



Former Brit is Strong Voice for American Freedoms

by Gila Hayes

Chris Bird is quiet and low-key, yet over the years this successful self-published author has done a tremendous amount to educate American gun owners and much to dispel the fears of those who distrust firearms and gun owners.

Author and publisher of several books including the enduringly successful *The Concealed Handgun Manual* and a stalwart advocate of firearms rights and training for citizens, this British expatriate has carried with him a love of freedom, firearms and shooting through all the twists and turns his life has taken. We interviewed Bird recently, wanting to learn about the experiences shaping his life, his books and his recent foray into television.

The English Shooter

Americans tend to think of England as a gun-free zone and believe it has been that way a long time. Still, while in school in the late 1950s, Bird was able to participate in marksmanship training and competition at his school. He explains, "We used production service rifles in .303. We used to go down to the coast and shoot at 200 yards and 500 yards. Then we had .22s on the indoor range at 25 yards and were able to do quite a lot of shooting."

By the time Bird was finishing school, gun ownership required a police-issued certificate, which he obtained. He remembers owning a Smith & Wesson .22 revolver. Books like *Sixguns* by Elmer Keith and *Fast and Fancy Revolver Shooting* by Ed McGivern introduced the young man to use of handguns for defense, and he notes, "I had to learn by what I read. There was nobody to teach me much except bull's-eye shooting."

After school, Bird went into military service, eventually becoming weapons training officer for the Royal Military Police in Rhindahlen Garrison at headquarters of the British Army of the Rhine. Here, his marksmanship abilities earned him a variety of trophies for handgun and submachine skills.



Chris Bird

Bird Migrates

With conditions for gun owners deteriorating in England, Bird immigrated to Canada to take up the life of a cowboy when he left the service. "When I arrived you could just walk in to the general store and buy a shotgun or a rifle with no paperwork at all. In Britain, shotguns were like that when I was growing up. There was no control of them because a lot of the people in the countryside had shotguns, I guess," he reminisces. "Now after so many years of

gun control people have come to accept that they should not have guns. I find that very distressing. How short people's memories are!" he exclaims.

Bird relates that during World War II, Americans gave the English firearms to defend against the Nazi invasion. After the war, those guns were thrown into the sea, and England's gun owners bowed once again beneath government restrictions. British anti-gun sentiment goes even further

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back, however, he notes. After World War I as British soldiers began returning home, the leaders of the day feared an armed revolt along the lines of the 1917 Russian revolution and cracked down on guns in the hands of citizens. In ensuing decades, various anti-gun initiatives wore the mask of crime control. "You know, an awful lot of people want to believe they live in a safe society and that they should be able to be protected by the government, law enforcement and military," Bird observes.

Today, few English citizens question prohibitive restrictions on privately owned firearms, Bird notes, citing a visit to England during which he reunited with a military colleague who voiced his opposition to the concept of an armed citizenry. "I have a different perspective on gun control, having suffered under it as a youth. I've tried to escape it as much as possible," Bird explains. "I think there are many in America who don't realize how lucky they are to possess firearms, not only for sporting instruments, but also the more serious side of being able to defend themselves. Self defense is certainly not approved of in other English-speaking countries like England, Australia or New Zealand. Particularly in Britain, if you fight back against somebody who broke into your house and hit him with a 2x4, you are likely to spend more time in prison than the guy who broke in, which I find appalling."

Becoming A Writer

When it became apparent that the opportunities he believed Canada embodied were not to be found working on a ranch, Bird moved to Vancouver, B.C., enrolled in a two-year journalism program and soon went to work as a crime reporter for several newspapers and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He began indulging a love of sailing and with his wife, Anita, eventually sailed a 27-foot boat from Vancouver, B.C. to Sydney, Australia and back to San Francisco, CA. A Texas native, Anita probably had much to do with where Bird settled next, San Antonio, where he went to work as the local paper's crime reporter.

Bird arrived in the Lone Star State at an interesting time. Since the early 1980s, the Texas Legislature had introduced, argued, and rejected laws licensing concealed carry. Several attempts came close, and the 1995 legislature finally got the job done, though the law has since been subject to revisions that Bird notes are mostly improvements.

"Most large newspapers were totally against concealed carry," Bird recalls. "They editorialized about how every traffic accident was going to end up as a gun fight and all this scary stuff!" As the *San Antonio News-Express'* crime reporter, Bird was assigned to write about what was likely to happen when the new law was enacted and his interviews quoted those in favor of concealed carry as well as those opposed.

Though he did his job and wrote articles about concealed carry both before and after the legislation came into force, Bird's opinions were at odds with the newspaper's. "I knew from covering the police beat that every time a homeowner shot a burglar there would be a dip in burglaries for several weeks. Who says deterrence doesn't work?" he chuckles.

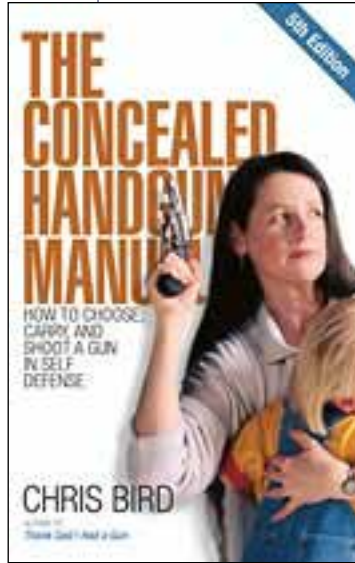
The First Book

Away from the job, Bird began pouring his knowledge about citizens and armed defense into a manuscript that would eventually become his best-seller. The project cost him his

job when the paper's management found out about it, calling the book a conflict of interest. Ironically, Bird credits his wife with convincing him to write the book that got him fired. Several novels he had written earlier went unsold, so when Anita said, "You should write about something that you know about," it proved solid advice.

In 1997, Bird put the finishing touches on the 276 pages comprising the first edition of *The Concealed Handgun Manual*. A few years later, having sold out of the first printing,

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The Concealed Handgun Manual, now in its 5th edition.

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Bird released the second edition, until now, in 2010, he finds himself facing the task of preparing a sixth edition of this tremendously popular and long-lived gun book. Fortunately, Bird's curiosity and interest in the world around him has already provided new material he intends to include in the sixth edition. He notes that he recently interviewed Jeanne Assam for a new chapter with which he will lead the *Manual's* sixth edition. Assam, you may remember, is the volunteer church security guard who shot the gunman during the horrific New Life Church shooting in 2007.

The current fifth edition of the *The Concealed Handgun Manual* (see our book review in November 2008's journal) weighs in at a whopping 522 pages plus introductions and credits! Counting all of the editions, Bird has printed nearly 67,300 copies of the title. When complimented on his success, he responds modestly, "It is something that I believe in strongly and I like to feel that I am making a difference."

The Concealed Handgun Manual uses real-life illustrations to introduce key points and his readers tell Bird that they love the stories. This inspired his second title, a 300-page compilation of 14 all-new reports of real-life defensive gun uses. "In the last part of each chapter I discuss what lessons can we learn and wherever possible I talk to the people and ask, if possible, what would you have done differently?" Bird explains. While it stands alone, *Thank God I Had a Gun* is also the perfect compliment to his original work.

While lobbying for better gun laws in Texas, Bird met

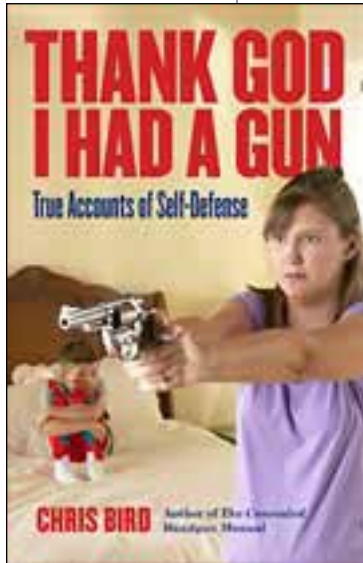
another prominent Texan. Suzanna Gratia Hupp turned the tragedy of seeing her parents murdered during the Luby's Cafeteria massacre into the force driving her successful run for the Texas legislature and becoming an unforgettable voice speaking out against restrictions on guns and self defense. A powerful witness at state and national government hearings on gun control, Gratia Hupp was repeatedly asked to write a book relating her own story, the basis of her testimony. The result is *From Luby's to the Legislature: One Woman's Fight Against Gun Control*, published by Bird's company, Privateer Publications, reviewed elsewhere in this journal.

A New, Influential Medium

With these publishing achievements to his credit, Bird could have rested on his laurels, but when asked to help producer Kelly McClear with Spike TV's new program, *Don't Be a Victim* he was intrigued. McClear had read both of Bird's books, and wanted his assistance as a resource person. He introduced her to some of the people about whom he had written, as well as Suzanna Gratia Hupp and his friend Bill Davidson of Tac Pro, an influential firearms training business in Texas.

Actor Gerald McRaney hosts *Don't Be a Victim*. It is broken into four half-hour segments. The two-hour program generally leads with a segment entitled *What If?* and is followed by *Because Lives Depend on It*, *Practical Tactical* and *Conceal and Carry School*. Unlike the ineffectual safety tips so commonly parroted on TV, this program speaks the language of the gun owner and embraces the ideology of people who possess firearms for defense of self and family.

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Bird's second book.

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Bird has enjoyed several appearances in the *Conceal and Carry School* segment. This portion chronicles the experiences of nine men and women, most prior victims of crime. Included were stalking victims, rape victims, hate-crime victims and people who had been mugged and otherwise harmed by crime. "Each was pretty much a non-gun type and some, I think, may have been anti-gun, or were at least certainly ambivalent about it," Bird recounts. The program chronicled the evolution of a victim learning gun safety, shooting skills and defense tactics. Ruger contributed SR9 handguns and Davidson supplied the facility and instruction with help from Bird.

At the end of filming, Ruger transferred the firearms to the participants as a parting gift. Bird is irritated to note that one student, a man from Massachusetts, has been prohibited from taking his gun home. "It is at a local gun store, and he has to go through months of paperwork before he can even take it home, let alone carry it. I find that quite distressing. It is the paternalistic, government-knows-best approach that is so prevalent in England," he says with exasperation.

As a two-hour program, *Don't Be a Victim* has a lot of variety. In the segment entitled *What If?* viewers watch reenactments of violent crimes making the news in recent years, followed by analysis of strategies that might have produced a better outcome. *Because Lives Depend on It* correlates tactics and defenses a private citizen attacked by a criminal might use compared to training and skills used by police, special response teams and Special Forces. *Practical Tactical* illustrates physical defense skills, including hand-to-hand, knife defenses, and a host of tactics



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including planning for home security, defense against an active shooter, what to do during a hold up and more.

Don't Be A Victim airs from 9 to 11 a.m. EST on Saturdays. For readers like me who only became aware of the program after it was underway, Spike TV will rerun the entire 13-episode series later this year in the same time slot.

Dispelling Ignorance

With the diversity of Bird's life experience it is hard to guess what he will tackle next. It is safe to predict boats, books or bullets may be involved. He may even take on another long sailing adventure, and I expect he will continue to write about what he knows. Bird is convinced that one of the roots of anti-gun sentiment is the all-too-human trait of fearing that about which we are ignorant. He explains, "People who don't know anything about guns fear them and are afraid of taking responsibility for their own safety. Fear and ignorance drive that."

Bird cites the experience of a woman featured on *Don't Be A Victim*. She came into the program citing the helplessness she felt not knowing if she could protect her children when her husband is not at home. This she realized after taking a cruise vacation with a friend who was raped during the cruise. She acknowledged that even if she had been present or come in during the attack, she would not have been able to help.

At the end of her training, the woman expressed increased self-confidence, noting that now she had strategies for fighting back, and knowledge on which to base her resistance, Bird relates. "If you have no plan and aren't paying attention, then the surprise of bad things happening may kill you," he concludes. ●

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Marty Hayes

President's Message

What a difference two years makes! Suffering a bit of writer's block when faced with writing this column, I decided to look back over the last two years and make a comparison from the October 2008 and October 2009 *eJournals* to today's edition. Join me as I take a look back in time.

Politics

In the fall of 2008 we were just about to elect our first black president, Barack Obama, with all the political hyperbole that accompanies a presidential election. History will tell whether or not electing Obama was a wise choice for America. I certainly have my own opinion on that issue, but suffice it to say, I am still proud that the American people can set aside their history of racial prejudice and elect a black president. A year later, in 2009, Americans were attempting to make sense of what they'd done, and watched as a struggling Barack Obama tried to get a handle on both the economy and the dual war we were fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid were firmly in control of Congress because the Democratic Party had taken control back in 2006. Now, in 2010, Reid's re-election bid is in big trouble and Pelosi may lose the Speaker's position. It appears that the American people are repudiating the policies that Obama and the Democratic Party advanced during the last two years and are preparing to give the ball back to the Republicans. If that occurs, let's hope the "R" team doesn't fumble the ball.

Economy

Two years ago, the stock market fell in one of the worst reversals of fortune ever seen in this country. I felt (and still feel) sorry for the people who lost a good portion of their retirement investments. I know the issue caused no small bit of discussion in my own household and we shifted some priorities regarding our financial future. The crash also pointed out the fragility of our current scheme of investment here in America, where entire fortunes hinge on the whim of a few Wall Street traders. I certainly don't know what the answer is, but I remain convinced that whatever

the future holds for America as a whole and for each of us individually, the less debt you have, the easier it will be to prosper or perhaps even survive in the future.

Gun Industry

Interestingly, despite the economic downturn, the gun industry has profited wildly. Ammunition and gun companies are just now getting the supply lines filled up after the panic of 2009 (when law abiding gun owners feared the worst might happen). I lived through both the 1994 assault weapons ban and the panic of 2009, and while a short-term financial windfall tastes good (like eating ice cream) in the long run, windfalls are not that great for the industry just as eating ice cream is not good for your body fat index. Prices rose sharply for ammunition in 2009, and are just now settling back down, although at higher prices than those of October of 2008. I predict prices will go even lower as people who panic-bought in the spring of 2009 realize they don't need to buy more ammo for a while, and the law of supply and demand will drive prices lower than they are now. This coming spring might be a great time to buy a few cases of ammunition and store it away for the next panic, and yes, there will be a next time.

The Ronda Reynolds Case

In the October 2008 *eJournal*, I discussed my involvement in a Lewis County, Washington case, where local law enforcement and the local coroner mishandled the investigation of the death of a former state trooper. In 2008, we were appealing a judge's decision and fighting to get a court to review the evidence of the case through a procedure called a judicial review. I was frustrated, and wrote my

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column in the eJournal about the case, citing it as an example of how your shooting might be misinvestigated by law enforcement. In October 2009, we were getting ready to present the evidence again, because the Washington Court of Appeals ruled that the local coroner failed to perform his duty under the law and reinstated plaintiff Barbara Thompson's right to have her daughter's death reviewed. In November 2009, a jury agreed that Ronda Reynolds had NOT committed suicide. Since then, the Lewis County Coroner has appealed the judge's order to change the death certificate and we are again waiting in Appellate Hell to get some justice for Ronda and her mother. In a new development, true-crime writer Ann Rule has written a book about the case. [In the Still of the Night](#) will be on bookstore shelves October 12, 2010. It should make for fascinating reading, and like most of Rule's books will likely be on the best seller lists. It would make a great Christmas present for you true-crime enthusiasts.

Larry Hickey Case

A month after October 2008, Larry Hickey was attacked by a three-headed monster in the driveway to his home and was arrested for defending himself and his family. In October 2009, I testified at his first trial, where testimony from several experts, as well as Larry himself, convinced nine of the twelve Tucson citizens comprising the jury that he was innocent of any wrongdoing. That was the good news. The bad news was that three other citizens agreed with the prosecution, resulting in a hung jury and a retrial. Last April, the case "Hickey II" was tried, again resulting in a hung jury. The judge ultimately dismissed the charges with prejudice meaning that Larry cannot again be prosecuted for that act. Later this year, all civil issues against Larry were dismissed or settled, and last month, we reported on the case, in an extensive story by eJour-

nal editor Gila Hayes. When I get old and gray and looking back through my "book of life," one chapter will undoubtedly be devoted to the defense of Larry and I will smile warmly at the remembrance. For now, I am just happy that Larry and his family are free of worry over this incident, and can put their lives back together.

The Network

Two years ago, after building the Network for ten months, we had about 450 members and had accumulated approximately \$6,000 for the legal defense fund. By then, the Network leadership was firmly convinced we had a good idea in the formation of the Network, and were working "full-steam ahead" in pursuit of the dream of what the Network could ultimately be. Fast forward from then to now: we have made great strides and are closing the gap between a dream and the realization of being able to fund a complete legal defense for a Network member subjected to an unmeritorious prosecution. We currently have over \$70,000 built up in the Legal Defense Fund, and have gained over 2,200 members. I remain humbled that what began as my little idea could actually turn in to the organization we are building today: an organization where members do not have to refrain from defending themselves merely because they cannot afford the legal expense of defending their actions in court.

We still have a way to go, because I will not feel comfortable until we have about \$200,000 in the fund with which to defend our members, but as you can see—and as our original members can attest—we are achieving what we set out to do, as we continue working to make the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, LLC a viable force within the legal community. For readers that are not yet members of the Network, I invite you to join us. ●

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New Addresses?

We hope you won't forget to update your membership information with the Network! If you move or change E-mail, you can call us at 360-978-5200, drop us a note in the mail (PO Box 400, Onalaska, WA 98570) or [send an email](#) with your new contact information. Network members will want to be sure our record of your E-mail is current and accurate, so we can send you periodic E-mail announcements, including one when each new eJournal is released.

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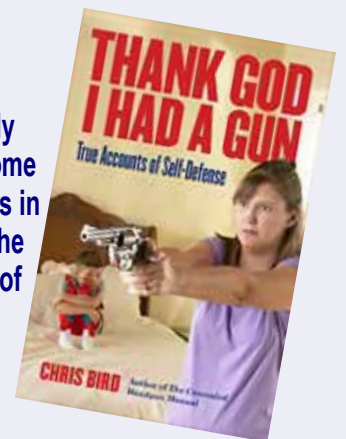
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Thank God I Had A Gun: True Accounts of Self Defense

By Chris Bird. One of the best-kept secrets in the United States is how often and how effectively ordinary citizens defend themselves with firearms against criminal attack or criminal threat. Some criminologists estimate that each year about 2.5 million ordinary people in the U.S. use firearms in confrontations with criminals. In the vast majority of cases, not a shot is fired, and frequently the incidents are not reported to the police. This book lifts the veil surrounding the defensive uses of guns by recounting in detail fourteen of these incidents. 328 pages, illustrated, paperback.

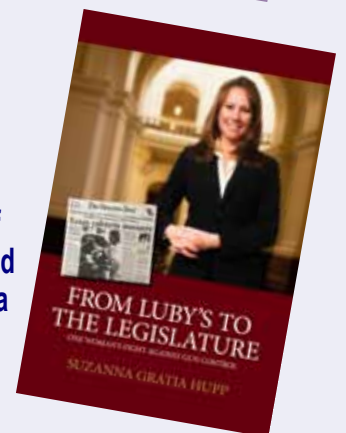
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From Luby's to the Legislature: One Woman's Fight Against Gun Control

By Suzanna Gratia Hupp. The mass shooting at Luby's Cafeteria in Central Texas made news around the world and turned an unknown chiropractor into a national champion for the right of ordinary citizens to carry guns for self defense. She has told her story to the national media and has testified before Congress and numerous state legislatures. Now she has put it all down in a memoir entitled *From Luby's to the Legislature*. 188 pages, hardbound, illustrated.

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Affiliated Instructor Question of the Month

One of the Network's great strengths is its affiliation with firearms instructors and attorneys. With the goal of introducing more of these professionals to Network members, in this edition, we are delighted to continue the *Question of the Month* feature with this question:

When your students ask you what to expect after a self-defense shooting, what are the top concerns most commonly expressed?

JB Training, LLC

Jim Berry
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Most of my students worry about what the legal system will do to them once the self-defense shooting is over. They are not sure how to handle the encounter with the police who will investigate the shooting. They are concerned with how they will handle the emotional side of the encounter. They also want to know more about the conditions under which they could have lawfully defended themselves. They want to know where they can go to get more information on how to handle the aftermath of a shooting.

For the most part, I do not believe most courses I have attended and some my own classes as well, do an especially good job of preparing our students for what happens after the shooting has stopped. We barely have enough time to prepare them for lawful self defense and thus tend to shortchange this subject.

My Shoot/No Shoot and Force-on-Force courses are the only ones where this subject is given the importance it deserves. I can do it in these courses since we are dealing with shooting that involves dynamic situations and judgment so it gives me something to work with. The debrief after the exercises accomplishes this.

One more comment I might add: I believe my first obligation to my students is to provide them with the tools to survive and prevail when faced with a felonious assault. In my opinion it does them little good to die but to know that they would have known what to do to if they had survived to handle the aftermath of the shooting.

If you will check my website you will see that my first three classes emphasize the skills needed to win the fight. Only when people get to the more advanced Force-on-

Force classes and Shoot/No Shoot scenarios will they have an expanded opportunity to deal with the aftermath of the shooting. It is not that I do not teach some of what they need to know but the discussion is abstract since the students have not gone through the actual shooting.

Once I have them doing realistic shooting I have an actual situation that can be used and critiqued to prepare them to deal with what happens after they pull the trigger with lethal results.

Denny Magnusson

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The first question comes up is usually, "Do I have to give a statement to law enforcement? They get pretty cranky when they don't get a statement right on the spot."

My answer is answer no questions and give no statement without your attorney especially in the case of something as traumatic as a shooting.

Kevin McNair

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Students tend to be concerned about—

"When am I justified in using lethal force to protect myself?"

"How will others (friends and family) view my decision to use lethal force to defend myself?"

"Will I face prosecution, even though I feared for my life and only used lethal force as a last resort?"

"How much information should I tell the police? Should I have a lawyer present?"

"Who do I turn to for advice? How much money will I need to retain legal defense?"

"What kind of professional help would be available to help me overcome the impact of such a devastating event?"

We appreciate the contributions of our affiliated instructors of which this shared wisdom is only one part. We hope our members will contact these professionals when they need training, and refer friends and family members to them, as well.



Affiliated Attorney Question of the Month

We are delighted that, with the support of our affiliated attorney members, we can continue this column designed to introduce our members to our affiliated attorneys. Our goal with this column is to demystify aspects of the legal system for our readers.

This month, we wrap up a question continued from August's journal, with the response to our questions penned by [Colorado Attorney Ken Willis](#), who affiliated with the Network recently and here shares his knowledge.

In your experience, after a shooting, how long does the prosecutor or district attorney have before deciding whether to charge a suspect with a crime? In other words, after a shooting how long is the citizen left in limbo before knowing if they will be charged with a crime?

Until the statute of limitations runs out on all possible crimes that could be charged on the facts of the case. If someone died that could be forever because murder generally does not have a statute of limitations.

The question of being charged with a crime after a shooting raises one of the most intimidating aspects of the post-shooting ordeal. Following a serious incident like a shooting, in your jurisdiction does a grand jury ordinarily evaluate evidence and decide whether or not to indict the suspect? As an advocate for the self-defense shooter, would you prefer that a grand jury make that decision, or in your experience, is justice better served when a prosecutor or DA decides about criminal charges and takes that information to a judge? Why?

The U.S. Supreme Court has never applied that part of the sixth amendment to the states so a grand jury is not necessary for a state charge. DAs use grand juries when

they fear political heat for their decision (let the grand jury take the heat) or when potential witnesses are refusing to talk and the DA wants the power of the grand jury to force them to give testimony.

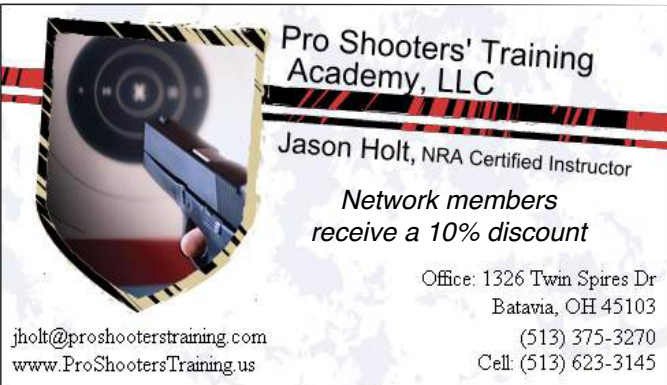
After indictment what is the average time in your area until the trial is held? From your professional viewpoint, are there advantages or disadvantages to going into a trial as quickly as possible, presuming you have an innocent defendant, as in an armed citizen involved in a justifiable shooting?

The right to speedy trial requires a trial within six months of charging but there are so many exceptions it can be much longer. The advantage of a quick trial is to force the DA to go with what they have at that point, but that is a two-edged sword if the DA has a good case. If the defendant is guilty an early trial might be better but if he or she is innocent more time to investigate, find evidence or witnesses that might have been overlooked is an advantage. More time also means more time for witnesses to change their story so might not be good for an innocent defendant. Witnesses are human and while they may have been initially outraged at the criminal who attacked the innocent victim who lawfully defended himself, they may later feel sympathy for the criminal who is now dead and whose family (that previously disowned him) now finds it safe to love him again. ●

We appreciate the contributions our affiliated attorneys make to the Network, including their interesting responses to questions posed in this column. Contact information for our Network affiliated attorneys is linked at the Members page at www.armedcitizensnetwork.org.

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Plan to Deal with Workplace Violence

In the wake of the August 3, 2010 Hartford, CT incident in which disgruntled employee Omar Thornton shot and killed eight workers before shooting himself, Network Affiliated Attorney J. Patrick Buckley sat down and penned the following advice on the topic of workplace violence. It was originally published in an online column he regularly contributes to the **Naples News** website. When Buckley shared it with us, we were so impressed that we asked permission to reprint it for our members, who we think can learn much from Buckley's comments.

by J. Patrick Buckley

The hours following Thornton's vicious attack at Hartford Distributors left many questioning whether something that terrible could ever happen where they work. Sadly, the answer is yes. For some people violence is part of an average workday. Police, soldiers, correction officers, and ninjas deal with workplace violence on a daily basis, but they are trained, equipped with the proper tools and go to work with the appropriate state of mind. For the rest of us, the most violent encounter we will experience at work is a disagreement about who should have been cut on *American Idol*. For the most part we are untrained, ill prepared, ill equipped, and often even discouraged from discussing workplace violence since it is unpleasant. But if something terrible were to happen, what would you do?

Think about it for a moment, you are looking at your computer monitor and getting ready for your 11 AM meeting and you hear a gunshot! Or maybe just a scream! What will you do? Where are the nearest exits? Gunfire can echo, can you figure out where it came from? You sure don't want to unexpectedly be face-to-face with the gunman as you try to escape. Maybe you should hide under your desk? Can you jump out the window? Can you lock your door? What about your coworkers, where are they?

Workplace violence can come from just about anywhere: a customer, coworker, coworker's lover, supplier,

or the street. There are sometimes signs that the violence is coming. The customer is angry or nervous, the coworker's behavior has dramatically changed, the coworker and the coworker's lover have had problems or split up and the lover shows up unexpectedly, the man off the street simply doesn't belong there.

Listen to your inner voice, if it tells you something is awry or you suddenly feel uncomfortable about a conversation don't ignore your instincts. You may be right. There may be evil present. If something happens, you are ready. If the problem blows over, nothing lost and you can return to your work confident that you were prepared.

If you see an actual weapon, it's time to act. Guns, knives, baseball bats, bricks, and pipes may fit into some workplaces, but if it is unusual in yours it is time to call 911. If the phone lines go dead, you need to be aware. If the power goes out unexpectedly in your building, you'll need a flashlight and you'll want to pay even closer attention to your surroundings.

There are a wide variety of people in most workplaces. The former Marine may have a cubicle directly across from the man in the wheelchair. The blind cashier works right next to the expecting mother. The receptionist has her own work area and can't see anything but the lobby. Each of these people may behave stereotypically if the threat comes through the front door; they may not. Either way, everyone needs their own plan, and the group needs a team plan.

The receptionist may be the aggressor's first encounter. She needs to know to just get out of the way and alert the rest of the office. The expecting mother should look to

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escape any way she can. The blind man will likely need some assistance getting to safety. The Marine may look for a tactical advantage to engage in an effort to neutralize the threat. The man in the wheelchair may decide to stand his ground. Different people, a variety of skill sets, one problem. Someone is trying to kill them.

People experiencing a violent attack may surprise you. The expecting mother may become the threat's greatest problem while the Marine has flashbacks of a war zone and freezes as people scream to him for help. Don't assume someone will behave in a special way unless you have a plan and have practiced it.

If you are a business owner or a boss, you need to take action and make a plan. If you are an employee, you need to get your boss's attention and explain your concerns. You are not being paranoid, paranoia exists when someone is worried about a threat and the threat doesn't exist. Workplace violence is real; the threat exists. Consider hiring a consultant to assist you in formulating a plan. You need to take as many factors into consideration as possible. What floor are you on? Going out a window is a viable alternative unless you are up too high. How many exits are there? How many public entrances are there? If there is more than one, determining how to retreat can be an issue. Is there a secured lobby someone must break through in order to get into the work area? Are there individual offices, work areas, or cubicles? Does someone in the office have a firearm? Can someone hide under a desk for cover or concealment, or are the desks glass? Know your floor plan and use it to your advantage.

Invite local law enforcement to meet with you. They may have ideas, and in many cases they are more than happy to help. They can explain what needs to be given to the 911 dispatcher. Some information is important; some is useless filler. Practicing what to say is just as important as practicing what to do. A secretary may repeat and type her address dozens of times a day, yet it would be natural for her mind to go blank when hearing a gun shot. Even dialing 911 can be a challenge.

Unless your office is next to the local speed trap, a 911 call will get the police coming, but it will take time. Now think about your workplace. How long will it take for someone to walk through your front door, through your workplace, pausing less than two seconds to find a victim in each office? Take a minute and go for a walk. Go out-

side, and plan your course. Go back inside, and begin your walk-through. Look into each office for just a moment since it takes that long to aim a firearm and shoot, continue. Did it take you thirty seconds? Maybe two minutes? Now how long would it take for the police to respond to a 911 call? And if the call is "man with a gun - shots fired," will the police come storming in, or will they set up outside and plan?

One of my favorite presentations is about "Situational Awareness" because it is so easy to control if you put your mind to it. We will go off topic for a moment to discuss the various "states of alertness," which kind of means how well you are paying attention. Colonel Jeff Cooper is credited with bringing this concept to self defense in a very easy to understand manner. As you read on, ask yourself what condition you generally use when at work?

Condition White: You are oblivious to what is going on around you. You are distracted. You are thinking about tons of stuff, but nothing about what's happening right in front of you. Stand in front of a department store and watch shoppers leave, talking on the phone looking into the air or down to the ground. They are clueless of their surroundings.

Condition Yellow: This is the first heightened level of awareness, and it is the minimal level that we should all be when we are not at home. I would even argue that this is the minimum level that anyone should ever maintain. When in Condition Yellow you are well aware of your surroundings, you are conscious of noises, although you are aware of no danger. This doesn't mean that you are focused on getting ready to do battle, but only that you can react well should something happen.

Condition Orange: Danger is near. You were in Condition Yellow and something happened: you heard glass

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shatter or someone shouting. You are now on alert and ready to act. This may mean that you will just try to get out of the building, which is understandable if you were to hear a gunshot. This may mean that you are deciding how to engage the irate customer if you are in the back room and your wife is working the counter. Whatever the situation is, you are now thinking and thinking fast. It is time to take your plan and put it into action.

Condition Red: You are now acting. Your plan is in motion. You are experiencing something called "Fight or Flight," which means just that. You need to stand your ground, or perhaps engage; or, you need to escape. What you should do depends on many circumstances, too many to elaborate on here, but I will provide some short examples.

If you are alone in a warehouse and someone smashes their car through the garage door, there is no reason to stick around. Get out, move to safety and call 911. Property can be replaced, your life cannot.

If you are organizing files and your children are playing on your computer nearby and someone starts to argue with your boss and it gets violent, you need to get to your children and determine the best way to proceed. It may be to get into a nearby room, close and lock the door, call 911 and stay quiet. Barricade the door with the filing cabinet or desk if you can. Keep the bad guy out and wait for the police to take care of business.

You may be making photocopies, and someone gets punched right in front of you. You aren't sure what just happened or why, but now your buddy is on the ground and another coworker is getting ready to pounce on him or you. You may want to just reach for the heaviest object you can find and neutralize the threat. Call 911 and ask for the police and an ambulance.

Fight or flight is situational, and requires a very fast threat assessment, sometimes based on very limited information. Do the best with what you have. The next day you can be assured that you will come up with dozens of things you could have done; and your friends will bombard you with, "What you should have done was..." or my favorite, "I would have..." Yea, right. It is just as likely that your friend would have frozen in place and peed himself. Speaking of, this brings us to the worst condition of them all.

Condition Black: You are frozen from terror. Chances

are good that you are about to become a victim. Avoid this at all costs.

Shifting conditions can be an issue. One of the reasons you want to avoid condition white is because condition black is the most likely outcome. Shifting up one level of awareness is easy if you can get used to condition orange. Sometimes skipping a condition can be challenging.

Okay, the fit just hit the shan. Now what do you do? As already mentioned, that depends on a variety of factors. How many people are in the building? Can you safely escape? What can you do? What are you trained to do? I know this is going to come as a newsflash, but men and women are different. If the aggressor is a 5'8", 120 lb man, AND he is unarmed, most men could tackle him. This is not to say that they will, but they can. If the aggressor is 6'4", 280+ and looks like a linebacker for the Baltimore Ravens, then most men I know would not tackle him without giving it some serious thought. In both cases women generally don't have the strength to handle this task. There are other considerations as well.

Think about something as simple as a cell phone. Most women I know keep their cell phone in their purse or on their desk. If they get up to make photocopies, they rarely bring their cell phone, much less their purse. Men on the other hand have no issue clipping the device permanently to their sides. Some even go so far as to have a Bluetooth device on their ear at all times. Now unless that guy is SecDef and he is always on the verge of calling in an air strike, that may be slight overkill. Nevertheless, the guys tend to be far more prepared to call 911 on the fly than the ladies. Something to think about.

Not long ago I was in my office training with a local self-defense instructor and he had me walk around my office

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pointing out everyday weapons and how they can be used. It was a good exercise. Telephone cords, pens and pencils, computer keyboards, staplers, scissors, the list goes on. Even a bottle of water can assist you in a hostile situation if you can capitalize on a split second. Think about it, when someone throws water on your face, your immediate reaction is to stop what you are doing and to wipe the water off your eyes. It is only water, it doesn't hurt but we do it anyway. That bottle of water may just buy you that split-second you need. A cup of hot coffee? Sure. Pick up that office chair and throw it if needed. It is all good. Marquess of Queensberry rules are NOT in effect.

Maybe you are armed. Whether your employer allows employees to be armed takes some considerable thought, and it isn't for everyone. Again, is the weapon with you at all times, or is it secured somewhere?

OC spray, commonly known as pepper-spray, should be more popular. I make sure that every single employee I have has OC spray. It is less than lethal, yet very effective. Just like any weapon, it does require some training. But it is easy to buy, easy to carry, very convenient, and if kept away from kids it is very safe. If you work outside you need to think about wind direction, but otherwise it is pretty much good to go. Most importantly it is very easy to carry concealed or openly without any special licenses or permits. As you can tell, I'm a big fan of this stuff.

Guns are another matter. Guns require some healthy, consistent training, an understanding of tactics, and the ability to avoid a panic attack. Guns can act as an accelerator in a situation. If an employer has some trusted employees, it may be an alternative. Speak to professionals and get advice on the topic. One thing is for certain, like an armed police officer, an armed employee in a hostile situation can save many lives by quickly neutralizing an armed attacker preventing an unnecessary body count. A gun is the only tool I am aware of that can change a mass murder/suicide into a self-defense shooting.

We need to start a dialog about workplace violence. We need to act proactively, not reactively. Signs and company policies may help, but as we have seen, evil people usually ignore laws, policies, and rules when they decide to kill. There seems to be a desire for some to just stick their head in the sand while pretending workplace violence will never happen "here." I'm sure that's what the administration and staff of Columbine High School and Virginia Tech thought, if they gave it any consideration at all.

I was recently in a hearing when opposing counsel announced that his client's business was not involved in the gun sales, did not involve firearms and firearms did not belong there. That may be true, but if a bad guy ignores that company policy, and we all know bad guys usually ignore things like laws and policies that tell them not to do bad stuff, a gun may be the only thing that stands in the way of a disgruntled employee looking for revenge for being fired. A beer distributor has little in common with a firearms distributor, but in both cases a gun is the best tool against a homicidal maniac.

I am always amazed at how seriously society takes fire prevention, yet is willing to ignore workplace violence. Most offices have fire extinguishers, an expensive sprinkler system, fire alarms, emergency fire doors, even walls that are fire proof. Firefighters get an edge every time they are called to an office fire. There are tools inside working with them or available to them. Fire codes force business to layer fire prevention efforts.

Fire prevention is serious business, and those that fight fires and keep us safe from fires deserve applause. Tools are made available to you to neutralize a threat, whether it is from fire or violence or disease. You do your part and those tools will do theirs. Workplace violence is also serious business. Every year good people become victims of workplace violence. Is workplace violence prevention layered, addressed by state and local safety codes, inspected, or even discussed? Not so much. ●

About the author: J. Patrick Buckley is a Ft. Myers, FL attorney focusing on firearms law, self defense and use of force law as well as business, corporate, real estate and constitutional law. He is a National Rifle Association certified firearms instructor and a certified pepper-spray instructor. He can be contacted at Buckley@jpbseq.com or (239) 278-7700. This column is not a substitute for consultation with legal counsel.

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Book Review

From Luby's to the Legislature, One Woman's Fight Against Gun Control

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Reviewed by Gila Hayes

Horsewoman, doctor of chiropractic, mother, sister and wife. Suzanna Gratia Hupp is many things to many people, but to American gun owners she will always be remembered as one of the most effective gun rights advocates of our time.

She came to that role in the worst way imaginable, having been present during the Luby's Cafeteria massacre where her mother and father were killed. Recovering from a tragedy that would have sent weaker women into isolation, Gratia Hupp went on to a political career in the Texas legislature and to exerting considerable influence nationally in the fight for gun rights.

What kind of person has the fortitude to pick up and go on? I think many of us asked that question in admiring wonderment as Gratia Hupp's name became synonymous with gun rights activism. Her autobiography, *From Luby's to the Legislature, One Woman's Fight Against Gun Control* introduces the reader to a practical, resourceful and intelligent lady, tempered by the experiences of growing to adulthood in the American southwest.

The slim, hardbound volume begins, appropriately with her early childhood, portraying the influence of both

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parents, and how gun ownership gave her confidence and helped her live safely as a young adult. One of my favorite vignettes describes using a snub-nosed .38 Special revolver to dispatch a rattlesnake menacing a house cat, after which the author and her sister skin the snake and fry its back strap in butter. The pleasant recitation of background memories comes to an abrupt halt, however, in chapter six, when Gratia Hupp describes the events of the 16th of October 1991, the day her parents were shot and killed.

Gratia Hupp relates that day's circumstances with a heart-breaking candor, with no excuses offered and none solicited. She candidly explains that fear of being caught illegally carrying her small revolver would cause revocation of her chiropractic license, and though she had carried illegally in the past when the circumstances seemed riskier, this time she elected to leave the gun in her car when she entered the cafeteria with her mother and father. To this young, unmarried woman, the chiropractic practice represented her livelihood as well as the earning power to pay off student loans.

When the killer drove his pickup into the cafeteria, the Gratia family took cover, but her father could not hide and watch the murder of others, and he was shot as he moved to confront the madman shooting the cafeteria patrons. A another diner broke out a window, providing an escape route, and Gratia Hupp told her mother they needed to get out. Taking the lead and fearful of being shot every minute she was exposed, the author stumbled outside. There she discovered that her mother had remained inside, learning later that the older woman went to her dying husband's side and was killed there.

The pages that follow are difficult to read, as the author

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describes the days after the massacre that took the lives of Al and Ursula Gratia. She writes about the news interviews, contact with family and friends, and her parents' memorial and burial services. Almost immediately, strangers began trying to use the Gratia family's tragedy to bolster their opinions in favor of limiting gun owner rights. In response, the book's author voiced a little of her own outrage by explaining that the Texas legislature had effectively removed her means of defending her parents during that emergency. Later when one commentator opined that even had she had her gun, it would not have been effective, Gratia Hupp snapped back that she had effectively used her revolver on smaller targets at greater distances. In the months to follow, she was amazed at the continuing interest the media showed her story.

Just as the sensation-seeking talk show hosts were becoming overwhelming, the author met fellow Texan Neal Knox. He encouraged her to put aside her distaste for the mud raking talk shows and use the opportunity to tell millions of viewers what happens when government steals defense rights from citizens. She need not fall prey to the host's agenda, he told her, emphasizing that she could control the message she gave. After some convincing, Gratia Hupp acquiesced and decided that if a talk show would pay her expenses, she would appear on it.

About this time, Texans began arguing for a law permitting concealed carry. When first passed, the law was vetoed. The second attempt, made with the endorsement of Texas' new governor, George W. Bush, was not without a fight, and the author was drawn into the fray, telling elected officials how it feels to have your loved ones killed before your eyes with no means of preventing their murder. Her efforts were noticed and she was urged to seek public office. Though she felt her brother better suited for political aspirations, it was Gratia Hupp who ran for the

post of state representative from the 54th district of Texas and handily won her election.

Her experiences as a legislator, a public speaker, and a pro-gun activist fill the rest of the book's pages, and instead of being a predictable pro-gun polemic, the opinions are soundly-made arguments, always tempered with humanity. As one of the most widely interviewed pro-gun speakers alive, Gratia Hupp discusses the various interviews she has given, and concludes with the assertion that the media is our friend, an argument she ably defends. The next chapter discusses influencing the legislative process and the book ends with a condemnation of the zero-tolerance plague rampant in schools.

Gratia Hupp, raised by her father to respect and honor the principles embodied in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, closes the book with appendices containing the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and a letter her late father wrote about the Fourth Amendment.

From Luby's to the Legislature is not just another gun rights book. It tells a compelling story in the same words and expressions you might hear if sitting across the table, sharing a cup of coffee with a friend. The tone is not academic, and the emotional story Gratia Hupp tells has great depth, detail and inspiration.

Many gun rights books are valuable because they are great ammo for arguments about gun rights. *From Luby's to the Legislature* does the same job, but is also a compelling read that explains how dangerous it is for a government to deny its citizens the right to their own defense. While making that point, it also inspires the reader through the example of a woman who could have grieved privately and remained devastated by the loss of her parents but who instead chose to talk about her loss, teaching an undeniable lesson and impelling the reader to join her in working to preserve American freedoms. ●

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Editor's Notebook



Gila Hayes

Last month a police family less than 100 miles south of my home endured a tragedy no one should face when their son, three-year old Ryan, got hold of one of his father's personally owned firearms and shot himself in the head. He died at an area trauma center several hours later. I cannot imagine the depths of regret and despair that lies ahead for the child's family.

The agency for whom the grieving father works issues lock boxes to deputies for off duty storage of their service pistols. Privately owned firearms are a deputy's individual responsibility, just as they are for you, me and any other private citizen. Herein lies the lesson. A gun that is not in immediate use must not be left lying around – even for a few minutes. Most gun owners are ordinarily very responsible citizens, but a surprising number fail in this duty.

Keeping a gun available for self defense must be done with conscious attention to safety, and that requires better safety procedures than a gun left in a hidden place where it may or may not be available if needed. A handgun carried in a holster on body is under the individual's control and ready for use should circumstances demand. Any additional guns we own must be secured – safe from the hands of children, untrained adults, or even burglars.

For most, that means putting a gun safe somewhere in the home. The expense is about the same as buying a good-quality gun -- \$700 to \$1000 for a basic gun safe made of heavy-gauge steel with a dial combination lock. Of course, there are many options and upgrades should the buyer prefer a decorative finish, electronic locks or fire resistance. For homes with only handguns, there are smaller safes that can be bolted to floorboards or wall studs and these provide a reasonable level of handgun safety and security, as well.

When you have owned guns for twenty or thirty years, or carry a gun daily, it is easy to become so familiar with firearms as to lose sight of the potential for disaster if guns are left lying about. We don't leave children alone in a running car, we don't let small children play near a running chainsaw or lawn mower, and we must not lose focus for even a minute or two and leave a gun where another per-

son may access it and harm themselves or another.

Now, there is a reason that the sad story of three-year old Ryan's death headlined all of the news outlets in our region. Unintentional shooting deaths have become increasingly rare. The National Rifle Association cites [statistics](#) showing firearm accident death rates at an all-time annual low of .02 per 100,000 population. A chart on their website illustrates 100 years worth of data, showing a steady decline from highs in 1904 and a period from 1920-30 until, as they note, "Today, the odds are more than a million to one, against a child in the U.S. dying in a firearm accident." Accidental shootings are considerably fewer than other every-day hazards to which Americans regularly fall prey.

Many of the instructors who have affiliated with the Network are NRA certified instructors, and they deserve credit for teaching adults and children about gun safety, as part of the more than 62,000-strong nationwide force of NRA instructors. To these men and women, and to the NRA, we owe a debt of gratitude for our ability to assert without doubt that gun owners go to great lengths to practice and to teach gun safety.

In support of those efforts, each individual gun owner needs to reassess their own gun security measures and be sure they are doing their part to guarantee that no one will suffer unintentional injury or death with a gun that they own. It's only right. ●



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