannes in 2015, and ***The Take***, directed by Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis, which was an official selection at the Venice Film Festival and for which Ricardo was nominated for a Best Picture Editing Gemini Award.

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