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DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE REAL WORLD

Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NO NIGHT SIGHTS?

by Tom Givens

I am often asked why my sights are plain black steel, with the front sight painted a very bright, garish orange/red, instead of being Tritium lighted night sights. It's not that I dislike Tritium sights, it's just that they are possibly a waste of money.

Violent crime does not take place in a vacuum. In public, there is no reason for a bad guy to be in real darkness, nor for you to be there. Most violent crime happens on well lighted parking lots, the rest on sidewalks under street lights. I have had my sidearm out on a Stab 'n' Rob parking lot at 3:00am and was able to see the sights better than at 3:00pm on a rainy or overcast day.

So, why orange/red instead of light green, which should be more visible? Green does in fact show up better than red in dim light, *against a blank wall or a tan cardboard target*. Shades of

green are also common, however, in outer clothing, and that's what your sights will be aligned on. Bright orange/red is about the least likely color for a criminal to be wearing when he attacks. That's why my front sights are bright orange/red.

In preparation for an Active Shooter Course we put on, I once went to the food court of a popular local shopping mall, got a drink, and just sat at a table and observed. I had a notebook, and kept tabs of the outer garment colors worn by everyone that came and went in the course of an hour or so. Black, brown, blue, gray, and green in various shades were by far the most heavily represented colors. No one wore an outer garment that was an ugly orange/red color, but an orange/red front sight will show up very well against any of those other colors. A policeman would call this "a clue."

A fire-colored front sight contrasts well with the likely target, and it contrasts well with the all-black rear sight (see image on the following page). If I'm looking through my black rear sight and can see orange/red, my sights are plenty well lined up for a fast shot at typical engagement distances. If a more precise shot is required, the orange/red front sight still makes alignment easier, as it gives a sharp contrast to the black rear sight notch.

Automotive touch-up paint sticks to sights pretty well, as it's intended for use on metal (even better if primed). I often use model paint and touch it up periodically. My carry gun and training guns are identical, so my carry gun gets shot very little and the paint lasts a long time on it. The training guns get repainted more often. ■



Visualization, or imagery, is one of the most effective tools available to you for mental conditioning. This is vital to success in a fight. Under stress, your subconscious mind will immediately take over and direct your body to do whatever the subconscious has been programmed to do. If you have been programmed through training to respond correctly, you will. Panic is simply the lack of a pre-programmed response. Since your subconscious doesn't know what to do, it does nothing. (When in danger, or in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout!) Obviously, your odds of surviving improve drastically if you have pre-programmed the correct tactical responses before a crisis.

NO NIGHT SIGHTS?

"If I'm looking through my black rear sight and can see orange/red, my sights are plenty well lined up for a fast shot..."

- Tom Givens

The Power of Visualization

by
Tom Givens

How do we program these correct responses until they become automated? There are three ways. First, you could engage in about a dozen gunfights. You would then be adept at making rapid, sound tactical decisions, *if you are still alive!* We don't recommend this method because the test comes first, the lesson afterward. This is a painful and expensive way to learn.

Bismarck said, "A smart man learns from his own mistakes; a wise man learns from the mistakes of others." This is especially true in this business, where mistakes can be fatal. The easiest way to learn from the mistakes

of others is to read a big city newspaper each day as you eat your breakfast. Look in the local news and select two instances reporting the criminal victimization of some unfortunate person. Take five or ten minutes to read these two accounts and actually analyze them. Ask yourself two questions, and make yourself come up with an answer.

The first question is, "What did the victim do to put himself in this situation?" Once you learn a bit about criminal behavior, you realize that above all, criminals are opportunists. They capitalize on circumstances created by inattentive, complacent, lazy, and unobservant victims.

Very soon you will learn to recognize the behavior or activity on the part of the victim that facilitated or even precipitated the crime. This will hold true in probably 95% of the cases you study. Once you have identified the specific victim behavior that caused the attack, you are reinforcing in your subconscious that this is negative, or harmful behavior. Day after day, by doing this, you are programming

your subconscious to avoid that type of behavior. If you don't present the opportunity, the criminal cannot take advantage of it.

The next question is, "Alright, I was careless and got into this mess, how do I get myself out of it?" Make yourself think up a solution to the tactical situation. In this manner, you are getting practice every single day in making tactical decisions. If you make tactical decisions every day of your life, they will come easily to you if you find yourself in dangerous circumstances. If you have never practiced this decision-making process, how do you expect to do it well under extreme stress?

The last technique in imagery we will discuss has to do with mentally rehearsing confrontations, to prepare beforehand for a confrontation. In your mind, as a normal, healthy person, there is a very fine line between reality and fantasy. A psychopath no longer has this distinction in his mind, and his fantasies become his reality. A normal mind blurs this distinction under several circumstances. If you are an avid reader, for instance, you "see" the action of a good novel or historical account unfolding in your mind as you read. You form mental images of the characters and events, as if you had

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seen them yourself. How many times have you awakened from a vivid dream and taken a few seconds to orient yourself? These are examples of that blurry line between reality and fantasy.

Airline pilots periodically receive training in a flight simulator, which is an enclosed box mounted on hydraulic jacks. Upon entering the simulator, the pilot is seated in a cockpit seat, a control panel is arrayed before him, and the “windshield” has a back projected image on it, just like the view from a plane. As the pilot applies control movements to the stick and so forth, the “plane” responds with motion. Within a few moments, the pilot’s brain is fully convinced that he is flying a plane, although intellectually he knows he is bolted to the floor of the training building.

At some point, the control panel will advise him of an emergency, and the “plane” will simulate the movement involved, as in a sudden dive. The pilot must immediately take corrective action to keep from “crashing.” Although they are in no real danger, these guys come out of the simulator white knuckled and sweating, because the mind blurred the distinction between reality and fantasy. If at some future date the pilots are confronted with that actual emergency in a real aircraft, they will automatically respond, quickly and correctly, because their brains have learned that the correct action will save their lives.

You can do the same thing with your mind in a self-defense context by using visualization exercises. Go to a quiet room and sit in an easy chair. Relax, and clear your mind of all thought (easy for some of us!). Now, in your mind vividly imagine a tactical scenario. See it as a daydream if you like, but get into it and project yourself into the action. For every imagined

"A smart man learns from his own mistakes; a wise man learns from the mistakes of others."

action by the bad guy, direct yourself through a proper reaction. “If he does this, I’ll do that.” Always direct the action to a successful outcome.

Let me give you a couple of examples. If you work in a retail environment, ask yourself, “What am I going to do when they stick this place up?” Visualize your workstation, and the surroundings. Where is cover? What direction could you fire in without endangering coworkers? Is there an escape route available? Don’t wait until a hold-up man is standing across the counter from you to think about this. If you are a boss, ask yourself, “What am I going to do if a disgruntled employee comes plodding down the hall with a shotgun?” Is there any other way out of your office? Is there any real cover available? Where is the secretary? You might find you want to rearrange your office. Find out now, not while under fire!

There are really only ten or twelve ways for a thug to violently victimize you. White-collar crime has endless opportunities for innovation, but street crime is pretty straightforward. Over a period of time, you can visualize your way through just about all of the likely forms of street crime, and have pre-programmed responses filed away in the back of your mind (the

subconscious) ready for deployment if faced with a similar circumstance.

One last area to address is that of practice targets.

Beware of doing all your shooting practice on bullseye targets or only vaguely humanoid targets that look more like a milk bottle than an attacker. Do some of your work on targets that look like a real, live, armed, threatening human being. Your subconscious needs to be accustomed to seeing your sights superimposed on such an image, otherwise you may lock up the first time you put your sights on a real assailant.

If you are faced with a life-threatening crisis in a form you have never seriously considered or given any thought to, you may hesitate just long enough to lose. If, on the other hand, you take a little time to practice these “simulations”, you can program ready responses and be able to retain control of yourself and your actions. Your mind needs to know that there is a way out, and that you know what it is. This avoids panic, and allows you to act decisively, which is your salvation. ■

OVER-PENETRATION

Earlier I wrote an article about some ballistic testing I observed at this year’s Rangemaster Tactical Conference. The bottom line of the article was that one shouldn’t depend on expansion from short barreled pocket pistols. That article generated all kinds of emails and questions on Facebook. Most questions centered around the issue of handgun gelatin penetration. Almost all of the rounds we tested penetrated a full 16” of gelatin. Folks were asking me why a bullet would need to penetrate 16” when the heart and other vital organs are only a few inches deep in the chest cavity. The reason is that penetration in gelatin is not the same as penetration in human flesh and bone.

The human body is not a consistent medium. Muscle, fat, organ, and bone all have different mass, density, hardness, and flexibility. In general, a bullet will penetrate much deeper in gelatin than it will in human flesh. The primary reason for the

by Greg Ellifritz
Active Response Training

diminished penetration in an actual body is the presence of skin and bone. Skin is very elastic. A bullet uses up a lot of energy stretching the skin before the skin actually breaks. Most ballistic experts believe that the skin itself is equal to one to two inches of gelatin penetration. Bones also tremendously slow bullets and limit their penetration. We want a bullet that penetrates 12"-18" of gelatin. That translates to roughly 6"-10" of human flesh, depending on the structures hit.

That introduction brings us to today's topic.... Many people think a round that penetrates 16" will drill right through the bad guy and then endanger any innocent person standing behind him. That's not how it works.

Recently, I participated in a ballistic laboratory of a different sort at the Paul-E-Palooza Memorial Training Conference. Instead of shooting gelatin, we shot (dead) pigs instead. It allowed us to actually see how bullets performed in real flesh and bone.

The three pigs were humanely harvested by their grower and then shot by instructors at the training conference. Doctors, military medics, and a veterinary surgeon then conducted necropsies for the class. Everyone was actually able to see what bullets do to real tissue. It's very different than what happens when you shoot a block of gelatin.

The pigs were not fully grown. I would estimate that they were somewhere between 60 and 80 pounds each. The width (side to side) of each pig carcass was less than 12." Instructors shot the pigs for a distance of approximately seven feet away. They shot with all of the following calibers:

- 9mm 127 grain +P Winchester SXT (head shots) (from Glock 17)
- 9mm 124 grain Speer Gold Dot (from Glock 17)
- 9mm 147 grain Speer Gold Dot G2 (from Glock 17)
- .38 spl 148 grain Wadcutter (from 2" .38 snub)
- .22 LR 36 grain Lead Round Nose (from 3" barrel .22 semi-automatic)
- 12 gauge Federal 9-pellet 00 Buck



12-gauge birdshot to hind limb from seven yards

- .45 Colt 225 grain Hornady Leverrevolution hollow point (from Rossi lever action rifle with 16" barrel)

Keep in mind, all of the pigs were less than twelve inches across. Every load tested penetrates deeper than twelve inches in gelatin. How many rounds do you think penetrated through and through on the pigs?

If you guessed NONE you would be correct. Not a single round (including the rifle and shotgun rounds) fully penetrated the pigs. Most wound channels were six to eight inches deep. Those that hit larger bones terminated even earlier.... Results were similar to the pig wound ballistics lab held during the previous PEP Conference. In that lab, instructors shot the pigs with:

- 9mm 147 Grain Federal HST
- .40 180 Grain federal HST
- 5.56 mm 55 grain Hornady TAP
- 12-gauge 00 Buck and birdshot.

You can read the linked article for details, but none of those rounds fully penetrated similarly sized pigs either.

What does this mean for you? It means you shouldn't worry so much about your round passing through a bad guy and hitting someone else. With quality hollowpoint bullets, that rarely happens. In most police shootings, medical examiners recover the just under the skin on the far side of the

suspect's body. If the round does penetrate all the way through, it's often found caught up in the suspect's clothing, not having enough remaining energy to penetrate even a couple layers of cloth.

Don't buy rounds that fail to penetrate 12" of ballistic gelatin. The FBI set that standard for a reason.... Definitely avoid the gimmicky rounds like the extremely light weight hollowpoints that are designed for massive expansion. Avoid Glasers, RIP, or MagSafe rounds that only penetrate a few inches of gelatin. In real bodies, those rounds don't go deep enough to reliably reach the vital organs and may fail to adequately stop a criminal suspect.

Pick a jacketed hollowpoint bullet from a quality manufacturer (I like Federal HST, Winchester Ranger, and Speer Gold Dots) that penetrates between 12" and 18" in calibrated ballistic gelatin. Then stop worrying. Those bullets are not likely to over-penetrate a human body and cause damage to an innocent person.

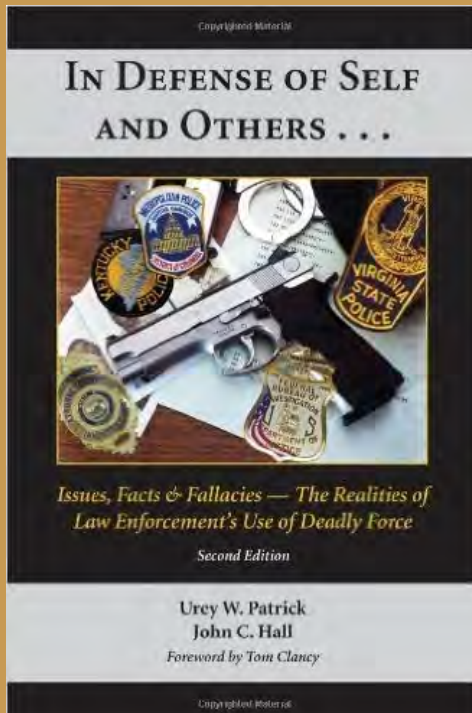
Your misses are what will cause damage to innocent people. Instead of worrying about carrying the latest under-penetrating "super bullet", spend your time improving your accuracy and speed so that you can reliably hit your attacker. Stop worrying so much about overpenetration. In real tissue, it rarely happens with well-designed hollow point bullets. ■

Book Review

In Defense of Self and Others

Review by
Tom Givens

by Urey Patrick and John Hall (Second Edition, 2010)



John C. Hall and Urey W. Patrick are retired FBI Special Agents, with Patrick having served the FBI for 24 years and Hall for 32 years. Both are seasoned field agents and investigators, Hall is a licensed attorney, and Hall was assigned to FBI SWAT for several years. Hall was the Unit Chief and Patrick was the Assistant Unit Chief of the FBI firearms training operations at Quantico. They are highly qualified to write about the topic at hand.

This is a scholarly book of 415 information-rich pages, arranged into 13 chapters. Although written specifically for a law enforcement audience, there is a lot of relevant information for the legally armed citizen. Perhaps as importantly, the book dispels a lot of myths and misinformation regarding the police use of deadly force. For their own

reasons, the media often distorts police involved shootings and with the information found in this book you can more fully understand why many of these highly hyped incidents were actually legally, morally and ethically the correct course of action for the officers involved.

Some of the most important chapters include:

- ♦ Chapter 2, Federal Constitutional Standards
- ♦ Chapter 4, Wound Ballistics
- ♦ Chapter 7, Tactical Factors and Misconceptions, and
- ♦ Chapter 13, Case Histories.

This book is available in printed and Kindle formats. I recommend it, especially if you are a law enforcement officer or a trainer. ■

by Tom Givens

CARRY YOUR DARNED GUN!

Rangemaster students' success rate (at least on events I know about) is 63/0/3 for 66 incidents. That's 63 clear victories, zero losses and 3 forfeits. The three forfeits were people who died as a result of not being armed on The Big Day. All three were killed in separate street robberies. Essentially, they were executed for the contents of their pockets. They were not able to defend themselves because they chose not to be armed that day. They made a poor choice.

Of the 63 students who won, only 3 were injured, and all recovered from those injuries. Based on my interviews with the winners, I believe the two MOST important factors are:

- 1) Having your damn gun on you when the event occurs, and
- 2) Being willing to use it to save your life.

Everything else-- gun model, caliber, ammo choice and yes, even amount of training, seems to be a distant third after these primary two. Four of the

shooters in our group were trained to our instructor level, four or five more to what I would call competency, and the rest had only had an eight-hour carry permit course.

One of the things we stress at ALL training levels is the need to actually carry the gun daily, as one simply cannot make an appointment for an emergency. An emergency, in this context, is a sudden, unforeseen crisis in which one's life is in immediate mortal danger. The key words are "sudden" and "unforeseen," so making carrying a handgun a daily routine assures that it will be there when needed. I believe that because we

stress this heavily, our students tend to be armed and thus win when attacked.

I believe a big factor is the bad guy's training, education, and life experience. Most bad guys go through their entire careers without ever running into an armed citizen on the street. Only about 4% of the U.S. population has some kind of carry permit, and I'd bet less than 1% of them actually carry on a routine, daily basis. So, when a bad guy confronts a citizen who is actually armed and produces a weapon, the resulting mental lag time for the bad guy allows even an untrained or minimally trained defender a golden opportunity. The one who starts the fight has an enormous advantage. In this context, the bad guy started the incident, but the student starts the fight.

This is not to say that more advanced training is not desirable. Several of my students have been in rather difficult extreme cases and still won. Fortunately, they had training beyond a permit course. ■



Car Wrecks & GUNS

by Clint Black

Here is some good information from Clint Black, a practicing attorney and Rangemaster student in Texas.

- Tom

You are driving your car in Jeff Cooper's "Condition Yellow," when an on-coming driver suddenly turns in front of you. There is not enough time or distance; you swerve, but the crash is unavoidable. You have a gun. What do you do now?

Be prepared for such an occurrence. Wrap your proof of auto insurance around your license to carry. In a crash, you will be stunned or even injured. Arriving officers will ask for your driver's license and proof of insurance. Having your carry license with your proof of insurance will make sure you comply with identifying yourself as a licensed carry holder.

In July 2015, I experienced just such a crash, and I was so stunned I did not even remember giving my proof of insurance to the attending officer. Thankfully the officer saw my license to carry. In the minutes that followed, pain in my chest set in... people checked on me and the other driver. As my head cleared somewhat and the tow truck arrived, I realized that my Glock 17 was about to be towed away by a stranger. If you find yourself in this situation, before you retrieve your weapon, go to the officer in charge and ask to retrieve your weapon for safe keeping. In my situation, because the officer had already seen my CHL, he was not alarmed and told me to remove the weapon.

Officers have seen fist fights and physical attacks occur after collisions, so if you do not advise an officer that you are going to remove a weapon you could be at risk for a fatal misunderstanding.

If your weapon is on your body and you are injured, advise the officer of your weapon, the location of your weapon and the status of your weapon. Do not make a move to touch or withdraw your weapon. Depending on your condition, you may want to request the officer secure your weapon. If the officer secures your weapon, get a receipt. Again, do not remove the weapon from a holster and attempt to change the condition of the firearm without receiving official instructions. Be discrete in your handling of your weapon at all times.

If your weapon became separated from you in the collision and is somewhere loose in the car, advise the police officer before you start searching for it. Follow the police officer's instructions. You could be so injured that your search could harm yourself or others. Again, don't make a fatal misunderstanding searching for your favorite 1911.

It should go without saying (but I will anyway), be polite and civil at the crash scene. Yes, the little "wench" was on her cell and caused the crash, but getting angry and accosting her will make you look bad and aggressive. Stay cool and get medical

help immediately. Don't assume you are tough and OK. I had a broken sternum and did not know it or how to treat it until I went to an ER.

Remember, after a collision, do not express any statement as to your involvement in the collision other than simple statements, like "I was going east and the other driver pulled out in front of me." Do not speculate or give a lengthy commentary of what happened. It is always better to say nothing instead of giving disjointed "babble" that a defense lawyer will use against you. You can always give a statement later.

Another good pre-crash recommendation is to not have any "inflammatory" stickers or badges on your car. Browning firearm decals, 9mm stickers, or NRA stickers on your car may invite witnesses to see you as combative or aggressive and cast you in a negative light. No one should be able to identify you as a weapon permit carrier because of a sticker on your car.

Lastly, take cell phone photographs of the scene if you are physically able and contact a good lawyer immediately. Be prepared for the unexpected and you & your weapon will survive a crash.

For individual information to your location and state, contact your local police department or local lawyer for more information. ■

SOLD
Almost
OUT



**FINAL
NOTICE**

TACTICAL



20TH ANNIVERSARY

Little Rock, AR • March 16-18, 2018



IT'S NOT TOO LATE. BUT IT WILL BE SOON.

rangemaster.com/2018-tactical-conference

UPCOMING

TRAINING



OCT 20-22

Instructor Development Course
Carrollton, TX

DEC 8-10

Instructor Development Course
Orlando, FL

JAN 5-7

Establishing a Dominance Paradigm
Shawnee, OK

FEB 3-4

Advanced Instructor Course
Homestead, FL

FEB 23-24

Instructor Development Course
Okeechobee, FL

MAR 16-18

Tactical Conference
Little Rock, AR

APR 7-8

Combative Pistol
Tampa Bay, FL

APR 27-29

Instructor Development Course
Lincoln, TX

Eventbrite



Think you know the answer? Reply to Tom's newsletter thread on the Rangemaster Facebook page. The first person to reply with the correct answer will be this month's **WINNER!**

Earlier in this newsletter, Tom's article on Visualization quotes someone named Bismarck. That's a reference to whom?

- A) The first governor of North Dakota
- B) A famous World War II sniper
- C) A 19th Century German statesman
- D) The inventor of the bump fire stock

