

Stephen Gutowski (00:02.628)

All right, welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to another episode of the Weekly Reload podcast. I'm your host, Stephen Gutowski. I'm also a CNN contributor and the founder of thereload.com where you can head over and sign up for our free newsletter today. If you want to keep up to date with what's going on with guns in America. Of course, if you want to go a bit further, get a bit of a deeper dive, you can buy a membership and get exclusive access to hundreds of pieces of analysis and stories you will not find anywhere else. This week we are discussing.

platform that you may be watching this show on right now. YouTube has made some changes to its firearms policy and anytime that happens there tends to be quite a bit of controversy surrounding it which is why we have a one of the great gun tubers I don't know if that's a term you want to put on yourself John but John Correia from Active Self Protection is with us welcome welcome to the show.

John Correia (00:56.743)

Don't you put that evil on me, Ricky Bobby. I don't claim gun tuber. I am a trusted advisor in the self -defense space, but I am not a gun tuber.

Stephen Gutowski (01:01.668)

How you doing?

Stephen Gutowski (01:07.076)

All right, fair enough. But you do run one of the largest and oldest, I mean, largest cataloged gun related channels on several of them, right? On the platform.

John Correia (01:20.551)

Yeah, yeah. I mean, obviously our big channel, it's not really gun specific. I mean, it's self -defense specific, but we're not, you know, there's a partial focus on firearms use and it's the most viewed in the world. You know, we've got about 1 .8 billion lifetime channel views now on the channel, which is kind of mind boggling to think about, but, and then the second channel, Active Self -Protection Extra, I mean, it's 265 ,000 subscribers over there and there we're teaching, that is a gun -centered channel for sure. I mean, we do legal and moral self -defense and some other stuff over there too, but.

Stephen Gutowski (01:25.284)

Sure.

John Correia (01:50.183)

We shoot guns several days a week.

Stephen Gutowski (01:52.452)

Yeah, absolutely. And you have a, an app as well, active self protection plus. and. my gosh. I'm sorry. Ask unlimited. I know everything's plus, or max or, you know, but the app is great. I am a subscriber. and I recommend that. Yes. And I recommend people go and check it out. You also speaking of which speaking of cross promotions, have a podcast.

John Correia (01:57.511)

Yeah, extra, unlimited is what we call it. So we have our own families of apps. No, I totally get it, man. There's so many out there.

John Correia (02:13.063)

as I am to the reload.

John Correia (02:20.103)

Yeah. That you get to be on every week. Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (02:22.372)

Hosted by my good friend and your good friend Mike Wilber. Yes. Yes. We have a news a news update section of that

podcast as well that I think is a lot of fun to do and Mike Mike is a good host

John Correia (02:35.463)

I think it's a great segment and making that, we did last year, we said, let's make that its own segment so that people, its own episodes, so that people that want that content can find it easier. And I think that was a good change. I think that gives you guys kind of a glow up that has been really good. It's great content, man. I listen to it every week. I listen to the other podcast as well. And I get to listen to that as a viewer. And I think it's really resonates.

Stephen Gutowski (02:57.796)

Love the main podcast. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely love the main podcast. Mm -hmm.

John Correia (03:04.423)

when we get to have that person and we get to see their video with them and hey, this guy got in a real gunfight or a real situation and then hear it from his or her point of view and then watch it happen and learn lessons. I just think there's a powerful resonance there that's really good.

Stephen Gutowski (03:18.756)

absolutely. And I think it gets to the core of what you guys do really well at active self protection, which is that you focus your training and advice on real world scenarios that you have actual video of that people can go through instead of anecdotal training, which is frankly much, much, much more common in the firearms community. so that's why I've always felt you guys stand out and, and where you excel and definitely the podcast taking it a step further from.

John Correia (03:37.863)

super come.

Stephen Gutowski (03:47.972)

Here's this five minute video of the incident to here's a full on interview of the person who was involved. And that's a really, really cool thing. And I'm also glad that we get to do a little bit of a firearms news update to add in there. I think it fits well too. But so all that to say, you have quite a bit of experience dealing with the YouTube algorithm, YouTube moderation.

And I'm interested in your thoughts on these changes. There's some interesting stuff in there. It seems to target mainly homemade firearms and fully automatic fire in videos, either by completely banning, for instance, videos that include instructions on how to make firearms yourself or age restricting videos that include homemade firearms or a fully automatic fire.

What is your takeaway from these changes?

John Correia (04:48.071)

You know, so listen, I tend to ride, okay, I'm a second amendment absolutist, right? The right of the people to keep a bear arm shall not be infringed. Okay, that's the one political position my company has. I'm like, you know, you or any other person. I personally have a ton of political positions. My company has one. I believe the second amendment is a civil right. All people should have access to the rights to self -defense and the best tools available for self -defense. So that said.

I think I am also not one who stands and shakes his fist at the man. I am a capitalism proponent and as a private company, hey man, you make whatever policies you want to make. If I, as a content creator, want to create within that ecosystem, then I agree to your policies. It's as simple as that. Okay. And if I don't like them, mine kick rocks. And so it's different if the government was doing it. If the government had a compelling interest in YouTube, boy, I'd be f\*\*\*ed.

freaking out, but that's not what we're talking about.

Stephen Gutowski (05:50.66)

Well, we can get into that a little bit, I think in a moment, because there was some government aspect here, not necessarily that the government passed a law to force them to do this or anything like that. But we'll get into some of the details of how these changes came about. Let's first go with, have you seen an effect on active self-protections content on YouTube from these rule changes?

John Correia (05:56.199)

Yeah.

John Correia (06:11.559)

No, not yet. No, I haven't seen anything. First of all, we wouldn't see any effect for him because the changes don't go into effect, I think, until June 18th. So they haven't taken effect yet. Because of the... I don't. I don't expect any at all. I think that the content that I produce... I do have a couple of videos on the Active Cell Protection Extra YouTube channel that have me shooting suppressed firearms. So those might end up age-gated, quite frankly.

Stephen Gutowski (06:21.924)

Do you expect any?

John Correia (06:40.359)

The way that YouTube normally works, every once in a while you'll have an older video that will somehow catch some wind in its sails from, you know, maybe the homepage or the algorithm, picking it back up for some reason. But, but for the most part, older videos in the catalog, you're not going to get a ton of views on. And so if they get age gated, I probably won't even recognize it, frankly, unless I go back and look and I'd have to scroll and scroll and scroll. Cause we post every single day on both channels. So.

I don't expect it. I think it might kind of like think about, okay, so am I going to put more? I mean, with right now, especially the ATF, e-filing on suppressor forms is back in, I've seen as little as 18 hours. So I was, I was literally just thinking, man, I need to get some suppress, some more suppressors, you know, because now they come back so fast. The thought of putting some more of that content on the channel was very appealing.

Stephen Gutowski (07:25.238)

Yeah, really, really changed.

John Correia (07:36.903)

this new policy makes that way less appealing. So, you know, I don't know that I will, especially because a suppressor is expensive.

Stephen Gutowski (07:42.244)

Right. Right, because this policy. sorry, go ahead.

John Correia (07:47.463)

I mean, especially because a suppressor is expensive. So for me to do that involves a pretty good investment of money. And I only have so much of that to go around. I know people think YouTubers, you know, they just make it rain and they've got unlimited funds or everybody just sends them things. If any of that was true, somehow it missed me. So, but, you know, it has it affected things. No, I don't do home printed firearms. So that's one of the things that they're age gating is, is homemade firearms.

I haven't gotten into that game hardly at all. I live in Arizona, man. It's the most firearms friendly laws in America. And so I'm like, I'm not going through the garbage of building an 80 % lower Nautiloc. Like I'm an HK guy. Like, you know, nobody's building homemade HKs and I'm not, you know, gonna forge an AR billet. It's just, they're too cheap to buy. And so, and I can have them. And so I don't, it doesn't bother me. I'm not saying others don't have a place for that. So, so I don't.

I don't anticipate it having a problem, but I do see, you know, some people, especially in the entertainment side of the Gunter net, as we say, you know, they show that stuff because it's novel and because it's cool and because people who

like that content, it's, it's novel and compelling. And so I think it will affect, I could see it affecting somebody like demo ranch, you know, Matt character and, and, or probably not somebody like Hickok.

You know, he's generally your fun old uncle who's just enjoying shooting on his cool range, but he does some full auto stuff. And so that might affect him. You can see some of the other channels that are probably effect in some way and that'll shape content moving forward.

Stephen Gutowski (09:24.388)

Yeah, because I agree. I think that these changes will have a much more significant effect on your channels that focus on 3D printing guns or gun homemade gun building, whether for entertainment or for, you know, sort of political activism, obviously a big component of that sphere of the gun community. And also the entertainment channels that shoot full auto and do all kinds of just crazy fun things with firearms.

because these changes age restrict any firing of fully automatic weapons or homemade firearms or but one thing I one way I could see could see it affecting your channel potentially beyond the suppressor aspect the silencer aspect is this age gate for anyone using a high capacity magazine or what they call a high capacity magazine now they don't define that in that in least in this section of the new policy.

And, you know, I guess there's no way to know for sure what it's, what it's going to be. Right. And that could back, that could.

John Correia (10:23.111)

And in the new policy...

In the new policy says, you know, manufacturing high capacity magazines is prohibited content. And, and, and it links that. So manufacturing high capacity magazines or belts over 30 rounds. And so I, I think the probable linking there of those two means if we're talking about over 30 rounds being high capacity, which, which if, if we could set there, I'm like,

Stephen Gutowski (10:39.78)

Right. It does in that section.

John Correia (10:54.535)

Okay. We call a 30 round magazine, a standard capacity magazine. I would agree with that on an AR pla you know, pattern rifle at 30 rounds is, is the modern standard of capacity. Cool. It could though. I mean, if they, especially if they define it as anything over 10, you know, right. I know it'll be an interesting thing as things move forward from the state's perspective, because under the Bruin test, I don't think that arbitrary magazine capacities are going to survive long.

Stephen Gutowski (11:01.828)

That's what they come with in those places, yes.

Stephen Gutowski (11:11.14)

Right, which is how a lot of states define it, a lot of the states that have capacity bands or limits.

John Correia (11:24.103)

I don't think they've been beat up too much yet, but I think that they're going to catch some, you know, text history and tradition challenges that are going to be very tough for the government to defend. I mean, there's lower hanging fruit for the time being. So, but that won't affect YouTube. They can define that however they want, right?

Stephen Gutowski (11:47.076)

Sure. But that seems like something that could have a major effect, especially on your second channel, not just by if anything that includes a so -called high capacity magazine gets age restricted. That's going to be, you know, if you define it as 10 rounds, that's going to be probably every gun you shoot on that channel, right?

John Correia (12:06.023)

I mean, it doesn't have to be, but it, I mean, my everyday carry gun has a capacity of higher than 10. And most of my staff who's shooting on channel, they carry standard capacity magazines, 17 rounds is typical in the company. So yeah, that will affect and, you know, starting to get those age gates will be a problem. I mean, on the big channel, I kind of fight tooth and nail with the algorithm over age gating for violence. So.

It's not like I'm not used to age gating and, you know, restricted monetizing. I will tell you, if my channel was, if I got the views I got and I was showing stuff that didn't worry about monetization problems, I'm not saying I'd say anything, but you'd know because you'd see me videos of me flying in my airplane places, that's for sure. But yeah, maybe in one that I, maybe more than my little Cessna 172 that I go flying, you know.

Stephen Gutowski (12:37.764)

Right.

Stephen Gutowski (12:55.972)

Maybe in a jet instead of a prop plane.

Stephen Gutowski (13:03.972)

Right. But yeah, I do want to get into how age restricting actually affects like your production of content. And obviously, I think you'd probably deal with it more than a lot of other gun related YouTubers because of the nature of the videos you're doing, which are kind of overviews of violent events so that people can learn from them for self-defense purposes. But going back to this high capacity magazine thing for a moment, it reminds me a lot of.

John Correia (13:04.903)

But it, yeah.

John Correia (13:16.327)

Yeah, big time.

Stephen Gutowski (13:33.284)

the silencer suppressor screw up in moderation that happened a while back with YouTube where they themselves came out and said that they had messed this up, but it's sort of indicative of some of the issues with how this stuff actually gets enforced in practice, because what is a high capacity magazine, right? They don't tell you. How in the world is, like,

a robot that scans your video going to tell the magazine is high capacity or not. And then same question for the people, the actual humans at the second level of moderation, you know, after an appeal or something, how are they going to make that determination? Cause that was, that, it seemed was the big problem with the suppressor issue they had a while back where they were just.

striking and banning all sorts of videos that had suppressors in them, like being screwed on or there was some, it wasn't really clear what the issue was, but it had something to do with suppressors. And, and YouTube said that they had sort of made a mistake in how they were enforcing that rule. I mean, what's your expectation or concern for how they're going to enforce this rule?

John Correia (14:43.495)

Well, I mean, A, I don't expect or believe that YouTube has anybody in their policy wing and anybody in their enforcement wing who understands a thing about firearms, okay? Or if they do, they're at a very low level and don't have significant influence. I will say at Facebook for a while, we had a real gun guy at a kind of a C-suite level for a few years there, and that was very helpful. That got us some understanding, like a guy that had lunch with Zuckerberg on the reg.

and unfortunately he retired. And, and so then that, you know, we didn't have that. I don't expect that with YouTube at all. And so, you know, when you've got policies that are made by people who, who aren't cognizant and conversant in the issues, you're going to make mistakes. And then when those policies are not communicated well to, and they, they're

completely opaque on enforcement. Who is doing the enforcement's bots for sure. It's a, you know, that's an algorithm generated AI level of.

of first enforcement, then if you appeal it, who's seeing that appeal? Is that appeal being done by contract labor in Malaysia? Not that Malaysian people can't be really good at things. I'm not saying that at all. Do they understand this particular issue? You know, I, again, I don't know who it is. Is it some guy who lives in Mountain View, California, who has never handled a gun in his life and doesn't understand what the issues are and doesn't understand what the enforcement standard is, and then you can't appeal it further?

It's just, you know, we recently, in fact, just the other day, Tuesday, I caught a strike on my big channel, which was really frustrating because it wasn't earned. And I appealed it. It was on a short video and got a response back in about six hours that said, no, sorry, we denied your appeal. We know this is frustrating, but sorry. And that's it. I have no further avenue of discussion. Like, can you tell me why? What can I do to avoid this in the future? Well, read the policy. I've read the policy. It's not very, it's not helpful.

in this issue. I need to know where my violation was so that I can do better. And it's opaque.

Stephen Gutowski (16:45.412)

Right, and that's kind of the issue across platforms at this point, right? I mean, this is, and they do this intentionally, and as they've explained, I think every major social platform has explained this at one point or another, they keep the rules somewhat intentionally vague because they don't want people to be able to

get around them or go through loopholes or whatever so that they give themselves a lot of discretion in how they enforce these things. And you kind of just have to live with that as a creator. But I mean, it seems sort of Damocles' situation with that, right?

John Correia (17:20.135)

Constantly. I mean you are living under the sword of Damocles because I mean I have a catalog on my big channel of over 4,000 videos I mean 4,500 videos at this point and they are all reviewable at any given moment and so at a moment's notice they could go strike one strike two strike three you're out and And I have no control over that. Yeah, just delete it

Stephen Gutowski (17:38.788)

and just delete your channel, right? Yeah.

John Correia (17:42.055)

That's the big reason that we started our own family of apps because I, you know, living on rented land with the sort of Damocles hanging over you is, is, I mean, if it's just me and I'm like, Hey, you know, I'm feeding my family here, but I could go get another job if I needed to, but I got 12 employees, you know, and all those people feed their families based on the revenue that we generate doing this. And so I have to think about them too, you know? And, so it, it.

It's not an easy thing. I think people think of their average content creator on YouTube as some, you know, fit girl who, you know, takes a selfie and then Instagram pays her a million dollars or something. You know, you're an influencer or whatever. For most of us, this is a business and we run it like a business and it's like any other small business in America. I create a product, I get paid for that product. People consume that product. I get paid for it. I have employees who do parts of the business for me.

And it's it's a small business like any other so it's a it's a it's an interesting small business And is it gonna be a problem moving forward? I mean, it's it's been a problem. I've been posting videos to YouTube daily since April of 2016 So, you know eight years eight and a half years or eight and a little bit now of doing that and it's just After a while you get used to the way of doing business and when they make a tweak you look at the tweak and you go Alright moving forward. Let's do this

I'm not going to go back and remove any videos because I'm not worried about anything I will say when they started

when the bump stock, you know, that was a government action when, when the ATF said bump stocks are now considered short barrel rifles or not bump stocks rather, I'm sorry. Pistol braces became, yeah, when the pistol braces were declared to be short barrel rifles, I went and took every video off of active self protection extra with a pistol brace on it because

Stephen Gutowski (19:23.844)  
Mr. Braces.

John Correia (19:32.679)  
I'm like, well, wait a minute. They were, I could certainly say they were legal then, and it was considered a pistol then, but are the bots going to understand that? Is the ATF going to understand that? That is a whole nother issue. So I just took them all down and there weren't a ton of them anyway. So.

Stephen Gutowski (19:47.492)  
And as far as all this goes, I think it is important, I think, to note for a moment something that you told me, I think, years ago when we first started talking about this issue, that to be fair to YouTube, they do seem to try and make some good faith effort here in trying to accommodate firearms content of some kind.

You know, they've obviously just gone over a lot of the problems that they have, which also frankly extend to all kinds of content on YouTube. I think firearms gets, firearms is a bit of a disfavored topic and industry, so probably gets a little bit more than tech YouTubers or some of these other groups. But it is an issue across platforms, the way content moderation works and how.

building a business on somebody else's platform, the risks that come along with that, these are not unique to the firearm space. But going back to sort of the suppressor silencer issue that they had when they changed that policy a little while back, they did make a good faith other to sort of rectify what they had done, these mistakes that they made in moderation, which tells you that.

They could just get rid of all gun content if they really wanted to. What's your view on that?

John Correia (21:15.271)  
Yeah, I mean, it's a private business, yay capitalism, you know, and so they can do whatever they want. I think again, if they get kind of, if they're not careful though, they could be declared, you know, a public conveyance, right? And then they'd be in real trouble and they've been working really hard to make sure that they don't, that Congress doesn't declare them, you know, we're part of a public utility or whatever. And so as a private business, yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (21:38.724)  
Yeah, they could face political backlash, but it's not a, I guess part of it is just not a very big part of YouTube. I know it probably seems that way to your average viewer of gun content, but if you go look around the rest of the site, it's like Mr. Beast or something like that, it's really not much.

John Correia (21:52.071)  
I mean, yeah, firearm related content is just a rounding error in the total view count of YouTube every month. It's literally, I mean, it's a tiny, minuscule part. It's big for us, right? Obviously, the views that my channel gets every month are humongous for my family and for my business and for my staff, but in the grand scheme of things, they're nothing. So them even saying, okay, we're cool with that. We wanna, you know, and they're facing pressure on the other side too. And you know, hey, we don't want that.

Stephen Gutowski (22:07.044)  
Of course.

John Correia (22:21.767)  
And when they come and they make this compelling argument, you know, firearms are the number one cause of death in teenagers in America today, which takes some massaging of numbers and whatever. But, you know, then you go,

wait a minute. How do we, you know, we don't want people to get radicalized. I agree. We don't want people getting radicalized on YouTube. You know, I don't want kids exposed to stuff that is detrimental to their, their development as humans, you know? So.

There's definitely a balance there and I think YouTube has. I've had YouTube creator partners, you know, where I got a rep with an at YouTube .com email address that I'm meeting with a few times a month to kind of talk through issues and they go, hey man, I love your content. I love what you're doing. And, you know, I think that you're doing the best you can. Yeah, there's some challenges here with this stuff and the other thing, and I'm not on that end, but we can help you with this. So they go back and forth. You know what I mean? I don't think they're...

sitting there in the Silicon Valley with a big black hat on, you know, trying to, you know, smoking a big cigar, trying to figure out how to stick it to, you know, the right wing. I don't see it that way.

Stephen Gutowski (23:28.516)

Yeah, but getting back to the point you mentioned beginning there, the pressure that they face, because the catalyst for this rule change was an effort by the gun control group Everytown to pressure them alongside the Manhattan district attorney, Alvin Bragg, to make these changes that.

this was not something that came about organically or something that was an internal effort by YouTube itself to identify issues in the space and correct them or what have you. It was an outside pressure campaign that did include a letter from a district attorney, a government official with prosecutorial power. Now it didn't involve a law change or...

a lawsuit or anything like that or criminal charges against YouTube or anything, but it did involve this government pressure campaign and this pressure campaign from the officials aligned political groups. So what do you make of that? How much does that concern you or do you think that's just part of the, I mean obviously this happens on the other side as well, but I'm just interested in if that adds a level of concern.

John Correia (24:47.079)

Yeah, I mean, it's concerning. Sure, it's concerning. And I think, you know, especially in light, we just had a Supreme Court decision come down in favor of the National Rifle Association in a First Amendment case, right? Involving an elected official, putting pressure on someone else not to do business with this person. And so I think under that precedent, we could go back to this district attorney and I...

think there's grounds for legal action there if we wanted to, if somebody wanted to get involved in that suit. This is an elected official putting pressure on a private company to put pressure on other private companies like this one, like mine, to not do business with that company or it will cost you and you have prosecutorial powers to do that and legislative powers to do that. And that was declared, I mean, nine zero. The court was not, there was no split here. There's no dissenting opinion.

Goodness gracious. I believe Sonia Sotomayor wrote the opinion on it for gracious sakes, saying, how much did it have to gall her to say the National Rifle Association is right? She's no NRA fan for sure. And yet, I actually think that's a beautiful thing that she said, no, when they're right, they're right. And we don't say somebody's wrong because when they're not, when we don't like them, we say that they're right when they're right. And they're right here and you can't do that.

Stephen Gutowski (25:59.684)

yeah.

John Correia (26:13.351)

And.

Stephen Gutowski (26:13.732)

Yeah, I mean, I definitely think there's some parallels there. I don't know that, you know, obviously the NRA case, there was sort of explicit threats, allegations of explicit threats of additional government retaliation if they didn't drop the



NRA and they were pretty explicit about the reason they wanted the NRA to be dropped is because they didn't like their political beliefs. So I don't know if Bragg's letter fits that, but it does seem.

in the same sphere, right?

John Correia (26:44.007)

I agree, I don't think it's the same spirit. I would say we're in, you know, I wouldn't say we're not in the same ballpark necessarily, but we're in the same league.

Stephen Gutowski (26:54.532)

At least from what we know, there may be things that come out later, because a lot of what's at stake in that NRA Supreme Court case were behind closed door meetings. She sent public letters like Bragg did in this situation, but she also is accused of having these sort of intimidating behind closed door meetings with these insurers in the NRA situation. But let's get into the consequences of this, right? So.

Talk a little bit about age -gating. If your videos do become age -gated because YouTube takes a very broad view of what high -capacity magazine means and just every video on the second channel that you have that involves shooting a gun now becomes age -restricted, how is that going to affect the content that you produce?

John Correia (27:38.215)

Well, I mean, it's when your video gets age gated, you basically are cut out of AdSense on that video. You're going to make pennies on the dollar on that video if you make anything at all, really on the AdSense side. So if your business depends on AdSense, which a lot of channels do, you're just going to have to you either take the risk and hope for the best. Or I know channels that will upload the same video 10 times, hoping to sneak one past the bots.

And you know, they're all unlisted till they get through a review process or whatever. I don't do that, but I know plenty of channels that do. And it will cause programming changes for those channels because I guess if you are doing it as a hobby, if you're doing it as something for funsies on the side, maybe not. Or if your channel's not monetized, maybe not. But when you're making a living at it, I mean, yeah, it's going to, it's going to affect.

When you say, wait a minute, my earning potential on this video is a tenth of what it would be otherwise, well, that'll change how I make that if I make that. It won't change anything for me. I mean, I'm gonna make what I make and I'm gonna make educational content, because my mission is educational. So I'm gonna make educational content. But certainly on the entertainment side, and that's the vast majority of gun channels are at most entertainment, but most of them are just for entertainment.

Of course it's going to affect how they make content.

Stephen Gutowski (29:08.612)

Yeah. Yeah. And I mean, I guess that's the sort of insidious nature because not it's obviously a bit different than giving you a strike or deleting your channel or banning the video, but age restricting something I think is more severe than people might understand it first. Now I would imagine that you are comfortable with them age restricting certain kinds of content, especially some of the, even the content that you produce on the main channel because of the violence in it. Right. I mean that just,

John Correia (29:35.847)

Yeah, I mean, I don't want 12 year old kids watching people get murdered. I mean, nobody wants that, you know, that's even though they do in their video games all the time and mom and dad are sitting watching already movies with them where people are being brutally murdered all the time. You know, I want, right. And if mom and dad want to show that to them because it's real life and they feel like the child is mature enough to handle that kind of content, great.

Stephen Gutowski (29:48.676)

Sure, but these are real videos of real life, right? This is a bit different, right?

John Correia (30:00.039)

then that's a decision parents make. I'm, I'm a big fan of, of parental consent and, and parents raising their kids. But, you know, there's certainly limits to that, right? I don't, I don't want, I think most Americans want, you know, don't want six year olds exposed to pornographic content. You know, that's, that's a pretty easy standard, right? So age gating that stuff and saying, no, we don't want any of that for younger ones is smart. And I don't.

I don't fight YouTube, our main channel videos get age gated, I don't know. I hesitate to give you a percentage, but it's not uncommon. And so when it happens, I go, bummer, okay, whatever. And the funny part is some of them that maybe should be aren't, and some of them that shouldn't be are, and you just learn to roll with the punches. But they do, and because of the content is violent, I get it.

Stephen Gutowski (30:49.732)

Right.

Stephen Gutowski (30:53.284)

But presumably you don't agree that just firearms training should be educated necessarily.

John Correia (30:59.111)

No, no, gosh, no, that's a good moral. You know, it's not, that's not any legal activity. It's not a threatening activity, firearms training, firearms shooting. I mean, gosh, I raised my kids. We were out hunting in the woods, you know, all the time. My kids all hunted squirrel with me. They all hunted dove with me. They all hunted quail with me. My son hunted big game with me. Not because my daughters weren't welcome to, they just were like, nah, I don't wanna go sit in the woods for a week with you, dad, get out of here. And so,

You know, I disagree with age gating that kind of content as a general rule at the same time. I go, okay, with billions of minutes of video uploaded every day on YouTube, how do I, how do I differentiate and how do I teach what's the okay stuff versus not? I really think what their problem is at the end of the day is kind of extremist or, or kind of edgy ideology that goes along with some of that training.

You know, like you come on Active Self -Protection Extra and you're going to get straight firearms training. It's, hey, here's a drill we're going to run. Here's a technique you're going to use. Here's an idea for this, but it comes with no politics and it comes with no kind of, I mean, the second amendment absolutism, but, but nothing other than that. Whereas, you know, a lot of other channels, they just don't do that. There's other stuff that is, that, you know, is in the train as it were, you know? And so I don't know how you would enforce that other than, you know, if you pull a,

an X and you just go to free speech zone have at it y'all. Well then you run problems on the other side because now you've got ISIS recruitment videos and you know really truly like you know well can the Nazis can legit Nazis post recruitment videos. Yep it's a free speech zone. You know I'm not not a big fan. So.

Stephen Gutowski (32:45.892)

Yeah, a lot of people don't like that. Yeah. Right. and then, you know, can you walk us through just, you know, you had this strike put on your channel recently. What, what does that mean practically? And you know, how does that inform where you're taking out active self protection in the future? How you approach these platforms? It's not just YouTube, right? You're also on Instagram.

John Correia (33:00.903)

Ugh.

Stephen Gutowski (33:11.364)

and some of these other platforms as well that have, I imagine, pretty similar issues as far as moderation goes.

John Correia (33:17.959)

Yeah, and the funny part is that we've, you know, you're living on rented land. This is why I founded my own family of apps, why we developed our own, because when you're living on rented land, somebody else's platform, you are

dependent on them for access. Whereas when you have your own, you're more in control of it. What happened there was about three years ago, we got a random...

Stephen Gutowski (33:33.219)

Cough cough

John Correia (33:45.671)

warning from YouTube, hey, this video is no good, we're pulling this video down, but it's just a warning from you. Okay, fine, I don't see why it was, whatever. Well then this one just randomly again, it is by no means the most violent video on the channel, it's by no means, I think egregious. And so I don't think it should have, but what it caused is it caused me, they pulled that video, it was a short video, it was a 60 second video. They pulled it.

And they issued a strike to the channel and they prohibited me from uploading content for seven days. So I can't post a new video for a week, which I post a new video every single day. So that is costing me a significant amount of revenue. I also, each one of those videos that would post during that week, has a sponsor on it. We take private brand deals and sponsorships. So I'm having to.

You know, go back to those folks and go, Hey, we're gonna, we're gonna have to change the schedule here and there's nothing I can do about it. So that's affecting relationships. It's affecting revenue. once that gets done, it's kind of, we'll go back to situation normal. We had already been, putting stuff that I deemed kind of too hot for YouTube only in our apps. And so we're like, Hey, this is too much. YouTube's just not going to like this content. And I get it. There's some that they are like, I,

I've got one coming if you're in the Ask My Unlimited app. There's one coming tomorrow, in fact, that I say to everybody.

This is really graphic and you need to understand if you want to pass this one by warning danger Will Robinson don't show this one to the kids. Okay.

Stephen Gutowski (35:17.668)

And you're good about that, honestly, in your content. Obviously, it's hard to watch any of these violent videos to some extent, but there are certain ones that are just more difficult to watch. And you warn people.

John Correia (35:31.815)

There are, and we try to be very cognizant of that. And so, you know, we're posting those more and more only in the app and just going, hey, we're just not going to even take a, you know, a swing at them on YouTube. I will say that I had one that was going to post as a short. So one of the things that we do on the main channel videos is we use, I've been using shorts as a draw to the full lesson, because I want people to learn lessons. I don't, I'm not into violence porn. I'm not into, you know, just violence for the sake of violence, but I use the short.

to draw people over via the related video link to the main video with the actual lessons in it. But my big argument to YouTube has been, hey, this is allowable on your platform because of the educational context of it. I am an educator and you watch the whole video and there's an education here. It's very difficult in the shorts. And so I'm taking a more, now the shorts can really get you a ton of views and bring new faces to your channel, like big time. You can get,

those views can, you know, you can get a million views on a short pretty fast. It doesn't happen a ton, but I'd say I've been getting a million views on a short once or twice a month or more. And so great, bring people over, come see the bigger video and come and subscribe and then you get more content. But I've got to be a little bit more careful moving forward because I can't, I really can't risk a second strike. So I'm going to be more careful with shorts.

and, and because there's less educational context in the shorts and, I'm going to be a little more selective on that. And if it's kind of any doubt, I'm just going to make it app exclusive and just say, Hey everybody, you know, we've done that. The thing is, is we've done it a couple of times, like about four times, I think in the, in the 15 months we've had the app live. I have said, Hey, today's video is too much. Hit the link in the description or the first comment. And it.

will pop up in a web browser for you on the Ask Unlimited app. You don't have to do anything. You do have to give me a sign in that I know that you are a human, right? So that's kind of my own kind of age gate there that you're a real person and not just a bot showing up. But you don't got to pay me a penny or whatever. And it causes a significant amount of sore posteriors on YouTube when I do that.

John Correia (37:50.183)

People view that as a money grab and they get really unreasonably angry. Now the funny part is they go, then hey, watch it there in the browser, great, sign in, watch in the browser, close the browser and we can come back and talk about it here. I just don't wanna catch strikes on YouTube. That's what I don't wanna do is I don't wanna catch strikes on YouTube and people get big angry.

Stephen Gutowski (37:50.692)

sure.

Stephen Gutowski (38:10.74)

Well, people certainly feel entitled to free content on the internet. That is a very common thing. Luckily, not everybody. There are many, many reasonable people out there that will support your work if they believe it's worthwhile. But there are a lot of people who just want you to work for free, basically. It's always funny to me because most of our member exclusive content is analysis.

John Correia (38:20.679)

Luckily. Yeah.

John Correia (38:32.455)

It's very true. It's very true.

John Correia (38:39.303)

Mm -hmm.

Stephen Gutowski (38:39.364)

Right? So it's my take on what's going on and my explanation for things, my personal view on it. And people will demand that I just tell them that for free. And it's like, this is weird. Think about what you're doing here.

John Correia (38:54.883)

You know, internet strangers, parasocial relationships are a weird thing. You know, parasocial, I've dug deep into parasocial relationships as a kind of, you know, I'm, social media celebrity is real celebrity in 2024. And so, you know, we've got a total social following over 4 million. So, and people think they know you and you're in their house every day or every week, whatever. And, you know, when I'm out in public, people come up and they just talk at me like they know me.

Stephen Gutowski (39:11.332)

Yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (39:15.364)

Sure.

John Correia (39:23.431)

And I'm like, hi, I didn't catch your name. It's nice to meet you, I'm John. And, my name's Jim. Hi Jim, it's nice to meet you. And it's a little subtle reminder, we don't know each other, right? And so that's like you saw, okay, much bigger celebrities than me, but you saw Jason and Kylie Kelsey were out for a night on the town and a couple out there asked her, asked them for a selfie.

Stephen Gutowski (39:35.364)

Right.

John Correia (39:49.031)

And they were like, nah, we're just out for a night. We'd rather not. And that lady just lost her stuff on, on Kylie, Kelsey, which, I mean, I know you're a Philly guy and so.

Stephen Gutowski (39:55.076)

I know. You don't do that to Kylie Kelsey. Kylie Kelsey is this a hot take, but Kylie Kelsey is the best of the Kelsey's in my opinion, especially watched the documentary. She's well, I mean, look, she's from where I'm from. She's from Delco. She sounds like my sister. They live next, you know, in the same town as my my grandmother. And so, you know, I got a affinity for them. But yeah.

John Correia (40:05.031)

Yeah, absolutely.

John Correia (40:21.575)

Well, and she came off in that video, she came off like an adult. Dude, just calm down. I can smell the alcohol in your breath. This is a bad look. And of course, the woman, when she sobered up, came back later and was like, my bad, sorry everybody. But like that level.

Stephen Gutowski (40:35.716)

Yeah, yeah. And look, I hope people let that all go, but yeah, it's a thing. It's a thing.

John Correia (40:41.671)

Totally, totally. I mean, anybody can get drunk and stupid. It's a thing, right? So people expect, you're just gonna give me what I want. Well, wait a minute, man.

Stephen Gutowski (40:50.628)

And I think they've been conditioned to be fair to some of these people, like especially in the news industry, which gave away news for free for a long time on the internet. And people just expect that you ought to, and same thing like you were talking about with YouTube, people assume that if you're big enough YouTuber that you're very rich, just by virtue of advertising, everybody thinks advertising is gonna...

Say that's enough, you don't need to do anything else. And in real life, when you're running a business like your business or my business, that's not realistic at all.

John Correia (41:23.943)

It's no different. You know, I do some expert witness work and you hear people talk about it. It's just highway robbery what attorneys charge these days. And I go timeout. Do you know what it costs an attorney to run a practice? Do you know what all this goes for and how many billable hours they can actually bill a week and the cost of their secretary, their paralegal, their errors and emissions insurance, their office, their all these things. And they have to build thousands of dollars every month just to cover that before.

they can pay for their law school degree before they can pay for their mortgage. And so then it starts making sense.

Stephen Gutowski (41:53.572)

Sure, sure.

Yeah, same for like a cable contract. Not everybody's making millions of dollars off those things. I can tell you, not that I'm very happy with my situation, but that's not... I'm not a multimillionaire from that. That's just not how it works. It is very wonderful opportunity and situation, but I'm not... Yeah, rolling in the cash. Not at all. No. But so going back to this real quick.

John Correia (42:03.783)

Right. You're not making it rain via comparing on CNN? Haven't bought the house in the Hamptons yet?

John Correia (42:18.183)

Yes. I say, listen, I'm not complaining about what I make on YouTube. I'm not mad about it.

Stephen Gutowski (42:27.64)

Because it's easy to catastrophize about this stuff, right? These rule changes, there is the potential with the way moderation works, the opaque nature of it, the mistakes that get made, the lack of knowledge on the moderator's parts, all these things we've discussed for you to lose your business overnight. That's a real thing that could happen. However, you've been dealing with this for, as you mentioned,

John Correia (42:48.647)

real thing?

Stephen Gutowski (42:54.564)

Almost, it's surprising to say this, but almost a decade now.

John Correia (42:59.719)

Absolutely a decade. So October 2014 is when I made my first analyzed video. That was on Facebook originally. We still have the Facebook page. So we've been doing analysis of video content and posting videos for a decade in October.

Stephen Gutowski (43:04.452)

There you go.

Stephen Gutowski (43:11.044)

And it seems to me like you've figured out that there's not necessarily going to be any major shift in response to this, that the way you're operating now, which is kind of trying to abide by the major platforms rules even as they change and shift, but also having that backup of running your own media.

apps to allow you to publish the sort of things that they won't let you on YouTube and to give you a more stable kind of revenue stream that isn't wholly subject to the whims of the algorithm or what have you. And that seems to be how you're going to operate moving forward, right? And then it seems to be something that's working.

John Correia (43:44.903)

Mm -hmm.

John Correia (43:59.687)

Yeah, I mean, I think catastrophizing doesn't do anybody any good. I think that, so I am, I'm an educator, right? So, you know, my background, I was 14 years as a pastor and nine years as a college professor. At the same time, those are overlapping things. And, and so, but, but I'm a businessman today. I run a business, active self -protection is a business. And so when you look at it as a business, well, when the market condition changes, you can either cry foul and say, it's not fair or.

you can adjust to the current environment and make a business that succeeds. So, you know, IBM started as a meat scale company, right? And rather than say, you know what, our meat scales are what we need to make, they continue to shift the business as the market changed and they still continue to do that, right? Apple, you know, they don't make the products that the Apple II and a home computer, home computing is not Apple's mainstay anymore.

I mean, sure, they do make computers, but that's not where their money is made. And so you got to adjust and be a business person and understand that. And that's hard because not a lot of YouTubers are business people. They just found a niche because people like their content. And so, you know, you got to just roll as things go and go, all right, well, if that's the new rules, what are we going to do moving forward? And again,

How do we adjust to the current environment? Now, not to say we can't complain when the environment gets unfair.

Something's like, hey, I don't think that's fair. I think it's, the words I use all the time, arbitrary and capricious, right? I don't like arbitrary and capricious rule enforcement in anything, nobody does. But I also have to remember, I'm not YouTube's customer. You and I as viewers of YouTube, I view YouTube every day as a consumer.

We're not the customer. We are the product as the viewer. The customer is the advertiser. And at the end of the day, YouTube is trying to keep their customer happy. And that customer is the people that are sending them dollars in advertising. And so, you know, as long as you keep it up from that perspective, and I am an adjunct that helps them get their product viewers to their customer advertisers.

John Correia (46:23.687)

then you just kind of go with the flow, you know, and I work, so our CEO Stephanie Widener is a genius at this stuff at kind of going, hey, how do I need to adjust the stuff? I won't adjust my messaging, but you know, how do we balance not catching strikes on YouTube with reaching people on YouTube? Because we want to reach people on YouTube because YouTube has got such a broad audience and it lets us educate the public about these issues. And, and.

At the same time, you know, then we say, okay, but then how do we adjust to the current market environment? And we will. And that means probably I, you know, am I going to shoot suppressed guns a bunch on extra? Probably not. You know, there's no, I don't shoot them a lot on it right now, but if you go, hey man, we put a suppressor on a gun, it's going to get age gated. And so then we won't make any ad sense revenue on that. Is it worth it for us to do that today? No, especially when I can just take the suppressor on.

Stephen Gutowski (47:22.756)

Yeah, certainly. So, like I've, I've also invited YouTube to come on the show, to send a representative to, to discuss these rule changes. I do think, you know, while it may be understandable that they want to keep things vague to avoid dealing with people trying to get around their rules, that also creates obvious and severe problems for people like you are trying to operate in good faith. so I'm, and I'm a

John Correia (47:31.239)

Cool.

Stephen Gutowski (47:51.364)

journalists, I'm always for more transparency in these things. So I'm, they said they're going to consider it and hopefully they will get back to me and we'll have them on for a fair, you know, interview that gets into maybe some more of the details of how this is all going to work.

John Correia (47:55.143)

Yeah, me too.

John Correia (48:09.543)

Do you feel like that's mom when you were five years old? Do you feel like that was mom when you were five years old? I'll think about it. And you're like, cool, she said maybe. And then like, she's helping like, forget about it. Like, yeah.

Stephen Gutowski (48:20.74)

Well, I'm always surprised. To be honest, somebody who's reported on these major platforms for well over a decade now, they are very tight -lipped most of the time. And I often expect that I will reach out for comment and hear nothing back. And so when I do hear something back, I'm often surprised that they did it and grateful that.

that there's been a response that doesn't mean that their response is always acceptable, right? Or that it, you know, the suppressor situation, they kind of have me weirdly acting as a middleman for the complaints that people had. I don't know why they decided to do things that way. But, you know, instead of just talking directly to the people affected, they...

John Correia (48:54.823)

Sure.

Stephen Gutowski (49:12.676)

I was writing the story, I asked her for comment and they reached out and gave me an explanation which is a proper thing to do but also they had me send them everybody who had an issue and I was like, this is a weird, I'm glad to help people but this is something YouTube should do themselves. But regardless, it's always weird and interesting dealing with these.

these massive platforms are massive companies generally Walmart when they after the El Paso shooting they decided to stop selling certain kinds of ammunition and when I got a hold of their corporate headquarters and spokespeople to talk about the logic behind how they made that decision because they stopped selling some ammunition but not others and it was a convoluted mess of a.

statement on it and you could tell that nobody there even though Walmart was the largest ammunition retailer probably still is just by scale alone. Yeah, I mean just because of how big Walmart is and they still sell some ammunition. You know, they clearly the people at the top or people talking impressed had no idea what they were talking about when it came to the subject and so it's always interesting dealing with with people at that level in these giant companies but.

John Correia (50:12.071)

Right, just by volume.

Stephen Gutowski (50:34.436)

you know, look, I do my best to give them a fair shake and that's what we'll do if they decide to come on the show. I'm not going to hold my breath because it's not a common thing for them to do, but, but Hey, look, I, I always want to offer. I always want to offer and they'll have the same platform like you just had here. I'll ask them questions. They'll have unedited opportunity to respond. And, I think that would be advantageous for everybody involved. Give people a little bit.

John Correia (50:40.615)

Yeah, for sure.

John Correia (50:46.791)

Maybe they will.

Stephen Gutowski (51:03.748)

more clarity on what these rules are going to mean in practice. cause a couple paragraphs on a website is not going to cover everything, obviously. But, yeah, look, we, I appreciate you coming on and giving us your perspective on this. I think it's a valuable one and you know, we'll have to have you on the show again in the, in the future. it's always good to have you on and, and, it's always good to be on the, the act of self protection.

John Correia (51:07.047)

Yeah, I hope they do.

Stephen Gutowski (51:31.396)

podcast as well, so I really appreciate that.

John Correia (51:34.343)

I'm grateful to be here, man. Anytime I can help, I'm game.

Stephen Gutowski (51:37.508)

And if people want to find more acts of self-protection, where can they do that?

John Correia (51:42.279)

Well, obviously our website, ActiveSelfProtection .com, it kind of can farm you out to the various places from there for



as long as they allow it. You can go on YouTube and search Active Self Protection. We'll pop right up two channels there, Active Self Protection and Active Self Protection Extra. Of course, we'd love it if people downloaded the app, iOS, Android, Apple TV, Roku, Amazon Fire, and then you can sign up for the Ask Blight, which is free with just an email address.

And there's, I think, 200 pieces of content on the free tier right now. So there's a lot of great content there, including the podcast is free for everyone in video format every week. And then, but you know, naturally we'd love folks to sign up for ASP Unlimited. And that's just filled with exclusive content to help people be good, sane, sober, moral, prudent in self-defense.

Stephen Gutowski (52:32.164)

Yeah, I especially like the compilation videos where you go through a number of examples on a specific topic, a number of examples of real world videos. Again, I think again, the big key to what you guys do and show the lesson. That's what made me get a carry gun with a larger magazine because I watched the video about magazine capacity and how they're.

John Correia (52:52.999)

Mmm.

Stephen Gutowski (52:57.988)

are scenarios in real life where people needed more than eight or 10 rounds and people never reload in real life gunfights. So it changed my, sure, private citizens know. So it changed my habits because of real world information, which I appreciate. So people should check that out. Go over, download the app. You won't regret it, I guarantee. All right, I will guarantee it for you.

John Correia (53:07.335)

Private citizens don't at least, cops do all the time, but...

John Correia (53:18.279)

Dude, you just made my day.

Stephen Gutowski (53:27.684)

All right, well, that's all we've got for this week's episode. We don't have a news update this week, just so you guys know. I'm dealing with family issues, the loss of my father. So it's been a bit of a hard week. But I like to stay busy and keep doing some work and bring you guys the content that you've.

paid for and expect. So this has been helpful to do this. I appreciate, John, you coming on and doing it in short notice. That was very kind of you. But.

John Correia (54:01.255)

Yeah, man, anytime. And again, of course, our condolences for the loss of your father. He seems I never knew him, but boy, he sure seemed like a good man from everything you said.

Stephen Gutowski (54:09.796)

He absolutely was. And it's difficult to lose him, especially at a young age. But he was surrounded by family, including myself at the end. So I was grateful for that. But yeah, that's all we've got for you this week. We'll likely be back next week as well, though it may also be effective.

by the funeral and stuff. I'll have to see how that goes. Anyway, thank you guys so much for tuning in. I will see you again real soon.