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DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE REAL WORLD

Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

“ If the cylinder drags, binds, or stops, then one or more of the cartridges is defective and must be replaced...”

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE SPIN



Recently I tested some factory .38 Special ammunition for prospective use in my backup gun. In the course of this testing, I was reminded just how ammo-sensitive revolvers are, and how critical it is to carefully inspect ammunition you plan to carry in a revolver for self-defense.

In one 20 round box of ammunition I found two cartridges that would not allow the cylinder to rotate. In both cases the revolver fired once or twice and then the cylinder locked up, refusing to rotate when I pulled the trigger. Close inspection showed that in both cases the cartridges had a small, identical

dent or burr on the case rim. This burr kept the cartridge from seating fully in the chamber by a few thousandths of an inch. That was all it took to lock the gun up.

The burr or dent on both cartridges looks identical and appears to have occurred during the manufacturing process. This can happen with any brand of ammunition. To keep this from happening in a self-defense incident any ammunition carried in a revolver should first be subjected to a “spin check”. Load the chambers with the ammo you intend to carry, then with your thumb pull back the hammer spur just enough to drop the bolt from the locking slots on the cylinder. Once the bolt has withdrawn into the frame you should be able to spin the cylinder freely in its normal direction of travel (clockwise for a Colt, counter-clockwise for a Smith & Wesson). If the cylinder spins freely, the ammunition is good to go. If the cylinder drags, binds, or stops, then one or more of the cartridges is defective and must be replaced.

It is a bit unusual to find two dented cartridges in one 20-round box of ammunition. However, over the years I have spin checked a lot of rounds in revolvers, and I’ve found a fair number with issues. The spin check is a good way to be confident that your ammunition will function properly when you need it. ■

- By Tom Givens

BOOK LOOK by Tom Givens

I just read *Left of Bang* last night. This is a new book on “Combat Profiling,” by Patrick Van Horne and Jason Riley. For some of us here there was nothing earth shattering or brand new. There was, however, a detailed breakdown of situational awareness and how to cultivate it. There is a wealth of information about spotting unusual or suspicious behavior and making timely and correct decisions about dealing with it. A worthwhile read.

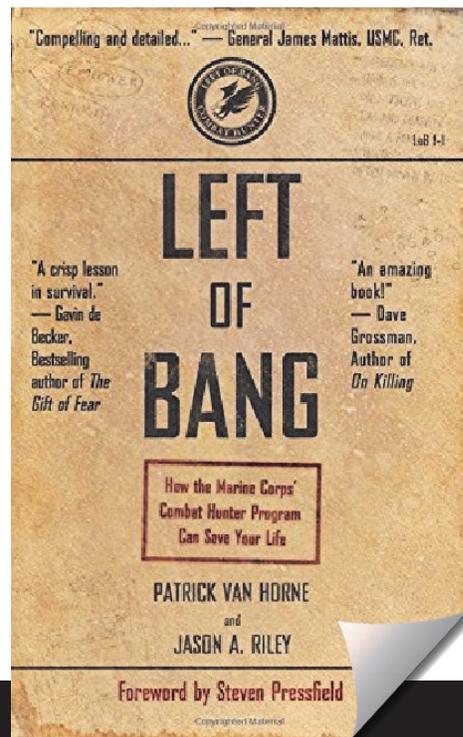
At the end of the book there is a website noted for continuing education. I found some of the articles on that website to be of more value than the book itself. One needs to read the book first to get the terminology and a feel for their method, then go to the articles on the website for practical application. The book is available from Amazon in both print and Kindle versions.

If you were to read the book, go through the practical exercises on the website, and then take MUC with Southnarc, you would have a pretty good grounding in spotting pre-assault indicators and other suspicious activity. Or, you could just spend 10 years in an inner-city patrol car and hope you're a fast learner. I recommend reading this book. ■

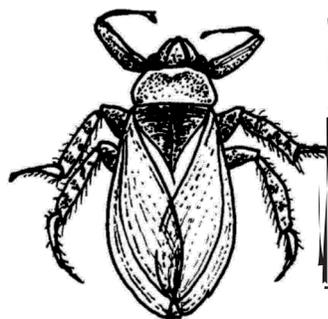
LEFT OF BANG

How the Marine Corps' Combat Hunter Program Can Save Your Life

By Patrick Van Horne and Jason A. Riley



For over ten years, Craig Harper was a staff instructor at Rangemaster. He is highly trained, having taken courses from a number of the best firearms instructors in the US. He also has experience as a Military Policeman in the US Army. A few days ago, Craig and I were discussing a recent incident in which a police officer was killed. The officer was shot in his dominant arm (right handed officer, shot in right arm). Although conscious and trying to fight back, he was unable to reload his empty handgun with his non-dominant hand only, and was executed by his assailant. Craig and I both felt that if this officer had been wearing a back-up gun (BUG), he might have been able to access it and continue the fight. Unfortunately, he didn't have a second gun.



NOTORIOUS BUG

To quote Craig's comments, "For a long time, I was of the mind that I didn't need to carry a BUG. After all, I had a very good primary gun that was well-maintained. It ALWAYS ran. In a class we both participated in – I think it was with Farnam – your 1911 failed. Remember that; your slide flying down range to about the 7-yard line? I saw that and thought, "I KNOW Tom takes very good care of his guns, and it still failed. If it can happen to him, it can

happen to me." That is what convinced me that I needed a BUG. I've carried one ever since."

Craig continued, "During one year's Tactical Conference in Tulsa my thinking was reinforced. I was shooting my "practice" Kimber during the scenarios and it malfunctioned. I cleared it, continued on, until it failed to feed again. At that point I discarded it, ducked behind cover and retrieved my

BACK UP GUNS

for Civilians

Cont'd

Kahr PM 9 out of the ankle holster and finished the stage. My time for the stage sucked; but I was still in the fight! Without a BUG, I would have needed my knife to make a bayonet charge; not a good idea when the bad guy is shooting at you.

Craig is so right, and that is why I carry a lightweight .38 revolver on my ankle, every day, in addition to the Glock 35 in the IWB holster on my belt. My G35 is accurate and reliable, and holds lots of .40 S&W ammo. But if the striker, or some other vital part breaks, the G35 isn't even a good club. That's what the Colt Cobra on my ankle is for.

For many years, while working in law enforcement, I carried a small .38 revolver as a BUG, sometimes in an ankle rig, sometimes in a pocket holster. After I became a full-time trainer, I was no longer involved in law enforcement and carried on a state issued handgun carry permit, like any other armed "civilian". At that point, I confess that I began to be a bit lax about carrying a BUG, relying on my holstered full size sidearm. After a short period of time, while traveling around the country teaching defensive shooting classes, I went back to religiously wearing my BUG, every day. Why?

The answer is simple. In class after class after class, everywhere I went, I saw well maintained, expensive, quality pistols break during high round count classes. By "break", I don't mean "malfunction". I mean, they suffered a parts breakage that rendered the gun out of action until a replacement part could be procured and installed. Bummer! This happened, and continues to happen now, with unsettling frequency. This phenomenon is not limited to one make or model, either.

When working extensively with military units after 9/11, I saw one M9 after another suffer parts breakages, usually locking blocks or firing pins. At one point, I actually had a three pound sack of broken M9 locking blocks and firing pins. With SIG pistols, I've seen the trigger return spring break on all models, and I've seen several slide stops break on P220's, rendering the guns inoperable. With Glocks (Yes, even Glocks!), I've

Without a BUG, I would have needed my knife to make a bayonet charge. Not a good idea when the bad guy is shooting at you.

seen several trigger return springs break, more than one locking block disintegrate, strikers break, extractors chip or break, take down latches fall out, and six slides fail structurally, with chunks breaking off.

The 1911 is a chapter all to itself. In the incident on the range that Craig mentioned, he and I were attending another instructor's course, something we both try to do at least once a year. I was shooting a 1911 customized and tuned by one of the best pistolsmiths in the US. I kept the gun cleaned and properly lubricated, and used only quality ammunition in it. During a drill, the slide stop broke into two pieces, putting the gun out of action. At the end of the drill, I put that one in my range bag and got out my spare, which I loaded and continued the class. I wouldn't have had that luxury during a fight! I have seen 1911's in class break extractors and ejectors, seen barrel bushings come apart (three

occasions), seen the thumb piece break off the thumb safety, and even seen the lower barrel lugs shear off, turning the gun into a very nice paperweight.

Revolvers are certainly not immune. In fact, when a revolver malfunctions, it is usually a problem that will require time and tools to fix. I've seen firing pins break, particularly the hammer mounted firing pins on Smith & Wessons. I've seen ejector rods back out or get bent, strain screws back out from vibrations, and bullets jump forward under recoil, locking the cylinder so that it won't rotate and cannot be opened. If any of these events occur in a gunfight, you darn well better have another gun to continue fighting with.

Since Murphy has a habit of showing up when he's least welcome, I recognize that a well made, well maintained sidearm may break at a critical point in a gunfight.

Given that, I carry a second gun, so if this happens, I can transition to the second gun and continue the fight. We carry a sidearm every day because we recognize that although a gunfight is a low probability today, it is a possibility for which we can be prepared and which we will deal with if we have to. Also, although that gunfight is a low probability event, the cost of losing is simply too high to take the risk of not being armed. To me, the logical progression of this train of thought is that my sidearm is not likely to break during a fight, but if it does, the potential penalty is too great, unless I have a BUG. So, every day, I carry my sidearm, and as life insurance, I carry my BUG. ■

- by Tom Givens

PLAN A
~~PLAN A~~
PLAN B

DON'T BE THAT GUY.

Originally written for
The ShootingChannel.com
(April 17, 2014)



Once you're on the firing line stay there until you are dismissed by the instructor. It is very poor form to walk off the line without permission. The instructor will give you an opportunity to get more ammunition, hydrate, or do whatever you need to do. It is hard enough for the instructor to observe and control everyone on the firing line as it is. Help him by staying in your assigned spot on the firing line until given permission to leave it.

Do not handle your firearm off the firing line. The instructor has to focus his attention on the

Always holster the gun before walking off the line, picking up any object, or doing anything else not directly involved in firing.

On the firing line there should be no casual chatting. Wait until you are off-line to talk about your performance, or anything else with other students. When you are talking you cannot be listening to the instructor's comments, to range commands, or to other important input. One exception would be when you are acting as a coach for another shooter. But even then, if the primary instructor begins talking you should stop

Etiquette

If you have had any formal firearms training, you are familiar with the Four Basic Firearms Safety Rules. In addition to those rules, however, there are some established and customary range practices you should be familiar with.

firing line, so he should not have to watch out for people behind him with guns out. Your handgun should not be out of the holster unless you are on the firing line, facing the backstop, and you have permission to do so.

Do not dangle your handgun by your side. Unless you are at the ready or on target the gun should remain in the holster. If you blow a shot, don't throw up your hands or drop them by your side with a gun in your hand. Keep the gun under control and again, if you don't want it in your hands put it back in holster.

Don't turn around with a gun in your hand and sweep the line, the instructors, or observers.

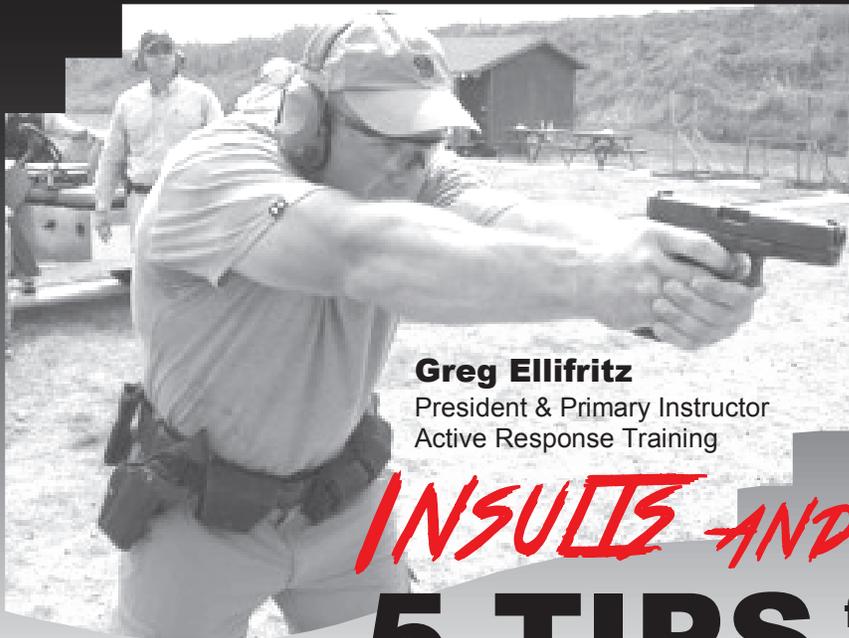
talking and listen to him. You can resume your coaching when the primary instructor is finished.

Immediately obey any instruction or command from the instructor. Do what he says first, and you can question it later. There may be circumstances of which you are unaware.

Electronic hearing protection is such an asset that it really should be mandatory equipment for a shooting class. With electronic ear muffs, you will pick up tidbits from the instructor you may have missed otherwise, including hearing coaching directed at other students. The same coaching may well apply to you. ■

- by Tom Givens

Range



Greg Ellifritz
President & Primary Instructor
Active Response Training

The following article is from our friend and fellow trainer Greg Ellifritz. Greg is a full-time police officer in Ohio and one of the trainers featured at our annual Tactical Conference.

- Tom



INSULTS AND CHALLENGES: 5 TIPS for Effective Verbalization in Violent Encounters

The news story below isn't all that remarkable. It describes something that happens every day with unfortunate regularity. An armed robber shoots one of his victims. There is, however, a worthwhile learning point in the article. The robber walked into a store and fired a couple of shots from a rifle into the ceiling before demanding cash. The victim (a store manager) complied. As she was handing over the money, she was still stunned by what was going on. She made a careless comment, saying "you're not going to shoot me" to the robber. The robber took those words as a challenge and shot her in the leg before taking the money and running from the store.



<http://www.wkrn.com/story/18694890/dollar-general-shooting>

THE INSULTED SHOOTER

When asked by police if he felt any remorse, the robber replied that he did not. He blamed his actions on the victim, stating: "You don't tell somebody that's got a gun pointed at you that you're not going to shoot them." The truth really is not all that important. When dealing with violent criminals, the only thing they care about is THEIR perception of what's happening. The robber here felt challenged and stepped right up to show the victim that he wouldn't be insulted in that way.

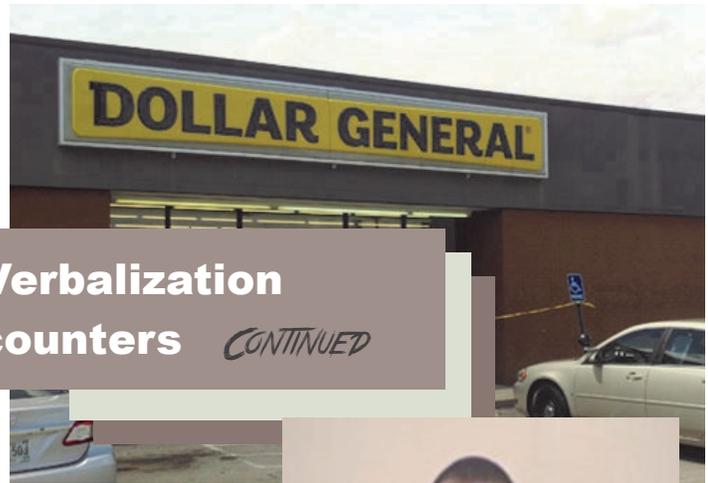
There was an interesting study done in California a while back. It was reported in Michael Ghiglieri's excellent book titled *The Dark Side of Man*. The researcher, David Luckenbill, studied all of the murderers in a California county over a 10-year period and asked them why they killed their victims. You would expect to see a variety of responses. You would be wrong. Every death row inmate interviewed listed one of only two reasons for killing: 34% said they killed because the victim challenged the killer's authority, and 66% said they killed because the victim insulted them in some way.

Like I said, the truth doesn't really matter here. What matters is the criminal's perception. If he perceives a challenge or an insult you are far more likely to be hurt or killed. How should you use this information to successfully plan your strategy for dealing with criminal violence?

HOW SHOULD YOU USE THIS INFORMATION?

1) Recognize that the criminal you face will likely not be operating under the same moral or ethical codes you use on a daily basis. A large majority of violent criminals are psychopaths or sociopaths. They simply don't have any empathy for their victims. Don't make the error of thinking "He won't shoot me because I wouldn't shoot him in the same situation." You would be wrong. Your bad assumptions can cost you your life.

2) Get rid of the false bravado. Most criminals are masters at quickly judging people and using those snap judgments to manipulate them. They will see through your bluff and they may punish you for your attempt to challenge them.



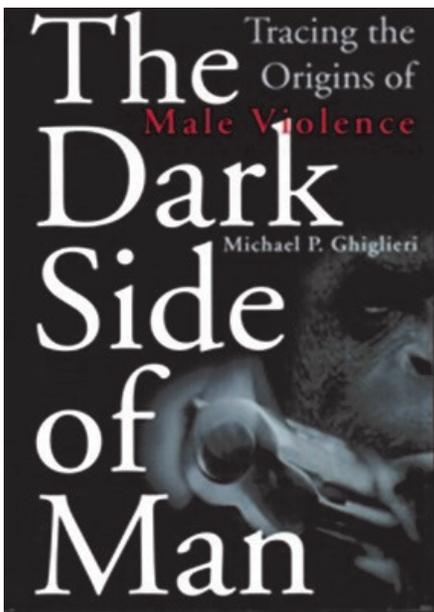
5 TIPS for Effective Verbalization in Violent Encounters *CONTINUED*

3) Don't be insulting. There is a big difference between screaming "GET THE FUCK AWAY FROM ME!" and screaming "GET AWAY FROM ME YOU MOTHERFUCKER!" Profanity can be useful in some contexts, but insulting an armed criminal will seldom have a positive result.

4) Be especially cautious during the times when the criminal is under the most stress. If you choose to comply, or if you are feigning compliance until you can find a better opportunity for resistance or escape, be especially cognizant of the words you use in both the beginning and the end phases of the criminal attack.

Research shows that a criminal is most likely to act violently in the very beginning of his attack. He has to dominate his victim and exert control to get what he wants. Whatever actions you take will likely be perceived as more challenging during this phase.

Recommended Reading:
The Dark Side of Man
by Michael Ghiglieri



The second most dangerous time is right before the criminal makes his escape. If you present any challenge or insult (something like saying "I've seen your face and I'm going to call the police.") at this point, you will be perceived as interfering with the criminal's escape plans and you will most likely be seriously hurt or killed.

5) Rehearse your "tape loop." Most people simply don't think very well when they are under the gun (literally). Trying to figure out the best thing to say while the criminal has you at gunpoint is tough. Master firearms instructor John Farnam suggests having a preplanned verbal response for the most likely scenarios you may face. He calls it a "tape loop." Rather than thinking of words on the fly, you just push "play" and say exactly what you have practiced.

When you are coming up with your tape loop "scripts", avoid any type of challenging language or insults. Keep calm, be monotone and non-threatening even if you are planning a violent resistance. Surprise is a very potent weapon in your arsenal.

Your goal in any criminal interaction shouldn't be mere survival. You should plan to prevail. You won't prevail if you get taken out early in the fight because you said something stupid. Be smart and give yourself an advantage by paying attention to the language you use. ■



Dollar General Shooter

"You don't tell somebody that's got a gun pointed at you that you're not going to shoot them."

- by Greg Ellifritz



Rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. I do not add 'within the limits of the law' because law is often but the tyrant's will, and always so when it violates the rights of the individual.

Thomas Jefferson

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