

The Value of Force-on-Force Training

by Marty Hayes, J.D.

I participated in my first force-on-force training as a trainee police officer back in 1977. I was just starting my law enforcement career and had been selected to be a reserve deputy with the Kootenai County (ID) Sheriff's Department. To teach the trainees proper traffic stop protocols, we role-played making traffic stops. This was valuable training, because the traffic stop was one of the most frequent law enforcement jobs and there was nothing except the role-play training to teach the trainee how to properly make traffic stops.

After a couple of years of working as a young police officer, I was hired out of state and attended the Spokane (WA) Police Academy, where during the training, I participated in several additional force-on-force training scenarios addressing domestic violence, more traffic stops, felony traffic stops and building searches. Again, I received valuable training, preparing me to face these difficult and dangerous policing activities while on the street.

My first private sector experience of force-on-force was in 1990, when I participated as an assistant instructor for Massad Ayoob and his Lethal Force Institute advanced training. It was after this experience that I decided that I needed to add this valuable training to my fledgling curriculum for my own training school, The Firearms Academy of Seattle, and so I began to devise force-on-force elements for my own classes. Since then, we have been offering different role-play scenarios during our

classes, and making the scenarios more realistic and tailored for the armed citizen with each passing year.

Fast forward to the present day. This summer, I scheduled my friend and colleague, Karl Rehn to fly in from Texas and present a two-day Tactical Scenarios course at my training school in Washington State. In this class, Karl successfully presented his version of force-on-force training to 16 of our Firearms Academy advanced students, running each student through 20+ scenarios in which they participated as either the armed citizen(s), as bad guy robbers or as other nefarious dudes or dudettes. In each scenario the students either participated in or observed incidents consisting of several components and roles that changed with each iteration of the scenario.

If you are a Network member and have never participated in this type of training, I would like to explain the value of doing so, because I am convinced that value applies both tactically and legally.

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Students and instructors role play a parking lot confrontation using plastic castings of guns as props, working through verbal commands, positioning and other tactics.

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The Tactical Value

Successfully participating in these training scenarios gives the armed citizen valuable experience handling possible violent encounters. I remember being on duty once and watching a bank entrance, waiting for a potential armed robbery, as there was an active robber working the area where I was a patrolman. I also was going to college, studying communications and preparing to give my first public speech. I was terrified of having to give this speech in front of my classmates. I remember thinking to myself that I would rather arrest this particular armed robber, because I had experience during training to know how to handle these types of events, than give this 3-minute speech. That was one of my first experiences showing me the value of force-on-force training.



There's an art to giving feedback, and in the same way, a skilled force-on-force instructor can coach the student in ways to improve the outcome of a scenario. Here, Rehn discusses a student's decisions during a scenario.

When we at FAS put on this type of scenario training, we have selected one particular lesson we want the student to learn and then run each student through the scenario, de-briefing individually. Karl has a different approach, with each student fully participating or observing each scenario. He keeps the same scenario running for a dozen or so iterations (like a robbery at a 7-11 store) and simply changes the story line.

Both styles of training are valid and valuable. The first style does a better job of teaching to a particular problem (like not being victimized in a particular scenario), versus the second where you can observe and participate in more scenarios. Either style of tactical training will go a long way towards preparing the armed citizen to face these types of scenarios. We want our students to be able to say to themselves, "I have been here before, and know what to do" if caught up in a similar real-life situation.



Rehn has the right teaching props to add realism to a training scenario. Here he role-plays actions of a possible attacker who is armed with a wrench.

The Legal Value

Let's assume for a moment, that your use of force in a defense situation is being questioned in a court of law. You will have the right to tell the jury what you did and why, and likely will have to give that testimony in a legitimate self-defense legal defense. But the jury will also know that your testimony will be self-serving. Will they believe you?

What if you were able to call to court fine, upstanding members of your community, perhaps a doctor, lawyer and business man who were fellow students in a force-on-force class who would testify that they took a class with you, where a virtually identical scenario was presented, and in that training they responded the same way you did in real life? They will be very credible witnesses, and it will likely result in their credibility transferring to you in front of the

jury. Additionally, it is likely that your instructor will be able to testify to what they taught you and why. While they will not be able to tell the jury that they think you

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were justified—it is the role of the jury to decide whether or not you were justified—it will be clear that if they could say that, they would.

More so, having this training in your background, and then having your competent legal defense team sharing this information with the prosecution could go towards the prosecution realizing that they have a losing case, encouraging them to drop it before trial.

Evaluating Force-on-Force Training

Not all force on force training is equal. In fact, you should choose your instructors wisely. It is one thing to attend a shooting class, and if that instructor is a loser, then you dismiss the training and find a better instructor.

Taking that loser's class will likely not come up in court, unless you want it to. But because force-on-force training can be so vital for your legal defense, and because finding a good force-on force class is not the easiest thing to accomplish, you should choose wisely. Before signing up, do your due diligence and research that class. I can unequivocally recommend Karl Rehn's training, as I can [Craig Douglas](#)' training. I have also heard good things about [John Benner's TDI](#) training. But there is a void in the industry for this type of training. (Hint: nature abhors a vacuum).

If you do not have a local recommendation or do not have the money to travel, consider sponsoring one of the traveling trainers who do this. As sponsor, you may get your training for free, and make a new, life-long friend.



My school uses metal detector wands prior to bringing students into force on force scenarios as an added layer of safety to prevent inadvertent introduction of a real weapon into the scenario.

In general, seek instructors with law enforcement experience. What better person to testify for you at trial than a member of the local constabulary, or at least a former, honorably retired law enforcement officer? Instructors with legal education or who have worked as use of force experts and have testified are another good option. I am reminded of the [case of Larry Hickey](#), who was able to call his CCW instructor who was also a local police sergeant as a material witness.

Successfully Putting on Force-on-Force Training

Some of our readers will be asking, "What is needed to put on force-on-force training?" You will need a venue, preferably one that replicates indoor scenarios, or can be reasonably made to do so. You will also need safety

equipment, especially if you use one of the projectile-based non-lethal training guns, such as Airsoft® or Simunitions®. Karl uses both in his classes, along with simply acting out incidents using dummy guns. If you use Airsoft® or Simunitions®, you must wear the protective masks and other clothing recommended by those manufacturers.

I recently traveled to Gunsite and participated in their [Ballistic Response to Active Violent Encounters](#) and was surprised but not disappointed that they simply used blue dummy guns. It did not take away from the experience, and certainly reduced the logistics and safety issues.

Another new training device to come on the market recently is the [CoolFire](#) dryfire training system. I saw these at the NRA meeting last May and got my hands on one to try.

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Rearranging classroom tables and using shipping boxes as props gives Rehn (right) the setting to act out a store scenario with a student while the rest of the class observes.

They are a replacement barrel and magazine, which when charged with CO₂, will cycle the gun just like you were shooting it live. It gives off a noise so others in the scenario know you are shooting and emits a red laser pulse to show where you would have hit. The CoolFire system was designed to give competitive shooters a way to replicate the recoil of the pistol when dryfiring for practice. We found it very useful during the force-on-force exercises. Our staff was so taken by the system, that after the class many ordered one for themselves.

To sum up this discussion, please understand that force-on-force training is a critical aspect of being an armed citizen who is both tactically ready to defend themselves or others and also able to make the best legal argument, if needed, for why self-defense actions were necessary. Seek out a class near you, or if there is none, then consider contacting Karl Rehn, Craig Douglas or another top instructor and invite them to come to you.

About Karl Rehn: Karl is a long-time Network affiliated instructor. He joined the Network within only a month of our inauguration. Prior to that, we knew Karl as a professional associate in the world of firearms instruction, where he has offered classes since 1991. His personal training résumé shows over 2,400 hours of training from more than 70 of the nation's top schools. In addition to operating KR Training in Austin, TX, he worked for 33 years as engineering manager at a university research lab, as well as developing curriculum, going on to teach and supervise the teaching of the Department of Homeland Security's training for emergency responders all over the U.S. Get to know Karl through his blog at <http://blog.krtraining.com> and consider training with him, too. His classes are listed at <https://www.krtraining.com/schedule.html> and advanced registration is a must with many selling out before class day ever rolls around.

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Please enjoy the next article.]*

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President's Message

Kind Words

by Marty Hayes, J.D.

I received the following in my e-mail the other day:

"Mr. Hayes, I'm new to gun ownership and

getting educated about self defense, but you have provided a substantial part of just what I need: good info, a support network, a way to support others, and a feeling of community. Thank you!"

It was sent in by a new member and it gives me warm and fuzzies to know that the idea that Vincent, Gila and I had back in 2007 has become such a success. By success, I do not mean financial, but instead successful in educating people about the legalities of self defense and, of course, providing peace of mind knowing that if one of our 17,500 members chooses to act in self-defense, they have an organization that will assist them with the legal aftermath. That was our goal then, and it is our reality now. Thanks, Matt, for reminding me.

Political Strife in America

With each election cycle, it seems that the divide in America between the two political factions becomes more strident, and in many cases, more violent. I have some thoughts on this. First, it is my opinion that politics is simply about power: it is who has it and who wants it. Politics really isn't about political ideologies at all, but instead, those seeking power make their message conform to that which they believe will give them the

greatest chance to win election. That, of course, gives them power.

I believe it is this lust for power that has made America what it is. If our founding fathers had not desired to have the fate of their own lives controlled by their own beliefs, then they would not have used the power of revolution, complete with guns and killing, to pursue their agenda. I for one, am glad they did.

I think it is a natural instinct for man to seek power. It is how we have climbed our way to the top of the food chain, here on earth. Being on top of that food chain means survival for the species. I don't have the answers to our problems here in America and throughout the world, but just an opinion or two.

Still No Word from the Insurance Commissioner

The Washington State Office of Insurance Commissioner has still not decided if they are going to try to put the Network out of business here in WA State, despite the fact that we believe we are not insurance. It has now been six months that we have been working on the issue, and in that six months we have learned a lot, including lessons about how they shut down the NRA's Carry Guard here in WA state.

I have learned more about the forces behind the insurance commissioner's activities from an investigation that has concluded and is in the public domain (so I am not dishing dirt on a competitor). It is discussed on the Insurance Commissioner's [website](#). Follow the links in the article and you will get an education.

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Please enjoy the next article.]*

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Attorney Question of the Month

This month's question concerns witnesses at the scene of a defense shooting and comes to us from those involved in armed security for churches, although the question has broader implications. Police officers involved in shootings are rightly advised to wait for 48 to 72 hours before making a statement to investigators. This is well established. Armed citizens are similarly advised for the same sound reasons. Should the same 48 to 72 hour principle apply to witnesses closely involved in a defense shooting? We asked our Network Affiliated Attorneys for their thoughts on the following—

If a Network member uses deadly force in defense in the presence of family, close associates, or in a workplace or church, what concerns would you as the member's attorney have about accuracy of witness statements given by those in close proximity to the incident?

If the incident is witnessed by co-workers or church members or others who are present during a defense shooting, would you recommend witnesses request time to gather their wits before giving a witness statement? How can the witnesses be advised of that protection without impeding investigation of the incident?

In a related matter, it is well-established that the person using force in self defense should have an attorney present when making a statement. May a spouse or child of a self-defense shooter be attended by legal counsel during questioning?

Their thought-provoking responses follow—

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It is very common for family members, or others with a close affiliation to an individual involved in a self-defense

encounter to be subjected to police questioning—about what they witnessed, about what they heard, and about what the defender said to them following the incident. However, a witness in immediate proximity to a violent encounter may be subjected to the same levels of detrimental impact on perception and memory from adrenaline dump as the defender, including false memories, memory gaps, time and distance distortions, and other adrenaline dump related effects. In order to protect a loved one, or other person, from being wrongfully charged with a crime for having had to defend themselves, it would be very wise for the witness to refuse to answer questions from the police until the witness has had the same opportunity as the defender to let the effects of adrenaline dump subside.

I have also had family members repeat statements to the police made by a defender in the immediate aftermath of a violent encounter that have later been proven to be seriously inaccurate, due to the impact of adrenaline dump on the defender's own perceptions of events and memory. You are under no obligation whatsoever to relate to the police the substance of conversations you have had with the defender.

You have an absolute right not to speak to law enforcement at all. If you do decide to speak with investigators, I strongly recommend that you speak with an experienced criminal defense attorney before you do. You also have the right to have that attorney present while you are being questioned.

Your statement will be characterized as having been made by an eyewitness. Should you attempt to correct an inaccurate statement at a later point in time, your attempt may be characterized by the prosecution as an attempt to shield someone important to you from criminal or civil liability for having committed a violent crime. Therefore, it is very important that you be in a position to provide as accurate a statement as you can. That very well might not be immediately after the incident has ended.

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If a Network member uses deadly force in defense in the presence of family, close associates, or in a workplace or church, what concerns would you as the member's attorney have about accuracy of witness statements given by those in close proximity to the incident?

Witness statements tend to greatly impress juries, but as an attorney I can say that I have never, outside of active collusion by witnesses, seen witness statements that mesh and most of the time witness statements tend to be given to, and recorded by, officers with various biases and with differing, shall we say, work ethic. For example, I've seen 20-minute conversations reduced to a single topic sentence. I've also seen statements where the names of those involved have been so transposed and inconsistent as to make the statement worthless and, unless you have experience detailing stressful events, it can be hard to give a detailed and cogent story, especially to officers trying to get the job done ASAP.

If witnessed by family, co-workers or church members or others who are present during a defense shooting, would you recommend witnesses request time to gather their wits before giving a witness statement? How can the witnesses be advised of that protection without impeding investigation of the incident?

There's no real good answer to this other than, "It depends." Give me one specific situation, I'll give you specific advice. Change it a little and my advice might be very different. As a general rule though, if you are involved in a shooting *never, ever* should you tell witnesses what to do or say. Any possible good from that advise is *vastly* outweighed by the probability that an outsider, an investigating officer, or the witness takes your attempts badly.

In a related matter, it is well-established that the person using force in self defense should have an attorney present when making a statement. May a spouse or child of a self-defense shooter be attended by legal counsel while giving their statement to law enforcement?

With this, the answer is that it depends. Generally, only those in fear of criminal prosecution have the right to have an attorney present. Certainly, I can see that in some situations. A witness in a shooting could be in this situation, for example, say a fight occurred between spouse and the suspect and the other spouse shot the suspect in that conflict, but in other situations that isn't going to be the case. It never hurts to ask though, especially if you are polite about it. Just know that a separate attorney will be needed for the spouse, i.e. one attorney for shooter and a separate and distinct one for the witness.

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I would not have any more concerns about close friend eyewitnesses than any other eyewitnesses. Studies show, and my experience confirms, that eyewitnesses are not particularly reliable. Despite that, however, juries tend to put great faith in eyewitness testimony. So, the concern about any eyewitness is that he or she may not be reliable but may be believed anyway.

I would not recommend a shooter or other party try to "counsel" a potential witness. Any attempt to influence a witness could be either obstruction or witness tampering or both. Let witnesses say what they are going to say.

Anyone may seek to have legal counsel present when speaking to the police. If the police do not want legal counsel present, they may not get a statement at all.

A big "Thank You!" to our affiliated attorneys for their comments. Please return next month for the second half of our affiliated attorneys' responses to this question.

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Book Review

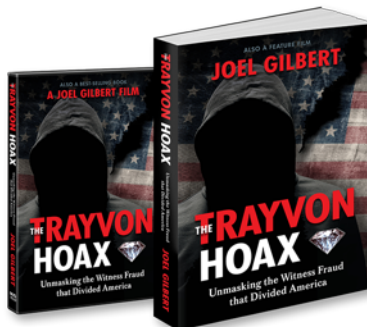
The Trayvon Hoax

Unmasking the Witness Fraud that Divided America

By Joel Gilbert

Available as a book or video at

<https://www.thetrayvonhoax.com/buy/>



Reviewed by Gila Hayes

My extreme distaste for conspiracy theories is, perhaps to my detriment in a world where political factions are willing to put forward any accusation, no matter how false, to win. Thus, when my husband expressed interest in filmmaker Joel Gilbert's analysis of how Rachel Jeantel came to be a key witness in the murder trial against George Zimmerman in 2012, it was with some hesitation that I ordered the video.

Joel Gilbert has been lauded as an investigative journalist and I expected an exposé along the lines of the Pentagon Papers back in the '70s. Gilbert starts his video by explaining that the 2018 candidacy of Tallahassee's radical socialist former mayor Andrew Gillum for Florida governor caught his attention because of Gillum's unflagging message that self-defense rights allowed white people to shoot black people whom they merely found fearsome. His campaign rhetoric often mentioned Trayvon Martin's death, parroting the line that the deceased was only carrying Skittles and iced tea and thus he posed no danger to Zimmerman.

Like me, readers will remember how from 2012 to 2013 America watched the heavily-televised prosecution of George Zimmerman, a time during which many either sympathized with his plight and asked themselves whether or not they would have left their car to tell 9-1-1 dispatch the direction a prowler in the neighborhood had moved, while others empathized with Martin's parents.

Gilbert suggests that Martin was the victim of a largely absent father and a mother who pawned him off on his father's girlfriends at times when raising him became too much. Gilbert concludes that Martin's family and their lawyers fraudulently coerced testimony from two teenaged girls—the 16-year-old Diamond Eugene of Martin's romantic interest and her half-sister, Rachel

Jeantel, who testified she was the "phone witness" speaking with Martin when he attacked Zimmerman.

Gilbert shows from trial documents that the Martin family's attorney, Benjamin Crump, aided by Martin's friends and family, badgered the 16-year-old Diamond Eugene relentlessly until she gave Crump a statement by telephone, primarily assenting to or parroting the assertions Crump passed off as questions. After that phone call, which was recorded, the real Diamond essentially disappeared, with 18-year-old Rachel Jeantel subsequently presented as the girlfriend with whom Martin was talking the night of his death, and who spoke with Crump a few days later. Jeantel was not believable and Gilbert set out to figure out Diamond's true identity and why the witness switch was allowed to occur.

Extensive phone records from the trial evidence gave Gilbert 750 pages of text messages and call histories, which he combined with the youths' Instagram accounts to acquaint himself with their culture. Searching high school yearbooks from the several high schools Martin attended, he matched social media pictures to the actual girlfriend.

While I was discomfited by the video's portrayal of how engrossed Gilbert became in the life of the real Diamond Eugene, it gives a portrait of a self-involved American-Haitian teen that authenticates the second prong of his proof that Martin was not speaking by phone with Rachel Jeantel in the moments before he attacked Zimmerman. During the trial, the prosecution presented a letter to Martin's biological mother Sybrina Fulton signed by and supposedly written by Diamond Eugene.

Engineering a face to face meeting with the real Diamond Eugene by purchasing clothing from her online fashion boutique, Gilbert contrived to obtain handwriting samples from the young woman. Prominent forensic handwriting expert Bart Baggett compared these to the letter supposedly written by the girlfriend to Martin's mother. Gilbert told Eugene that he intended to give the clothing to various women as gifts and asked her to personally sign greeting cards to include with the gifts, place the cards in envelopes and then seal them. The saliva from sealing the envelopes provided DNA that,

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compared with DNA from clothing salvaged from trash outside the home of Rachel Jeantel and her mother, leads Gilbert to suggest that Diamond Eugene and Rachel Jeantel are half-sisters, mothered by Marie Eugene but raised by a different woman.

Gilbert explained, "Doing a little research, I learned that although upper class Haitian families favor the nuclear family model prevalent in the West, lower socioeconomic Haitian families routinely feature 'plasaj,' a form of common-law marriage. These relationships, often fluid, are reinforced by a strong extended-family network. Moving children from one home to another among extended families is not uncommon at all. Obviously given the large number of calls and texts between Diamond and Rachel I had observed in Diamond's phone records, they were enjoying a close relationship as half-sisters. For Rachel to assume Diamond's identity may seem outlandish to us, but in an extended Haitian Eugene family clan, it may not have been that big a deal."

The witness fraud and the people who engineered it during the Zimmerman murder trial is interesting but it is not Gilbert's most important point. The complicity of the politicians, the news media, and the attorneys driving the narrative that white people fear black people to such an extreme that whites shoot blacks without cause is the most far-reaching aspects of his research. The ripples from that false narrative went all the way to the presidential race, creating a voter bloc to assure Barack Obama's return to the White House for a second term.

In *The Trayvon Hoax: Unmasking the Witness Fraud that Divided America*, Gilbert writes, "The media had no more interest in the truth than the prosecutors." Martin's mother and father had no interest in revealing the truth of their teenaged son's descent into the drug and violence milieu of Miami, either, he wrote earlier. He also calls out prominent politicians and entertainment personalities for promoting the story that Zimmerman was so frightened of a lone black youth walking through his neighborhood that he shot him without cause. Despite police reports and evidence to the contrary, the

national news media and activists with much to gain by stirring up racial unrest promoted that false story and a ground swell of unrest that moved beyond Florida and was echoed in the Ferguson, MO riots following Michael Brown's shooting by police officer Darren Wilson. A racially divided America serves the political interests of many.

Gilbert relates that he talked to Zimmerman's attorney Mark O'Mara early in his investigation and the attorney told him that initially, no one thought Jeantel could have been a fraud because she was such an awful witness that there was no compelling reason for the prosecution to put her on the stand. He continued that, in his opinion, no one ever expected Jeantel to be a persuasive witness. Gilbert concluded that her role was to stand in as the witness needed in order to arrest and prosecute Zimmerman. "For Crump, an arrest opened the door to a civil suit. For the State of Florida, an arrest kept the mob at bay. For Barack Obama's Justice Department, an arrest meant getting out the black vote for Obama in 2012 in Florida and hopefully nationwide," Gilbert wrote.

Gilbert observes that the person Trayvon Martin could have grown into has been entirely eclipsed by the politicking of Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson and others seeking to expand their sphere of influence. Through his investigation into the fake witness, Rachel Jeantel, he developed a genuine sympathy for the teens the politicians exploited and that adds an interesting and unexpected facet to the book and video.

I hope that this analysis of a trial hijacked for political gain will encourage citizens to demand honesty and truthfulness from our courts, prosecutors and state officials, inspire people to challenge the sweeping proclamations of politicians seeking only to solidify their power base and to counter false news reporting at every turn. Joel Gilbert's book and video spotlights a lawless and exploitative stain on America's system of justice. What we do to keep it from happening again is up to us.

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Please enjoy the next article.]*

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Editor's Notebook

by Gila Hayes

Making Safety Fun

Network member Mike T. has shouldered range safety officer responsibilities at the Georgia DNR shooting range he belongs to and he's doing

what he can to draw range members' attention to the importance of safe gun handling—with special focus on youthful range members. Instead of relying on the standard range sign listing the Four Universal Gun Safety Rules, he has broken the rules into separate plaques which are presented by seasonal characters. With Halloween looming, this month's presenters are a trio of ghosts.

The picture Mike sent of his safety display at the range was a great reminder that much of what we do to learn and practice armed self-defense skills, we do for those we love. That fact contains several facets. The first, on which Mike is scoring big points, is preparing young shooters to carry forward our armed lifestyle proving that with proper precautions, deadly weapons fill a very necessary personal defense role without posing a danger to innocent people. This is glaringly absent in the anti-gun diatribes to which we are regularly subjected through popular media.

Mike's outreach got me to thinking about how armed citizens present our reasons for owning guns to society at large. Sometimes the seriousness underlying self-defense preparation morphs into gloom and doom that eclipses why we develop and maintain our defense skills. While we acknowledge the deadly serious aspect of firearms ownership for self defense, it isn't the guns and skill in gun use that we love. It is the people we love for whom we learn and practice our defense firearms



skills. This we do to help keep them safe and to remain safe ourselves so we can participate in their lives.

Selling through Fear

Earlier this month I enjoyed a long phone chat with a member who was weighing whether carrying a gun in his extremely anti-self-defense state was worth the risk. Our member told me that he also participates in a competitor's prepaid legal services contract and as a part of their program he periodically receives videos about the devastating legal aftermath of use of force.

I have visited and corresponded with this member in the past and I know him to be a well-educated, thoughtful and ethics-driven citizen who has the unfortunate to dwell in a very restrictive state. He has owned guns and taught his family about safe firearms use and self defense for several decades. Our member and his wife have gone to the considerable effort to obtain their state's carry licenses and are serious and responsible armed citizens. Despite that, when I spoke with him, he had become so worried about the legal system's abuse of armed citizens who have used guns in self defense that he was seriously questioning his long-standing decision to have and carry guns to defend against falling victim to the whims of a violent criminal.

Society, he observed, favors violent criminals and punishes law-abiding citizens who defend themselves. I was stunned by the fearful, emotional state stimulated by the reports he had been watching. How, I wondered, had this intelligent, ethical man been driven to ask in complete seriousness whether possessing the ability to prevent violent crime against himself and his loved ones was worthwhile?

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I was horrified that his choice boiled down to the risk of social and legal consequences after defending against a violent criminal weighed against dying or being injured by a violent sociopath, unable to stop an attack if he had chosen to give up the ability to put up an effective defense. As he was talking, my mind flashed to the 2007 deaths of a CT doctor's wife and two daughters that Tom Givens discussed in his June 2019 interview in this journal.

With the story of that family's tragedy foremost in my mind, I was compelled to ask, as gently as I could, whether it is better to live carefully and responsibly but still keep a gun available for defense against unavoidable risks that breach our precautions, or if it was preferable to give up the gun and risk being raped and murdered, carjacked, seriously injured in an assault or to watch helplessly while the same was done to one's wife and daughters, as was the fate of the CT doctor that Tom Givens had talked about last summer.

It seemed a most unfair question! Realizing the seriousness with which the gentleman was considering giving up his means of defense, I felt enormous regret for the way the self-defense industry raises awareness of the need for self-defense skills and stirs up fear as

motivation for purchase of books and classes. Even some of our competitor's support plans that exist to help cope with the legal aftermath sell through fear mongering. They are very skilled at eliciting an emotional response. Creating a highly emotional need is great salesmanship but it is seriously detrimental to the long-term well-being of armed citizens because in its emotionally-charged approach, it bypasses and fails to engage the logical, analytical part of the brain that weighs the options and decides on the best long-term solution for the individual and those in their care.

Living with awareness creates issues that the head-in-the-sand crowd doesn't experience! The biggest challenge, I think, is balance. We each have our own blind spots! For the self-defense practitioner, one common set of opposing demands is remaining well-prepared without letting the study and practice overwhelm the better joys of family, health, faith and accomplishments in other areas of life. I believe the same applies to selling post-self-defense support. At the Network, we want our member to choose to be part of this family of like-minded citizens out of logical choice, not out of fear.

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Please return for our December 2019 edition]*

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About the Network's Online Journal

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In addition, material presented in our opinion columns is entirely the opinion of the bylined author and is intended to provoke thought and discussion among readers.

To submit letters and comments about content in the **eJournal**, please contact editor Gila Hayes by e-mail sent to editor@armedcitizensnetwork.org.

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