



Tactical Talk

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"No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms. The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government."

-- Thomas Jefferson,
1 Thomas Jefferson Papers, 334

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UPCOMING CLASSES

Combative Pistol II

May 19-20, 2007, Saturday - Sunday, at Rangemaster

This is a very intensive shooting course. There is almost no classroom time, just a lot of shooting geared toward making you the best shot possible. You will need about 1,500 rounds of ammunition. Both daylight and dim light firing included. Students should be a prior graduate of Level III Handgun or Combative Pistol I prior to this course. We conduct this class all over the U.S., but only do it about twice a year here at the home range.

Dynamic Marksmanship Course

June 30-July 1, 2007 - Chattanooga, TN

Low Light Skills

July 12, 2007, Thursday, 6:00-10:00 p.m., \$69.00

Classroom instruction and range practice firing in various dim light conditions, both with and without a flashlight. You will need about 200 rounds of ammunition. Should be a graduate of at least Level II prior.

Back-Up Guns (BUG) Course

July 23, 2007, Monday, 6:00-10:00 p.m., \$79.00

Classroom and range instruction on the selection of a BUG, carry methods, and deployment. Advantages/disadvantages of the various types will be considered, and you will get an opportunity to fire a variety of common small back-up handguns. Guns and ammunition are furnished, or bring yours.

Combative Pistol I

Combative Pistol I

August 20-21, 2007, Monday -Tuesday

at H&H Gun Range, Oklahoma City, OK

Controlling Fear and Making Sound Decisions Under Stress

By Tom Givens

When a responsible person first begins going armed, he is usually haunted by two recurring questions, or self-doubts:

1. If I'm really attacked, and my life is at stake, will I be able to handle it?
2. What if I screw up and kill an innocent person?

This is a normal reaction, and to a degree it is healthy. We do, however, need to address these issues and resolve them, before a conflict, so that they will not raise their ugly heads when we should be concentrating on winning the fight. Remember, if an unavoidable fight is thrust upon us, we **MUST WIN!** The alternative can be death, or crippling injury.

The first issue to face is that of FEAR. Fear is a normal reaction to physical violence for most people. In addition, since most of us no longer have military experience and live in "civilized" surroundings, we may not have ever actually engaged in a true fight before our moment of truth in a criminal attack. This fear of the unknown is, for many, worse than the fear of being hurt or killed.

First, let me say this. Unless you are an exceptional person, a nutcase, or a liar, and you have actually been involved in armed conflict, you have tasted fear. I'm not ashamed to say I have been scared several times, and I fully expect to be scared again before my life is over. What you must learn to do is control your fear, and do what you must to win.

Fear can be controlled and overcome, even in life threatening circumstances. This is obviously true, and it is proven every day by hundreds of ordinary people all over the country. Here are some steps you can take to make this process easier:

1. Admit to yourself you are afraid, then move on. Concentrate your mental energies on the task at hand, not on your fear of death, injury, or loss of ego.
2. Avoid dwelling on the chance of failure. Concentrate on finding a way to win.
3. Take control of yourself. Autogenic breathing is the very best and most efficient way to do this. (Details later.)
4. Focus on getting the job done.
5. Have a Plan B. Always, always, always, expect Plan A to fail. Expect your gun to malfunction. Expect the suspect to stay up after being hit solidly. Expect to be injured. If any of these things occur, have a pre-planned option to continue (Plan B).

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6. Turn anger into a motivator. Who does this clown think he is?!? What makes him think he has the right to (rob/rape/kill/ pick one) me?!?

7. Accept an element of fate in every situation. You can get hurt by accident after doing everything right. Control everything you CAN control (selection of equipment, getting adequate training and practice, being alert, thinking tactically) so there are fewer things you CAN NOT control.

Courage under fire is not a matter of being without fear. It is a matter of being able to control fear and accomplish your mission, which is to stay alive. Only fools are fearless.

The other nagging self-doubt concerns over-reacting and shooting someone under unjustifiable circumstances. If you are reading this, that will not happen. Citizens who are responsible enough to obtain carry permits, seek expensive training, make time for practice sessions, etc. are simply too honest, caring, and self disciplined to shoot people without just cause. In my own state, there have been eight fatal shootings by permit holders in the past three years. Every single one was judged to be justifiable and lawful by the Attorney General's office. Not one of these permit holders was charged with any crime nor were they sued for anything. Why? Because every single case was clear-cut, obvious, and morally, legally, and ethically justified. Private citizens have a great reluctance to shoot, even when it is necessary. In fact, for many the problem they will face is the exact opposite of being "trigger happy". Believe it or not, every day, people who are armed and know how to use their weapons, and who have an opportunity to use their weapons to save their lives, fail to do so and die as a result. This happens to both private citizens and police officers alike.

You ask, "Why on earth would someone who is armed stand there and literally watch a thug kill him?" There are a number of reasons, and they stem from the socialization process that the normal person goes through from birth (but that the criminal does not). These reasons most often include:

1. Moral repugnance to taking a life: You have been taught all of your life that human life is sacred, that to kill is wrong, and that only bad people hurt others.

2. Failure to be mentally prepared: An astonishing number of people who go armed have never given any thought whatsoever to the fact that they may have to shoot someone. To many, the gun is a talisman, and wearing it is thought to ward off evil spirits. In fact, it is a tool, one used for launching bullets, and nothing more.

3. Failure to understand the dynamics of armed confrontations: Many people armed with firearms are killed by thugs armed with edged weapons because they fail to take the "lesser" weapon seriously; they don't understand that deadly force is deadly force, whether applied by gun or knife; and they don't realize how quickly someone at ten feet can be at their throat.

4. Inhibition by community pressure and fear of lawsuits: These are trivial matters compared to being killed, raped, or permanently crippled. Get your priorities straight! Unless you are

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alive, these don't matter, anyway.

5. Uncertainty about when deadly force is justified: This is a training issue. Be certain that you understand the laws of your state as they apply to self-defense and the use of deadly force. Once you have internalized this information, it is simple and easy to see when the circumstances fit the law. There is nothing subtle about someone actually trying to kill you! It will be obvious to you, to any witnesses, and to the police.

The best way to be fully mentally prepared to actually press that trigger if you have to, is to develop a well thought out and plainly stated set of rules of engagement, long before you are faced with a crisis. This is referred to as a "pre-made decision", thought out, verbalized, and firmly planted in your mind in advance.

I suggest the rules of engagement set out by fellow trainer Gabriel Suarez, a decorated veteran of several police gunfights and a world-class firearms instructor. Gabe uses the acronym IDOL, which stands for "Immediate Defense of Life". Make a commitment that you will only fire as a desperate measure to terminate a threat to your own life, or the life of an innocent third party. If you pose an imminent and otherwise unavoidable threat to my life, or that of an associate (wife, partner, etc.) I will act swiftly and decisively to put you down and out. I will reach for my gun for no other reason, period.

Many people think about this incorrectly. They ask themselves, "If he does ----, can I shoot him?" That is a recipe for disaster! Your question should ALWAYS be, "Do I have to shoot him?" Ask yourself, "If I don't shoot this man, right here, right now, will I be killed or crippled?" If the answer is Yes, shoot him! If the answer is No, try something else.

As with most things, this is a matter of training. Proper training ingrains the proper responses. Repetition is the mother of all skill. With skill comes confidence. With confidence comes the ability to think under pressure and make sound tactical decisions.

To be of value to you, training must meet the test of the Three R's. Training must be:

RELEVANT/ REALISTIC/ RECENT.

Relevant training refers to exercises and skill drills pertinent to the task of self-defense.

Realistic training is conducted on humanoid targets, from the holster, with a carry type gun and full powered ammunition, in varied lighting conditions, and under time pressure.

Recent training assures retention of motor skills, which degrade quickly. The skills involved in rapidly firing a full-power weapon with precision are perishable, and are lost completely without frequent practice. I suggest two sessions of dry practice at home each week, with at least one range session per month to maintain competency. Practice builds skill, skill builds confidence. Having a well developed skill set, and the confidence that well developed skill engenders, can help you keep your head and stay in control during highly stressful conflicts. "An amateur practices until he gets it right. A professional practices until he can't get it wrong."

Hot Weather Concealed Carry

Summer will be here soon. The temperature hit 88 degrees several days in March in Memphis this year, so I expect a real scorcher this Summer. Hot weather does not, however, excuse us from the need to go armed. In fact, aggression and violent crime peak in August, as high heat and humidity contribute to short tempers. We tend to wear less clothing in really hot weather, however, with cover garments like jackets becoming less workable for many. There are still a number of viable options for being adequately armed, however—they just require some thought and planning. Let's look at some of our hot weather options.

One option is the Belly Band. This is a ventilated elastic band worn around the waist. It closes with Velcro, and has a holster sewn in. The Belly Band is worn around the waist, under the trouser waistband. If an un-tucked shirt is worn over it, the gun is very well concealed but surprisingly quick to access. Worn just to the left of the centerline (for a right hander) the shirt can be tucked in, but the gun still accessed fairly quickly by yanking out the shirt-tail as you reach for the gun. You may have to experiment to find the most comfortable gun position for you.

Another option is the pocket holster. Just dropping a gun in your pocket does

not work well. The gun tends to move and shift in the pocket, and the outline of the pistol tends to print right through the pants. The pocket holster breaks up the outline of the gun, and keeps the gun oriented upright so you can get a firing grip on it when needed. Good pocket holsters are designed to snag and stay inside the pocket as the pistol is withdrawn. Obviously, the size of gun is pretty limited in this mode of carry. The small Kahr autos, like the PM9 or a small frame .38 snubby are best suited for this type of carry.

There are outer garments suitable for wear in even very hot weather. Concealed Carry Clothiers

(www.concealedcarry.com) makes a Tropic Vest constructed of a very light-weight synthetic material. The Tropic Vest has a vented shoulder cape and is extremely light and thin. It is comfortable and does not look like the "photographer's vest" of days past. Bullfrog Skin offers a very light-weight dress vest, made of tropical weight wool. (www.bullfrogskin.com) This is dressy enough for a professional office setting. Either vest allows wear of a full size pistol and accessories.

Another option is an undershirt with a built-in holster, worn beneath a shirt. We have been experimenting with a

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new version of this carry, and it shows great promise. The T-shirt is made of a special wicking material, which transports perspiration from your skin to the surface, where it dries, helping to cool your body. The T-shirt has a holster built in on one side, and a pouch for spare magazines or other items on the other side. Carrying a spare magazine on the opposite side actually helps balance the shirt, and keep it from sagging on one side. A loose fitting shirt is worn over the T-shirt, concealing the gun quite well. If worn under an un-tucked polo shirt, you simply pull up the outer shirt to expose the gun. An unbuttoned Hawaiian shirt is great for this use. This rig can also be worn under a dress shirt. If you wear a tie, leave a couple of buttons behind the tie undone. This allows you to reach inside the shirt and access the pistol. This is an excellent option for the dressy office environment. We have these in various sizes, in either black or white in the Pro Shop.

The last option I'll mention is the ankle holster. I wear one quite often for my *back-up gun*, but not for my primary or only sidearm. It takes an awful lot of practice to present a pistol from ankle carry quickly, and it is damned hard to accomplish while moving to cover or getting off the X. I suggest leaving ankle carry to a second gun.



The Undershirt Holster can be worn under a casual shirt, or even a dress shirt. They are available in black or white.



A good Inside Waistband (IWB) holster makes concealment far easier. Examples here from Comp-Tac

Undershirt holster. Works well with small to medium handguns and has spaces for spare magazines, OC, flashlight, or whatever you may choose to carry.



dress vest from Bullfrog Skin

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Brutal Kidnap, Rape, and Murder in Knoxville

Earlier this year Hugh Christopher Newsom, Jr., 23, and Channon Gail Christian, 21, were abducted and murdered in Knoxville, TN. Their vehicle was car-jacked, whereupon they were taken to another location and raped, tortured and murdered. The abduction occurred on the night of Jan 6, 2007. Newsom's body was found the next afternoon near some railroad tracks in East Knoxville. He had been shot to death and his body burned. There was no trace of Ms. Christian.

Her parents found her Toyota 4Runner abandoned two days later, with the help of her cell phone provider. Police found fingerprints in the car which led them to a suspect's address where they found the young woman's body stuffed into a trash can. According to a Deputy U.S. Marshal, "they kept her for a couple of days and brutally raped and sexually assaulted her" before killing her and dumping her body in the trash. Eventually, five suspects were arrested and charged with the carjacking, the rapes and murders. Of course, all five had prior criminal records, and one had recently been released from prison after serving five years for another armed carjacking.

