



Ten Deadly Little Mistakes *An Interview with John Farnam*

Interview by Gila Hayes

Instructors who teach shooting have become fairly common; mentors who inspire students to adopt security-conscious habits as integral to the armed life style remain rare. John Farnam, who with his wife Vicki Farnam, travels the nation teaching self-defense preparation, is one of the rare teachers who show by word and deed how to live more safely.

One of Farnam's great talents is distilling life skills into manageable tidbits taught with such simplicity that we can take the advice to heart, improve day-to-day safety procedures, and thus either avoid danger altogether or if unable to get out of crime's way, we are better prepared to fight back.

Toward the end of 2014, Farnam (pictured, right) outlined little mistakes that can cascade into lethal disaster, in one of his famous D.T.I. Quips published on his website at <http://defense-training.com/dti/quips>. (Be sure to include that URL in your "Favorites" list, members).

Pointed brevity is a strength of Farnam's frequent Quips, so while listing these dangerous little mistakes, his online publishing format did not accommodate illuminating discussion of the various important points. Blessed with time to visit with Farnam and his wife Vicki at the 2015 SHOT Show in January, I asked him to elaborate on small mistakes that combine to create unrecoverably dangerous situations. Farnam graciously agreed and Vicki added a few observations, adding up to a great learning opportunity. Let's switch now to a Q & A format to preserve the humor and clarity of these observations.

eJournal: John, when I read your recent Quip about "little mistakes," I thought, that's brilliant! Then I thought, but what are we missing? Well, you led the list with "#1: missing danger signs" (pre-assaultive behavior), so let me ask, what danger signs might we miss?



Farnam: Watch for things like hands on hips. That always indicates a challenge or a power struggle, if you would. Now does that mean that your life's in mortal danger? Well, no, because people do that every day, but it's a cue, especially when combined with other things like folded arms or playing with your face. [Mimes running a hand across cheek and chin] It is always a danger sign when people run a hand across their face. We call it a pre-assaultive cue. Not if it is your relative or something, but I am talking about a situation where it is someone you don't know. That's the time for you to get some distance!

I consider anybody I don't know initiating a conversation to be a danger sign. Just two days ago, in Las Vegas we were coming back from the range and we had to buy gas. We were sitting at the gas station and here comes a jamoke saying, "I'm sorry to bother you, sir, but I, you know..." and he never got to complete his sentence because I said, "I'm sorry, sir, I can't help you." He said, "Oh, OK," and he faded away.

Now, was that guy dangerous? You bet! Under the right circumstances, he's extremely dangerous and no interest of mine was served by prolonging this any longer. As the tank filled up, I watched him approach just about everybody else and the reaction was interesting. When he was brushed off immediately, as I did, he concluded that it's a dry hole, to use oil prospector's terminology, you know. Why would an oilman spend any time on a dry hole?

But, when the person hesitated, or asked questions that opened the door, and then he got closer, he started asking questions, and then you started seeing this stuff [again mimes the scrubbing motion of his hand across his face]...very dangerous!

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eJournal: You demonstrated how you spoke to the panhandler at the gas station that I think illustrates the second point on your list, “Mumbled, unpersuasive, and indecipherable verbal commands.” I wish this were video instead of print, because you showed how forcefully yet politely you disengaged. Sometimes people are shy, uncertain, and fail to communicate, “Stay away from me!”

Farnam: Indecision always projects weakness. Our colleague Clint Smith always says, “If you look like food, you will be eaten.” Well, here is an example of looking like food: you mumble and are hard to understand, your posture is submissive and weak looking. All that contributes to actually stimulating prey behavior on the part of the predator. It arouses the predator, even without him knowing it.

[Demonstrates in decisive voice, left hand thrust out, making eye contact] “I’m sorry, sir, I cannot help you.”

eJournal: And you are not afraid to meet their gaze for fear it will initiate a fight!

Farnam: No, I’ve got my trump card right here (flicks vest away from belt holstered pistol). I’m not worried that I will lose the fight. I have to ask, “What is in my best interests?” How is my best interest served by trying to find out what this person wants? The Salvation Army is right down the street. Why is he approaching me? You have to have a philosophical discussion with yourself. How helpful do you want to be? Should I never be helpful or should I always be helpful? Of course, the real answer is somewhere in between.

Was the guy at the gas station starving to death? He was not about to die! Maybe he did run out of gas, but, look, here you are at a gas station! [chuckling] What a coincidence! Apparently, the only thing missing was the cash!

When I don’t help this person, is someone going to die? Is some terrible thing going to happen? That is what you have to ask yourself. There are more charitable organizations than you can count in this town and most others, so why is he approaching me? [gestures to his clothing] Do I look like the Salvation Army?

More likely his whole story is a scam. He has not run out of gas—he is out of drugs. He does not need food—he needs cash. He is doing this because enough people give him cash often enough to encourage him to keep

doing it. People at fast food places ask, “I’m really hungry...” I say, “I’m sorry, sir, I cannot help you,” then I go back to my car and watch person after person give the guy money. I’ve seen the guy sitting out on the grass and have people bring food out!

When people do that, they are not trying to benefit humanity, they are trying to assuage some kind of guilt. They say, “Well, I feel so much better.” Well, fine. Far be it from me to tell you what to do! What I AM telling you is, one, you are not bettering society because you are just encouraging that behavior. Two, you are exposing yourself to risk, maybe not significant risk, but it is definite risk unnecessarily.

My students come to me and say, “I’m carrying a gun now. What can I do to make lethal encounters even less likely than they are now? What lifestyle changes can I contemplate?”

Well, here is one answer: Maybe you are going to have to be a little less helpful. You are going to have to be very good at forcefully disengaging, or maybe you need to get good at being deselected to begin with. When you speak in complete sentences, speak forcefully with eye contact, that will usually end it right there. He will conclude it is a dry hole, “I’m going to get nothing here, no point in wasting my time.”

eJournal: We become so accustomed to panhandling, that it falls off our danger radar, leading into a point on your list: **#3 Inability to separate the significant from the insignificant** that made such an impression that I wrote it in bold type in my notes.

Farnam: I think we have to look at genuine risks vs. imaginary risks. What kinds of behavior represent genuine risk exposure and what is trivial? You see two people arguing loudly at the gas station. How much risk does that represent to you? Probably not much. What represents the best course of action? Get out of there. How risky is it really to stay there, finish filling your tank and get on your way? Probably not much. That is probably what I would do.

Now, suppose one of them produces a weapon. I just made a quantum change. Before, the argument was substantially insignificant. I would just like to get the tank filled and go. Now, somebody has produced a weapon.

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Suddenly, the gas is unimportant. I'm not even going to pay for the gas. I am just going to get out of here!

eJournal: We do have to decide to break our enculturation, whether that is to drive off without paying for the gas, or enter an empty intersection on a red light to avoid getting shot.

Farnam: At that point, you have got to be good at making the transition and the faster you can do it, the better off you are.

eJournal: How have you trained yourself to be able to go from zero to 100?

Farnam: Other than thinking about it? We do incorporate this into drills in classes. We get it out in the open and we talk about it and make sure our students understand that the whole theme behind carrying a gun is that you have to know how to go from being benign to lethal and the quicker you can do that, the better off you are. Every moment of hesitation significantly increases your personal risk, whether from your inability to see what is going on, or your unwillingness to confront it.

eJournal: Every moment, you may be taking damage until you're unable to fight back.

Farnam: The chance of you getting real harm done greatly increases with time. How many people have you talked to who got mugged who said, "I wish I'd left five minutes earlier!"

eJournal: Or the classic, "He came out of nowhere!"

Farnam: Why didn't you see him? Not long ago, Vicki, a friend and I were in a Cracker Barrel restaurant having breakfast. I was very hungry and I was thinking about eating and what I had to do for the rest of the day. We ordered breakfast and Vicki excused herself and when she came back, I knew something was wrong because she didn't sit down. She walked behind me, put her hand on my shoulder and said, "We're leaving now."

We said not another word. We all got up and I put a \$20 bill on the table and walked out and as we walked out, at the cash register there were three uniformed officers, and I heard one of them say, "No, we will just wait for him to come out."

I have no idea whether they made an arrest nor do I

care. We went down the block to the IHOP and had breakfast there. The whole experience cost me \$20. I am not going to agonize over it. You make decisions; you don't look back. We never discussed it after that, nor did we say, "Do you think we should have..." That is a waste of time and we don't do that.

I'm not sure rationalizing it is terribly important. Maybe you'll sort it out later or maybe you'll never sort it out. I think women are especially sensitive to this and may say, "I don't like the looks of that guy, I don't like the way he's standing." I know that if I'm with Vicki and she says, "We are leaving now," I don't say, "Why?"

Vicki Farnam: Because we have agreed ahead of time that is the way we will be! You should have the same agreement with everyone in your immediate family and people that are around you a lot, that they know when you say it in a certain tone of voice, that there is no question at the moment. You can ask questions later, because not everybody sees that same thing.

Farnam: If she says, "I think we had better leave," and if I say, "that's stupid," she should say, "Well, OK, Bud, I'm going." Leaving is OK. I just think that is common sense. I would rather be suspicious about it earlier, break it off, and never know.

I would rather err in the direction of being too cautious rather than not being cautious enough. On the other hand, I don't want to be hyper paranoid to the point where I am afraid to go outside. I, for one, want to experience every good thing this civilization has to offer. I do not want to miss out on anything! I think that is how we grow as individuals and how we become valuable as individuals.

What represents genuine risk and what represents, for lack of a better term, normal risk? Risk attaches to everything we do, that's normal. We have to be able to separate that from significant risk, and especially from significantly avoidable risk. How about going with your friends to a raucous, sleazy bar? You have to ask yourself, "Why is this a good idea? How is it going to benefit me?" Nine times out of ten, the answer is that you are with a group and you do not want to be the wet blanket. You need the emotional independence to say, "I am not going to go in there. If you guys want to go, go ahead. I have car keys, I have cash, I have a pistol and I'll be OK."

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eJournal: Preparation cuts dependence on companions so you can go on home or to your hotel. Now, on to the fourth little mistake in your list: #4: Taking a bad position. Is this, as Claude Werner explained in this journal (see <http://armedcitizensnetwork.org/our-journal/313-august-2014>), about positioning in public spaces, or is there a larger principle?

Farnam: I wrote that particularly for police officers, who get paid to confront dangerous people and need to ask, "What kind of a position am I in? If this really goes south right now, could I get an object between us, could I use cover, could I do this better?" This is why police officers get shot at point blank range, standing flat-footed out in the open. How could you do your job without going so far out on a limb?

For non police officers, it is the same thing. If I do not like the looks of some jamoke, I try to get distance and get something between him and me. In a restaurant, I don't care to sit with my back to the room, although sometimes that is unavoidable. I'm sensitive to vulnerable positions. I know where the exits are, how I can get out.

Getting caught flat-footed is often avoidable with just a little planning, just a little advance thinking about what can I use for cover, what can I get behind, what exit should I head for to get out of this place if it catches on fire? Those are lifestyle axioms that you have to seriously think about when you want to be one of us.

eJournal: You've said a lot about training and preparation. Your list's next point may be the direct result of failing to prepare! You called the #5 mistake paralytic indecision. Doesn't that come from not having a plan?

Farnam: [Laughs] Paralytic indecision is probably a fancy term for panic. One of the things we try to infuse in our students is decisiveness. You have to be capable of making a decision and not looking back because that is where the hesitation comes from. We are all guilty of it, of course, but when it comes down to life and death, what if I'm completely mistaken and it isn't what I think it is?

People say, don't ever shoot unless you're completely sure! Well, you are never going to be sure! There is always going to be some doubt. You have to confront the fact that there are no guarantees. You might be

completely wrong, but in this business, we make decisions and we don't look back. I know lots of lawyers and we will work it out afterwards.

I promise you, whatever you do, it will not be perfect. Expect civil litigation five or six years later and an expert is going to get on the stand and point out where you could have done better. I promise you, he will be right—you weren't perfect. What your lawyer will say in closing arguments is, "The law doesn't require you to be perfect. The law requires you to be reasonable."

You do what makes sense right now and don't look back and don't apologize. Once Abraham Lincoln put it like this, "If I were to read, much less to answer all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how—the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

Are you ready to confront the fact you may be wrong? If you're not, you better not carry a pistol; go back to eating grass because if you get into something, you are going to do something that can't be taken back. All kinds of people will point out where you could have done it better. If you value your mental health, you better not spend your life looking back.

eJournal: You said a few minutes ago, that indecision was a fancy word for panicking, and you added to your list of "little mistakes," #6 Panicking and shooting too fast.

Farnam: In our particular art going too fast is a perennial problem. [Laughing] Some people shoot too slow, the other 98% shoot too fast. They overestimate their ability and don't make the first shot count. How many students have you seen come through that after four or five shots, they can't miss, they are fine.

eJournal: Sure, but we don't get any warm up shots if shooting for self defense!

Farnam: That's the problem, isn't it? How do we teach students to slow down and hit with that first shot? It is something that we need to practice doing, and we

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reward students when they are able to do that. When you try to go too fast, it is a manifestation of panic. Whether you are a piano player or a shooter, you go too fast. In music, that will make for a bad concert; in our business it is a fatal mistake.

It blends in with the persistent delusion that a miracle will save us! What is the theme of most television dramas? There is this terrible situation, there is no way out, and then—a miracle! It can take the form of super heroes who have some magical power or the cavalry arriving in the nick of time. We tell our students, “That is fantasy. None of that is going to happen.”

People talk as if some miracle is going to save them, saying, “Well, when it comes right down to it, I will be able to make that shot.” I say, “Are you nuts? Look what you just did! Do you think you are going to shoot 10 times better in an emergency? You are going to be only half that good in an actual shooting!” It is not going to save you. It is not the great shots that save you, it is the little mistakes that kill you.

eJournal: And the #7 “little mistake,” unintentional discharges, is closely related to going at speeds that exceed your level of mastery.

Farnam: The accidental discharges (ADs) you hear about occur on the range, especially when there is an injury because somebody shoots themselves when they are handling the gun under administrative circumstances, but ADs happen in gun fights, too. People get their fingers on triggers too soon and AD. It is not just a safety issue, it is a tactical issue. What does that do for your concentration? How many seconds will that cost you before you re-orient yourself?

So, keep the fingers where they belong; the muzzles where they belong. It is not just a range procedure, this is something you have to cement into the way you handle guns under all circumstances or you are going to have an AD in the middle of the gun fight and you are going to shoot yourself or at the very least you will break your concentration and it could be fatal.

eJournal: You talked about not shooting too fast, but conversely you mentioned that we could shoot too slowly, too.

Farnam: Unproductive or insignificant accuracy means nothing! Consuming an extra couple of seconds to do

that is not in your best interests. I teach on an area target that we can shoot closer or from farther away. I want you to maintain the same degree of accuracy, and that means you have to adjust the speed, but I do want to see that first round hit no matter what, which means that you must adjust the speed. How much? Only you know, and you probably don't know that now. But you should know by the time we are done with class.

eJournal: Your list included another challenge that makes it harder to shoot accurately—using cover. What effect is trying to use cover going to have on accurate first shots?

Farnam: Once again, if you don't do it routinely in training, you are not going to do it. We can't just SAY when you get in a real gunfight, do it this way. We actually have to do it, which means you are going to be in awkward positions that are going to affect your accuracy in class. Well, how much? You will learn that and will know it because we do it in class. Students are not always going to be terribly comfortable, and I tell them, we are going to do some things that by their nature are going to be awkward and clumsy but I hope you understand, we have to do this.

eJournal: That brings us to the last little mistake, which you said is relaxing too soon.

Farnam: In class, when you fire what you think is your last shot, I don't want to hear, “Oh, thank goodness that is over!” What right do you have to declare this over? I will tell you when it is over! What should you be doing? Moving? Reloading? Scanning? Staying in the fight! I will tell you when it is over. You let me end the problem, you do not get to arbitrarily end it yourself.

I hope you understand the reason for that. When you go, “Whew! I'm glad that's over,” well, for your sake, I hope you are right, but when we take this into the real world, and you think you have the right to arbitrarily declare this over, you're in the middle of self delusion. You do not get to declare anything. You get to handle what gets thrown at you.

Relaxing too soon was one of the ten that was included in Pierce Brooks' original list. Many will be too young to remember, but Pierce Brooks was the lead detective on the LAPD Onion Field case in 1963. He wrote the first

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book on police tactics *Officer Down: Code Three*. In it he listed the Ten Deadly Sins for police, like being asleep on duty, poorly maintained weapons, stuff like that, but I remember the one that really stuck with me was relaxing too soon, arbitrarily deciding that you had the authority to declare this over.

eJournal: Our readers should understand that you went into police work soon after serving in Vietnam where

people tried to kill you, so Brooks' list would have resonated with you, because you may have seen people die because they relaxed too soon.

Farnam: Exactly, where it was never-ending and you never got to relax! That was one of the bitter lessons that I lived through, through no fault of my own. When I first read that in Pierce Brooks' book, I thought, "Oh, boy, no kidding." I thought I should include it in this list, because it really is important.

eJournal: I thought yours was a great list, too, and it means even more to me now after you helped by fleshing out the details of each point. Thank you so much for developing the list for the Quip, and for doing so much to help armed citizens understand the responsibilities we assume when going armed.

For further research Network members may wish to read the underlying quip at <http://defense-training.com/dti/little-mistakes/>.

The list discussed here is found at that link and identifies these "little mistakes" that can cascade lethally:

- 1) Missing "danger signs" (pre-assaultive behavior)
- 2) Mumbled, unpersuasive, and indecipherable verbal commands
- 3) Inability to separate the significant from the insignificant
- 4) Taking a bad position
- 5) Paralytic indecision
- 6) Panicking and shooting too fast
- 7) Concentration-destroying unintentional discharges
- 8) Failing to move
- 9) Failing to take advantage of available cover
- 10) Relaxing too soon.

*[End of article.
Please enjoy the next article.]*



President's Message

by Marty Hayes, J.D.

We lead off this month's message with the story of Steffon Lamont Josey. Some of you may know about this, so I will write the following for those who do not. According to Steffon, he is a resident of New Jersey, and up

until his arrest and conviction on an unlawful gun charge, he was an armored car driver and was testing to become a police officer. He lawfully owned a handgun for his job and normally transported the weapon secured in the truck of his car.

On the day in 2013 that the problems began, he had been surprised by his six-year old sister as he was getting ready to go to work, so he slipped the gun into the glove box of the car as that was quicker than putting it in the trunk and he wanted it out of the little girl's sight. Steffon then headed off to work. When stopped by a police officer for a traffic violation, he remembered the gun was in the glove box and told the police officer about it. The cop wrote the ticket and confiscated the gun, telling him to come down to the police station to pick it up.

At the police station, Steffon was arrested for a crime, even though he legally owned the gun. Now, here is where the picture gets fuzzy. Apparently, some time after the arrest and before trial, he was offered a plea deal to avoid spending any time in prison. New Jersey has a mandatory five years in prison for any gun offense. Well, Steffon, fearing prison, took the deal, and as a result became a convicted felon, even though the gun was legally his. His transgression was transporting the gun in the glove box of the car, instead of the trunk. And for that, he has lost his job and any hope of becoming a police officer (unless he can get the conviction overturned on appeal or be pardoned). And that is his current situation.

He posted a link to his story on the Network Facebook page, and I am going to re-post it here. He wrote, "Armored guard aspiring to become a police officer from NJ facing 10 years for his legal owned firearm in NJ help save him! #2A Anything helps! Steffon & Evan Nappen are battling to win the appeal please help! gofundme.com/pardonsteffonjosey

Why, when Steffon was NOT a member of the Network, and this was NOT a self-defense case, am I discussing the case? Because Steffon is black, that is why. Let me explain.

The following may be controversial. It is NOT the opinion of the Network, but mine alone. I also think it needs to be said. You see, I think that the black community is being used as pawns by the predominantly white, leftist media, in an end-run attack on the Second Amendment and our way of life as gun owners, starting with the George Zimmerman/Travon Martin incident, then the Michael Brown/Darren Wilson incident, then the Eric Garner/NYPD case (not a shooting case but the hysteria was the same).

Here is how I believe the narrative plays out: before the facts are known, the media jumps to the conclusion that an innocent black man was killed by white police (or in Zimmerman's case a White-Hispanic wanna-be cop). The media then whips up hysteria, and before we know it, there are protests and even riots in the streets (think Ferguson, MO). Of course, this is all of great benefit to the news reporting stations, which then go on 24/7 reporting the incident and whipping up even more hysteria and frenzy.

What is missing, of course, are the reports of white people being killed by police under similar circumstances or of white people being killed by black people. Why? I guess it is perhaps because there is no history of white folks rioting and/or protesting when one of their population is killed. Why do blacks riot and protest? I do not know, but perhaps we can get someone with the answer to that question to respond here.

Which takes us back to Steffon and his case. Was he prosecuted because he was a young black man with a gun? Would a white person have been given a pass?

We all remember Shaneen Allen, a Pennsylvania black woman who mistakenly believed that she could lawfully carry a pistol in New Jersey because she had a Pennsylvania concealed weapon permit. She was arrested in 2013 under very similar circumstances (pulled over for a traffic offense in NJ and told the officer that she had a handgun in the car). The charges against

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her were finally dropped in mid-2014. Evan Nappen, who is a Network Affiliated Attorney, got involved in the Allen case and Allen received probation and thus avoided jail for the gun offense.

Would a white male be given the same courtesy? If what Steffon says is true (and I have no reason to not believe him), I think that perhaps some Network members might want to know about his case and send the young man a few bucks to help fight his conviction.

Here is the link to Steffon's Go-fund-me page <http://www.gofundme.com/pardonsteffonjosey>, in case you might be inclined to give a few bucks to the cause. I did, and I personally hope you will, too.

Race and Self Defense

In pondering the above story, this is my question: How can we (an organization comprised predominantly of white gun owning males) help to solve this issue? (While I realize that not all Network members are white males, the fact is that white males make up the large majority of Network members.) Well, being a white gun owning male myself, I really don't have a clue.

I personally try to lead my life as a color blind individual, but when an Al Sharpton slaps me in the face and calls me a racist thug (as he did each and every white gun owning male during the George Zimmerman/Travon Martin case) it is difficult not to give some additional thought to the issue of race and how it plays in a self-defense scenario.

The reason this is such a big deal for me is that as President of the Network, I do not want to see our Network members being arrested and prosecuted because of the color of their skin, be that black, brown or white, nor do I want Network members to be prosecuted because of the color of the skin of the person they were forced to shoot after being attacked. This is a unique problem for our gun culture and one that we really need to resolve.

We here at the Network have considered hosting a *Race and Self Defense* summit to explore these issues and try to find solutions to the problems that our American society still has about race, guns and self defense. The summit won't happen next week, but I can see us doing something like this in the not-so-distant future.

See You At NRA?

If you are attending the NRA annual meeting in Nashville, April 10-12, please remember that the Network will have a booth in the exhibit hall, where we will be meeting Network members and signing up new members. Please come visit us in booth #2455 and bring a friend who is not yet a member. Also, authors Massad Ayoob, Grant Cunningham and our very own Gila Hayes, along with Network Affiliated Attorney Andrew Branca will be holding book signings at the booth. So, bring one of your own books for the author to autograph or pick one up at the booth. We are looking forward to meeting many of our members, so please be sure to come up and identify yourself.

Are You a Raven?

"Raven" is a nickname for a Gunsite Academy graduate. I must confess that even after 25 years in the training business, I am not a Raven (but Gila is). For a number of reasons, I have never taken a class at Gunsite, although I did accompany Gila there back in the Stone Age and I attended two National Tactical Invitational events there, too.

I plan to rectify this oversight in my firearms instructor history, by attending the 250 Pistol class Sept. 28 thru Oct. 2, 2015. Why would an established instructor, having taught for 25 years, take a fundamental defensive handgun course? Well, we will find out, as I also plan on writing an article for SWAT Magazine about my experience. In addition, our Network VP Vincent is going to accompany me. My question to you all is, would any of you folks like to take a Gunsite 250 Pistol class with Vincent and me? As of this writing, there are six openings in the class, so if you think this is a dandy idea, don't wait—give them a call at 925-636-4565, or enroll on line. <http://www.gunsite.com/>.

I can shoot a gun just fine...

Why do I need more training? To accompany the above announcement, I wanted to spend just a little time discussing training. You see, I just completed a course taught by John Farnam, Network Advisory Board member and world famous trainer, who holds his Defense Training International courses throughout the

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country. Recently, my own training school, The Firearms Academy of Seattle hosted John and his wife Vicki for a two-day defensive handgun course.

It had been 20 years since I trained with John, and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. But what did I take away from the class, other than two good days of shooting? For one thing, I have updated my own training resumé. I try to take at least one class per year from a nationally recognized training entity. That way if I am ever on the witness stand, either as an expert witness or a defendant, I can explain that I continually seek professional training, to keep my skills sharp and my body of knowledge updated, just as lawyers, doctors, and judges do. Remember, you will be judged to the standard of a reasonable and prudent person who "knew what you knew, and saw what you saw."

Because my two days with John and Vicki Farnam are now documented, anything they told me is discoverable in a court of law to help me prove my innocence. And so, if I need to defend my actions in court, and something we covered in class was fresh in my mind during my decision making process, BINGO. I testify to that, and more importantly, I have John or Vicki come to court and testify as to why they taught me what they did.

If you don't have any recent training courses on your training resumé, you might want to rectify that. Either Gunsite or Defense Training International <http://defense-training.com/dti/> would be good places to start.

For the advanced student or instructor, a unique opportunity is available this summer. In late July, Massad Ayoob and I will be teaching a *Use of Deadly Force Instructor* course, here at my school halfway between Portland, OR and Seattle, WA. This course only happens once a decade or so, and with the proliferation of concealed weapons permit instructors needing to understand the nuances of self-defense law and how to teach this subject matter, we decided to offer it again this year. If you are interested, there's a lot more information at <http://firearmsacademy.com/guest-instructors/109-udfi>. Network members get a \$100 discount off the tuition, since Massad is one of our Network Advisory Board members and such a strong supporter of the Network.

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Please enjoy the next article.]*



Attorney Question of the Month

The question we are currently asking our Network Affiliated Attorneys arose when a member wanted more information from state law to determine if pointing a firearm without shooting is considered use of deadly force in the various states. Wanting more than just a “yes” or “no” response, we asked our Affiliated Attorneys the following—

What is the law in your state regarding defensive display of a firearm?

If the gun is not fired, is simply pointing it at an assailant considered deadly force in your state?

What are common charges stemming from pointing a gun at another and what are the defenses for the armed citizen who does so to ward off imminent attack?

It was a rather complex question, so responses tend to be a bit longer than usual. Last month we presented the first half of the attorneys' commentaries, and will wrap up the second half of the responses in this journal.

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In Utah, a person may use a firearm if it's otherwise justifiable applying the concepts of imminent, reasonable and necessary or to stop the commission of a forcible felony. If it is not reasonable and necessary, displaying the gun in a threatening manner is considered a Class A misdemeanor “Threatening with a deadly weapon” or, if the gun is pointed at any part of a person's body, and the threat is not justifiable, it's considered an aggravated assault, a third degree felony.

Although the question of whether the threat of deadly force is considered the use of deadly force has not been decided by the Utah appellate courts, the Model Penal Code, section 3.11 makes it clear that the threat of deadly force does not involve the use of deadly force. However, no one should be anxious to be the test case on this issue.

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Simply pointing a firearm at someone in Alabama is not normally considered deadly force unless one is doing it as part of a criminal act. There are misdemeanor charges for menacing and harassment where a weapon is waved around or pointed in a threatening manner without justification. However, self defense is a defense to such a charge in situations where the gun owner is legitimately afraid of death or serious bodily injury due to the aggressive or threatening actions of others. Having a gun in your hand while investigating what appears to be someone breaking into your car would not be considered deadly force.

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Unlike some other states Maryland does not have a brandishing type statute. What Maryland does have is the crime of First Degree Assault. There are several different types of First Degree Assault but the crime as it pertains to the question presented would be defined as “using a firearm to intentionally frighten another person with the threat of immediate physical harm.”

The good news is that the display must be intentional; an accidental slip of a cover garment would not trigger the statute. However pulling a jacket up to show you are carrying a pistol could be considered an intentional frightening. The bad news is that the charge of First Degree Assault is one of the most serious crimes on the books in Maryland and is a felony that carries a potential maximum penalty of up to 25 years in prison. Since there is no lesser charge it is often the only charge a prosecutor has at her disposal and is frequently lodged against a person in this situation.

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There are some defenses to First Degree Assault. As you can see from the definition above the display must be coupled with the threat of immediate physical harm. This can give rise to a potential defense when there is a conditional threat, for example: "If you don't get back, I'll shoot." Additionally Maryland recognizes self defense as a complete defense to all assaultive crimes, so if all the elements of self defense are present it is an absolute defense to the crime of First Degree Assault. Maryland does not consider the mere display of a firearm to be deadly force. To rise to that level it must be discharged. So you would only need the elements of non-deadly self defense to be present to mount a successful defense.

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In Florida the simple reply is that pointing a firearm at another is normally aggravated assault with a firearm carrying a mandatory prison sentence unless there was a reasonable belief of imminent death or great bodily harm, or the imminent commission of a forcible felony. It is not recommended except in the most dire of circumstances.

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Pointing a gun at another person in Washington State could result in a class B felony charge of assault in the second degree with a deadly weapon. That crime occurs when a person assaults another with a deadly weapon. Assault is not defined by statute in Washington; this state uses the common law definition, which for these purposes is as follows: "An assault is an attempt, with unlawful force, to inflict bodily injuries on another, accompanied with the apparent present ability to give effect to the attempt if not prevented. Such would be the raising of the hand in anger, with an apparent purpose to strike, and sufficiently near to enable the purpose to be carried into effect; the pointing of a loaded pistol at one who is in its range; the pointing of a pistol not loaded at one who is not aware of that fact and making an

apparent attempt to shoot; shaking a whip or the fist in a man's face in anger; riding or running after him in [a] threatening and hostile manner with a club or other weapon; and the like." That charge carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$20,000.

It could also be charged as unlawful display of a weapon or unlawful carrying or handling, a gross misdemeanor carrying a maximum sentence of 364 days in the county jail and a \$5,000 fine. That statute makes it unlawful for any person to carry, exhibit, display, or draw any firearm, in a manner, under circumstances, and at a time and place that either manifests an intent to intimidate another or that warrants alarm for the safety of other persons. So, you can see that one is pretty broad. There is a published case in this state that upheld a conviction for this when a man was walking down a residential street carrying a firearm over his shoulder. He was doing nothing in the way of pointing it or making any threats. And Washington is an open carry state.

It could also be charged as aiming or discharging a firearm, another gross misdemeanor. Aiming or discharging a firearm occurs when a person aims a firearm, whether loaded or not, toward another human being.

There may also be a number of other offenses that could be charged depending on the circumstances of the case; these are the ones that seem to most closely fit the hypothetical.

On the other hand, it is legal to defend yourself, your loved ones or others using reasonable force, which is a whole other area of definitions and can generally be stated as a person can use the same force being used against him or her if it is necessary to do so and a reasonable person under the circumstances known to the defendant would believe it was necessary. Or, a person can use deadly force, which a firearm certainly is, when it reasonably appears immediately necessary to avoid imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury. But this area is complicated and a person should study it well. There is older case law in this state that says that it is not lawful to bring a gun to a fistfight; that presumes that the size/ability disparity is not in and of itself a deadly threat.

Self defense or defense of others is a defense; that is, the State can still bring charges and then you have to defend against them. Self defense does not prevent

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charges from being filed. Every gun owner should educate him or herself before having to use a firearm in self-defense. The Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network has extensive materials available for this purpose and I think that Massad Ayoob's new book, *Deadly Force: Understanding Your Right to Self Defense* is excellent; I can't imagine how anyone would write a better book on the subject.

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What is the law in your state regarding defensive display of a firearm?

21-5221. Use of force; definitions. (a) (1) "Use of force" means any or all of the following directed at or upon another person or thing: (A) Words or actions that reasonably convey the threat of force, including threats to cause death or great bodily harm to a person; (B) the presentation or display of the means of force; or (C) the application of physical force, including by a weapon or through the actions of another.

(2) "Use of deadly force" means the application of any physical force described in paragraph (1) which is likely to cause death or great bodily harm to a person. Any threat to cause death or great bodily harm, including, but not limited to, by the display or production of a weapon, shall not constitute use of deadly force, so long as the actor's purpose is limited to creating an apprehension that the actor will, if necessary, use deadly force in defense of such actor or another or to affect a lawful arrest.

If the gun is not fired, is simply pointing it at an assailant considered deadly force in your state?

No, if the action is in defense of self in an otherwise appropriate situation. Kansas requires the "Imminent fear of death or great bodily harm" in order to justify use of deadly force.

What are common charges stemming from pointing a gun at another and what are the defenses for the armed citizen who does so to ward off imminent attack?

If the firearm presentation is in defense of self as described above, no charges are likely. If it is not, then Aggravated Assault is the likely outcome.

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I just tried to a jury in Sacramento, California this very issue. The client was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, or in the alternative, brandishing. The foreman of the jury was a retired detective. My expert witness said my client was justified in pulling his legal revolver and saying, "This argument is over!" I talked to the jury that convicted him and they said the reason they did convict him was because he did not immediately call the sheriff's office.

I am an NRA instructor and I now tell my students to carry a set of handcuffs whenever they carry a handgun because if you are justified in pulling your handgun, you are justified in making a citizen's arrest. I also recommend that the students get professional training in handcuffing.

A big "Thank you!" to each Network affiliated attorney who responded to this question. Please return next month for an entirely new topic of discussion.

*[End of column.
Please enjoy the next article.]*

Book Review

Low Light Combatives

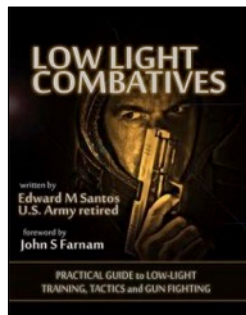
Author: Ed Santos

Published April, 2013

224 pages, paperback, photo illustrated

Buy from the author at

www.tacticalservicesgroup.com



Reviewed by Gila Hayes

In 2007, Ed Santos published his book *Rule the Night Win the Fight*, but later concluded that he had only scratched the surface, he writes in the introduction to his follow up book, *Low Light Combatives*. He spent the next five years in further research, gathering anecdotal reports about low light confrontations, and refining what he had already written. Is the subject complete now? Santos writes that he doubts it, because every time someone is involved in a low light use of force incident, there are new lessons to be learned.

Those lessons join with the tactics and methods taught in his original low light book and still the learning process is underway, Santos writes, "...every real world low light gun fight brings a deeper understanding or situational perspective that must be examined." With that in mind, I was eager to read his *Low Light Combatives* and review it for this column.

Santos addresses his instruction in *Low Light Combatives* to law enforcement officers, soldiers and instructors. However, the private citizen should not mistake the advice for cops only, because as the first in line to defend self and family, fighting off an assailant in the dark can be required of private citizens as easily as it can to police or military personnel.

Why is learning to operate in the dark so important? As humans, most of our sensory input arrives through what we see. The brain integrates visual inputs with what we feel, smell, and gather through other senses, but remove the visual component and most people feel anxious or stressed, Santos explains. The stress is revealed through reduced performance, often decreases in speed for which there is no real reason, since the motions of drawing a gun for example, don't require visual feedback. He gives a lot of good reasons we must become comfortable in the dark!

Santos begins his book by defining the basics of visual perception in daylight, in waning light and under

conditions of darkness, explaining the transition period between full light to reduced light, as well as fundamentals of eye physiology at work under different conditions.

Operating effectively in low light requires controlling the environment, using top quality equipment, cutting-edge tactics and controlling our own responses, Santos proposes, writing at length about each factor. The psychological impact of operating in darkness is acknowledged, he explains, but he fears that the tactical aspect of low light combatives is rarely discussed.

For example, law enforcement officers are repetitively trained to watch the aggressor's hands. In low light, an officer may aim the high intensity flashlight's beam to illuminate the hands, when indeed enough light is produced to light up both the hands and face. Besides, he adds, putting the beam in an offender's face takes away their visual advantage. This is only one example of the real-world experiences Santos draws upon in explaining what's important in skills and equipment to work well without much light.

One advantage of modern, high quality lights is smaller size, Santos continues. It is hard to overstate the value of a defense tool that is already in your hand, he points out. Offensive or defensive techniques built to integrate a flashlight already in your hand enjoy the advantage that you do not have to decide what tool to use – use what is already in your hand, and thus gain back some of the time sacrificed to the loss of speed common to low light operations, he writes.

Shifting away from artificial light, Santos discusses the psychology of shooting when targets are hard to see. Visual patience requires self control to wait to see a correct sight picture, a problem arising in both classes and competitive shooting when, pressed by time and other stress factors, the shooter fires upon thinking they've seen an accurate sight picture, when they have not. This also happens with realistic photo targets, he continues, explaining that trainees will shoot targets depicting hands raised in surrender when pressed to quickly identify threat targets and non-threats without adequate light.

The mind fills in what the eye cannot see, he explains, and this is exacerbated in the initial moments of body

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alarm reaction and the resultant changes in how the eye focuses, he adds. Learning visual patience is vital to overcoming low light's disadvantages: take time to make sure you see the sights and the target. Training and experience working in low light conditions increases confidence, and thus results in better visual patience, he concludes.

The subject of visual patience arises now and again throughout the book, and is raised later when Santos describes using flashlights to search for or identify threats, and again when he discusses common errors students make during low light training. He also defines the most common half dozen methods of operating a tactical-sized flashlight in conjunction with a pistol and writes at length about teaching low light skills. This segment contains the principles of light discipline, realistic applications of using light then moving away. Also discussed is outfitting the light with a lanyard or having other options if the off-hand is needed for weapon manipulation, as would be required if a malfunction occurred.

Working hard to remain brand-neutral, Santos discusses commonly available tactical light options, outlining the importance of the beam's clarity and intensity, and writing about LED-type bulbs and conventional incandescent bulbs as well as various battery options. Use of strobe light options, as well as the theory behind the strobe's disorienting effect enjoys in-depth analysis. Likewise, he critiques use of weapon-mounted lights, identifying the muzzle control problem of relying exclusively on the weapon-mounted light, but he also explains how to mitigate the problem by carrying an additional hand-held light to use for searching, observation, and other non-shooting functions.

The operator's personal equipment and techniques meld to create that shooter's personal system, Santos defines. These include understanding and using principles like the eye's off-center vision ability when light conditions are poor, using lighting conditions to your advantage and to dominate your assailant, use the lowest level of light possible, applying the most light to the assailant, and more. The complex and detailed education in this segment is more than a book review can encompass—readers are encouraged to get Santos' *Low Light*

Combatives and digest this and the other principles taught.

This brings us to the final element in Santos book, a very compelling 23 pages analyzing low light tactical situations faced by law enforcement. Entitled *Real World Diaries*, in Chapter 12, the stories come from a request Santos made of his contacts in law enforcement for reports from low light situations they had encountered. He breaks each report into its discrete elements then identifies actions and problem areas and solutions.

Six incidents are studied and analyzed through the lens of the book's foregoing lessons. Recommendations include back up equipment, and training in working in darkness in an outdoors environment and a repeating theme emphasizing the necessity of visual patience. A panicked, reactive shot is fraught with problems, including correct identification of the threat and loss of shooting accuracy, the first story underscores.

Another report underscores the importance of light discipline, when an officer approaches a burglary location with his flashlight continuously on and left burning during a prolonged chase that ended when the suspect shot him. Fortunately, the single shot hit his vest's trauma plate so he lived.

Several other reports show the value of extensive training and taking time to evaluate the threat before shooting. We should all hope to do so well, and Santos points out that training, practice and good equipment make these results more likely.

Low-Light Combatives closes with an analysis of laser sights, self-luminous night sights, and a simple one that caught my attention, the common outdoorsman's headlamp pressed into use navigating when light is limited and when no threat is present.

Santos has written a very comprehensive book about using artificial light in dangerous situations. Since a flashlight is such a vital element in every armed citizens carry gear, knowing when and how to use it is important. You can learn much from *Low Light Combatives*.

[End of column.
Please enjoy the next article.]



News from Our Affiliates

Compiled by Gila Hayes

With spring officially “sprung,” our Network Affiliates are busily launching their 2015 training season with lots of new activities and continued programs. We’ve been in touch with a lot of our affiliates and they have so much going on that this will be a somewhat longer than usual report.

Our North Idaho Affiliated Instructor Robert Smith has announced a seminar entitled *Defensive Use of Force Options* scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2015 from 6 to 10 p.m. at Harding Center, 411 North 15th Street, Coeur d’ Alene, ID 83814.

Smith, who teaches this seminar, is an expert witness in use of force who has been teaching firearms and related topics for three decades and is director and guiding force behind the Fernan Rod & Gun Club in the National Forest outside of Coeur d’ Alene, ID. In this seminar he addresses how much force is appropriate for defense, and when or when not to use it, as well as the ethical, moral, and legal parameters within which one may use deadly force. It is his aim that seminar participants develop a heightened sense of security awareness needed to avoid or survive a criminal assault, and that self-defense actions they undertake will be court defensible in the aftermath. Seminar tuition is \$50 (and is free to Fernan Rod & Gun Club members).

While the *Defensive Use of Force Options* seminar is open to general public, pre-registration required because class size limited. Call 509-993-1508 for further information, or to register send \$50 tuition and your name, address and phone number to: SAFE (Security Awareness & Firearms Education), P.O. Box 864, Post Falls, ID 83877. <http://safe-llc.com>

Dennis “Dub” Smith of Firearms Professional Training in Round Lake Beach, IL is holding a Tax Season Sale on state-recognized Concealed Carry Licensing courses required prior to making application for your Illinois, Wisconsin and Utah and Florida non-resident concealed carry licenses. P.F.T. also teaches several levels of pistol, rifle and shotgun classes, and has set aside a program specifically for senior citizens and Scout masters, and a gun cleaning program, as well. We recently sent a resupply of the *What Every Gun Owner Needs to Know About Self-Defense Law* booklet to Smith who writes, “I hand these out to all of my students

and strongly encourage them to join your organization.” His April schedule is posted at <http://www.firearmsprofessionaltraining.com/>.

The training courses required for New York State pistol carry licenses, Florida concealed weapon licenses and Utah’s concealed firearm permit are the focus of Michael and Tania Costello’s Interstate Concealed Carry in Kingston, NY. In addition to the training, they can help students get the finger printing and passport-type photos needed for license applications. Learn more about their programs at <http://www.interstateccw.com/services>. The Costellos are new to the Network and we welcome them warmly and look forward to seeing their students become Network members, too. After all, armed citizens telling others about the protections they enjoy as Network members is a big part of how we grow!

We also extend a big Network “Welcome!” to Jeremy Gill, of Practical Defense Training in Albuquerque, NM. Jeremy teaches a 15-hour NM Concealed Carry License course, as well as skill-building programs that focus on practical applications of pistol skills, in either group class settings or through one-on-one instruction. Jeremy also runs Albuquerque Armory and you can read more about this new Affiliated Instructor’s operation at <https://www.abqconcealedcarry.com>.

Our friend Jay French at CCW Breakaways recently shared some happy news with us when he wrote that their family business, which sells very nice trousers with built in ambidextrous pocket holsters, has a great new U.S.-based supplier which has started shipping product! Jay and his family sell a high quality innovative concealed carry product, and it is so nice to hear that they’ve weathered supply line problems—something that can trouble almost any business, large or small. See <http://www.ccwbreakaways.com/>.

Jay adds, “I think it is going to be a while before our shelves are fully restocked . . . but we’ll be making incremental gains.” Congratulations to the French family for getting through the tough times. Members, if you pocket carry a small pistol, you might find just the carry solution at CCW Breakaways. The owners are Network members just like you and it really is nice to support our own.

In Castro Valley, CA, our long time affiliated instructor Gary O’Brien is keeping busy and creating lots of opportunities to tell students about the Network. Gary focuses on each individual student, offering one-on-one,
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personalized instruction and making sure that students who are new to the gun understand the fundamentals before they ever go to the range.

When I asked about his classes, he stressed that he doesn't teach multi-student classes, adding, "All my training is one-on-one. By teaching in a one-on-one, one-hour lesson, the student has me standing next to them, and positioning both their hands, and trigger finger on every shot. I also hang two 8 1/2 x 11 pieces of paper with 6-inch circles as targets. When we get enough holes, we change the paper. We want to know where every shot is going. How else can you make corrections if you don't know what you are doing wrong? I love teaching beginners; they are always amazed at how much you can learn in one hour."

This philosophy of focusing on the individual student's needs extends to his work with local, state, and federal law enforcement agents whom he coaches in rapid fire,

holster work, working under time constraints and movement drills that match their actual work environment, his website explains. Learn more about Gary and his training at <http://www.obrienpistoltraining.com>.

Affiliates, please remember to let me know when you need more copies of the Armed Citizens' Educational Foundation's booklet *What Every Gun Owner Needs to Know About Self-Defense Law* and our tri-fold brochures by emailing me at ghayes@armedcitizensnetwork.org or calling 360-978-5200. At the same time, don't forget to send me an email if you have any special events like open houses, special classes or other interesting tidbits that we can announce for you in this column. 60 days lead time is recommended.

*[End of article.
Please enjoy the next article.]*



Editor's Notebook

by Gila Hayes

The Network is like a teenager, in yet another growth spurt. It's a wonderful position to be in and with the Network now advertising on Tom Gresham's *GunTalk Radio* program and in several gun magazines, we

are reaching more and more gun owners who are only now realizing the importance of Network membership. I'll admit sometimes questions from members who've come onboard in just the past few months set me back on my heels a bit and I am reminded that now and then a refresher course in Network membership benefits, how they work, and the rationale for how we structure member support is helpful.

Recently half a dozen inquiries have asked if the Network's member benefits were available only after self defense accomplished with a firearm. As one of the first organizations to establish a suite of after-incident support measures for armed citizens, the Network did start in 2008 by focusing our assistance on self defense using guns, owing to the necessity of reserving those early monies in the Legal Defense Fund for the most serious needs. Soon, however, as early as 2011, we expanded that after-incident support to self defense accomplished by any legal means or method.

Since that expansion of services, we've had as part of our membership benefits description at <http://www.armedcitizensnetwork.org/learn/membership-benefits> "Benefit applicable to any justifiable use of force, whether firearms related or by other legal means of defense," a statement I recently changed to bold type after such a rash of similar questions from members worried about eligibility for Network support if they used something other than a gun to defend themselves. One couple related that they were not going to renew their membership over this issue, but decided to ask. They were delighted when they learned that we stand strongly in support of members using layered defenses and not going immediately to guns!

In fact, as I reported to some of the members who emailed to ask about support for members after incidents resolved by non-gun defenses, of the eleven instances in which we paid legal fees for Network members involved in self defense, two members

defended themselves with improvised implements that were readily at hand, and even never presented a gun, although both could have done so had they chosen. We paid their attorney fees just as quickly and without question, as we would have if either had needed to resort to deadly force with a firearm.

I am sometimes taken aback by the amount of mistrust and outright suspicion among armed citizens these days! Because we are proud of the good we've been able to do in seven short years, we dearly love to clarify the facts of how the Network works. We do find, however, that explaining member benefits is a lot harder when the questions submitted by email come across as if we are out to bilk the poor guy or gal!

A few weeks ago a member expressed his considerable distress and worry that Network membership benefits might be withheld by emailing, "So 'YOU' are going to help me only if my lawyer tells you there is a 'reasonable self-defense component'????"

"That is your reasonable decision to help me??"

"If my case is a long shot, but I am innocent, you would say NO HELP?"

I don't think our gentleman understood how the Network funds a member's legal defense after a self-defense incident, and in hopes of short-circuiting other such fears, let's briefly outline the role of the Network's Legal Defense Fund and how we draw on it to support members after self defense.

The Legal Defense Fund is the resource by which the Network assists its members after self defense. To date, eleven Network members have received assistance from the Fund after self defense. The financial support is distributed at two distinct points on the timeline after the member's act of self defense.

The first funding is a deposit against attorney's fees sent to the member's attorney as soon as we get the word that the member has had to act in self defense. Network President Marty Hayes confers with the member's attorney over the seriousness of likely charges and the attorney explains how much he or she will need to represent the member in the early days after the incident. Once this is established, the Network sends the attorney up to \$10,000 to cover the cost of initial representation.

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In this phase, the only questions asked are those necessary to determine how much it will cost for the lawyer to provide initial representation for the member.

We want the attorney to have sufficient funding to attend fully to the member's needs in the immediate aftermath—being present with the member during questioning, as well as arranging an independent investigation of the incident to tie down what really happened. Knowing that the facts of the case will become clearer as the investigation goes forward, we set a top limit of \$10,000 since these funds are paid to the member's attorney without any questions about the legality or justification for the use of force at this very early stage in the process. Our intention is to make certain that the member is represented by an attorney as quickly as possible after the incident and that the attorney has the resources he or she needs to do the job.

A couple of years after the Network started up, we expanded this benefit from up-to-\$5,000 to up-to-\$10,000 when we became aware that the expense for initial representation was higher than we'd originally estimated. To date, fee deposits paid on behalf of members have ranged from a low of \$300 to provide a member with a simple one hour consultation with an attorney after an incident to several payments of the full \$10,000 for members with cases so serious that the full amount was needed to cover the expenses of attending to their legal needs after self defense. The amounts vary because self defense can entail such very disparate fact patterns, encompass such very different ranges of potential entanglements, and attorney fees are higher or lower depending on the locale. One of the great strengths of the Network's membership benefits structure is our freedom to respond to the needs of the individual member's case without the restraints of an insurance policy or other limits.

OK, so that wraps up what I think of as Funding: Stage One. Now, if a member's self-defense incident results in criminal charges and he or she is going to court, the member and his or her attorney can request grants of additional financial assistance to pay legal expenses of preparing for and going to trial. At this second stage of funding, the Network with the assistance of its Advisory Board (see <http://armedcitizensnetwork.org/defensefund/advisory-board>) bears a heavy responsibility to review the facts of the case as provided by the member and his or her attorney. I think this is the aspect of Network member support that had so worried my email correspondent, since the first stage of funding is extended without delay.

At this, the second stage, however, we certainly must determine that money from the Network's Legal Defense Fund is not being requested to defend a criminal who joined the Network with the expectation of committing a crime and having the Network squander its Fund defending illegal actions. As I told the deeply concerned member who emailed, absolutely no one in the Network wants the Legal Defense Fund wasted defending a genuinely criminal act, so yes, a funding review process certainly does have to be in place as protection against the outside chance that someone joined the Network, then committed a murder, for example.

Since the Network funds the member's legal defense "in real time," that is, as the legal bills arise and before a court hears all the facts of the case and renders a verdict, there absolutely must be a process in place to assure all of the Network members that we will protect the Legal Defense Fund from being plundered by someone who set out to commit a crime and not face the punishment.

Most of our competitors' self-defense aftermath support plans are dependent on insurance and thus if going to trial, their customers have to wait for not-guilty verdicts to have their attorney fees and other legal expenses paid. The Network's member support is not reliant on insurance and sometimes that makes it hard for people to grasp what the Network does for members who have had to defend themselves. In the final analysis, I honestly believe that the only "proof" is in our actions. Not what we say, nor what a competitor says about the Network. Only in our actions.

To date, eleven Network members have been the beneficiaries of Network support after self defense. These disbursements from the Fund have often been discussed in Network President Marty Hayes' President's Message in this journal. We don't gossip about member incidents and give only general information about the support extended because we must protect member privacy at all costs. Our greatest commitment must be to you, our members, and to your well being first and foremost.

To do this best, we also need your trust. I hope this explanation of member benefits provides explanations that will overcome any worry and suspicion.

*[End of April 2015 eJournal.
Please return for our May edition.]*

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About the Network's Online Journal

The **eJournal** of the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc. is published monthly on the Network's website at <http://www.armedcitizensnetwork.org/our-journal>. Content is copyrighted by the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc.

Do not mistake information presented in this online publication for legal advice; it is not. The Network strives to assure that information published in this journal is both accurate and useful. Reader, it is your responsibility to consult your own attorney to receive professional assurance that this information and your interpretation or understanding of it is accurate, complete and appropriate with respect to your particular situation.

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.

The Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc. receives its direction from these corporate officers:

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J. Vincent Shuck, Vice President

Gila Hayes, Operations Manager

We welcome your questions and comments about the Network.

Please write to us at info@armedcitizensnetwork.org or PO Box 400, Onalaska, WA 98570 or call us at 360-978-5200.



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