



## Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of American Gun Violence Jens Ludwig, Ph.D.

Edwin A. and Betty L. Bergman Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy.  
Pritzker Director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab.  
Codirector of the National Bureau of Economic Research's working group on the economics of crime

## Christian Mitchell

Vice President for Civic Engagement for the University of Chicago.  
Former Deputy Governor for Public Safety, Energy, and Infrastructure for Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker.

**Wednesday, May 14, 2025, 7:00 PM**  
**Evanston Township High School Auditorium**  
**1600 Dodge Ave., Door 6, Evanston, IL 60201**

This event is #freeandopentothe public and will be recorded but not live streamed.  
**NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED**  
Suitable for youth 12+



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JENS LUDWIG, PH.D. – IN PERSON**

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**No registration required.**

In 2007, economist **Jens Ludwig, Ph.D.**, moved to the South Side of Chicago to research two big questions: Why does gun violence happen, and is there anything we can do about it? Almost two decades later, the answers aren't what he expected. ***Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of American Gun Violence*** is Ludwig's revelatory portrait of gun violence in America's most famously maligned city.

Disproving the popular narrative that shootings are the calculated acts of malicious or desperate people, Ludwig shows how most shootings grow out of a more fleeting source: interpersonal conflict, especially arguments. By examining why some arguments turn tragic while others don't, Ludwig shows gun violence to be more circumstantial—and more solvable—than our traditional approaches lead us to believe.

Drawing on decades of research and Ludwig's immersive fieldwork in Chicago, *Unforgiving Places* is a breakthrough work at the cutting edge of behavioral economics. As Ludwig shows, progress on gun violence doesn't require America to solve every other social problem first; it only requires that we find ways to intervene in the places and the ten-minute windows where human behaviors predictably go haywire.

Ludwig is the Edwin A. and Betty L. Bergman Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy. He is the Pritzker Director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab, codirector of the National Bureau of Economic Research's working group on the economics of crime, elected member of the National Academy of Medicine, and a member of the Committee on Law and Justice of the National Academies of Science. His work has been featured in leading peer-reviewed scientific publications as well as national media like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, NPR, and *PBS NewsHour*, among other outlets.

Ludwig will be in conversation with **Christian Mitchell**, Vice President for Civic Engagement for the University of Chicago. In this role, Mitchell oversees the Office of Civic Engagement, including state and local government relations, as well as the Office of Business Diversity and Commercial Real Estate Operations. Prior to becoming Vice President, Mitchell served as Deputy Governor for Public Safety, Energy, and Infrastructure for Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker.

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Sponsored by **FAN**, in partnership with The Avery Coonley School, Baker Demonstration School, Beacon Academy, Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School, Brickton Montessori School, British International School of Chicago/Lincoln Park, British International School of Chicago/South Loop, Catherine Cook School, Chicago Jewish Day School, Compass Health Center, Countryside Day School, Evanston Township HS D202, The Family Institute at Northwestern University, Family Service Center, Foundation 65, The Frances Xavier Warde School, Francis W. Parker School, Glenview Public Library, Gorton Center, Haven Youth and Family Services, Hyde Park Day School, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Kenilworth D38, Lake Bluff D65, Lake Forest Academy, Lake Forest Country Day School, Latin School of Chicago, Leo Catholic High School, Libertyville D70, Lycée Français de Chicago, Morgan Park Academy, New Trier High School D203, North Shore Country Day, Northwestern University Office of Neighborhood and Community Relations, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy, Pope John XXIII School, Regina Dominican High School, Resurrection College Prep High School, Rogers Park Montessori School, Roycemore School, Santa Clara University School of Law, Science & Arts Academy, Stevenson High School D125, Township High School D113, University of Chicago Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, Wilmette Public Library, Woodlands Academy, Youth & Opportunity United.