

Self Defense in the House of God

An Interview with Tom and Lynn Givens

Interview by Gila Hayes

A few decades ago, needing to defend yourself and your family at church was never discussed. Today, few would challenge the value of learning defense strategies for time spent in a house of worship.

In light of the Network's focus on individual responsibility (membership benefits are provided to individuals, not to groups), we won't offer advice on the many issues attached to organizing a church security team. If Network members or their pastors have concerns about security teams, they should contact qualified firearms trainers including our Advisory Board for instruction in the skills to defend against mass murderers.

The Network's greater concern is that every churchgoer should have a self-defense plan on which to rely during time spent in and around places of worship. This is a topic on which our Network Advisory Board Member Tom Givens and his wife Lynn Givens are eminently qualified to speak. Let's switch now to a Q & A format, and learn from them in their own words.

eJournal: First, before we begin talking about defending oneself while at church, how do you respond to the common question, "Would you really carry a gun into a place of worship?"

Tom Givens: Of course I would! To me, it is a silly question. In the first place, you've got to get to church; you've got to get back. That means you're out in public, in an uncontrolled environment.

Lynn Givens: In looking through the Bible, God addresses people being able to protect themselves. He addresses the person's actions but never addresses the person's tool. The Bible never addresses by what

means the person was killed, it is always about the person's intent. When Cain and Abel's situation broke out, God never addressed the tool that was used. He addressed the intent for which the killing took place. The Bible always focuses on the intent of the person responsible for the act, and never focuses on the instrument, because instruments don't act on their own; it is the person who does the acts.



eJournal: So the choice to carry a gun is more about why you carry it, not whether you brought a gun into the sanctuary?

Lynn Givens: Yes, you have a right to protect yourself and your family from death.

eJournal: What kinds of violence occur at churches and what's the frequency?

Tom Givens: Most people have no idea how much violence occurs in churches. I attended a national church security conference in 2011. [Scanning a page of notes] I've got some notes here that I took. First, serious crimes reported at churches had gone up 200% in the preceding five years, which was a rather dramatic increase. From January 1999 to August of 2011, one study found 473 incidents resulting in over 200 fatalities. Not injuries, fatalities. That was five years

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ago, and things have gotten worse now than they were then.

One of the things we find is that unless it is an actual fatality, a lot of serious crime in churches goes vastly underreported. The churches have a vested interest in NOT reporting to avoid negative publicity or to avoid having the congregation not show up.

Lynn Givens: One reason a lot of churches don't report violent incidents is that it runs up their insurance costs, so a lot of times when people come into the church and commit crimes, the church does not report it.

eJournal: What are we talking about? Mass murder by a psychotic person, religious jihad, or plain old garden-variety brawling?

Tom Givens: In another study, they looked at 335 incidents that happened in churches, breaking down the root cause of the incident and they found that domestic violence accounted for about 18 percent of it. Typically, that's church staff getting involved in a couple's marital dispute or in their custodial dispute, one or the other. 27% of the time—one out of four—it was a personal beef. That means that somebody in the church got mad enough at somebody else to seriously assault or kill them. Here's one that surprises a lot of people, robbery was the motive 27 percent of the time. All churches have cash in them; I've never seen a collection plate with a credit card being run. Then, about 10% of the incidents are gang related and another 18% is just random.

eJournal: That's kind of odd, because people seem more frightened that ISIS might attack their church or that someone off their medications will come in and slash or shoot the worshipers. What you just described could be done by the same people we chat with at the potluck after church services.

Tom Givens: If the pastor is assaulted during the week, typically it will be because a woman has come to the church seeking shelter from a batterer. The batterer shows up and feels the pastor is interfering in his marriage and he beats him up. That assault goes unreported because that is just part of daily business.

For every battered woman, there is a batterer. There is a reason she is trying to get away from him! He is irrational and violent. Who commits assaults? Irrational and violent people. Understand, that a program to help

drug addicts brings drug addicts in to the church and drug addicts are responsible for a high percent of the crime.

eJournal: What else do we know about attackers at church?

Tom Givens: They tend to be male, overwhelmingly, 92% of the time, and guns are used in about 60% of those assaults, knives 16%, automobiles 20%. Guns were used in 60%—so you asked earlier, do I carry a gun to church? You bet I do, because the majority of these, two out of three, involve fighting back against a gun, so I am going to have one or two. To me, it is almost a silly question. Of course, I do. Who wouldn't? My normal response is, "Don't you?"

In the study with the 473 incidents I mentioned before, 596 people were seriously injured or killed. That is almost 600. Remember, with modern trauma care, there are hundreds of people hurt badly who don't die, and by "bad" I don't mean broken fingernails or bloody noses, I mean injuries that require multiple surgeries, and to the degree that they're possibly crippled for life. In my city, in 2013 alone, of the 20 hospitals in the metropolitan area, the one that catches most of the gunshots (although not all of them), treated 3,100 people for gunshots. Only about a hundred of them died.

Now, take the 200 fatalities from the study and apply that. We are talking about thousands of people. It is not some arcane threat; it is a real, plausible possibility. It may or may not be likely that you will be present at church during a shooting, but it is certainly a plausible possibility. So why not just take some sensible precautions?

eJournal: We hear a lot about organized church security. Is their job different than that of the individual churchgoer?

Tom Givens: Absolutely. The problems faced by the individual congregant and organized security details are completely different. The church detail, believe it or not, is actually mostly concerned with the security of the pastor, because he is most likely to attract the attacker's attention.

In most of the high profile churches, the deacons sitting near the pastor will have pistols on them because they

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are concerned about his security more than anything else. He is essentially the heart of the church. He is the prime target for the nut case or the disgruntled husband, or the jihadist, but normally it is not the jihadist, it is the estranged husband, and the pastor is the primary target.

For the congregant it's completely different. I am not concerned about the pastor; the pastor has other people who are concerned about him. I'm more concerned about me and mine, so I want to be as far from the pastor as possible.

eJournal: What, no pressure to sit down front? This is interesting.

Tom Givens: Well, if I go to a retail establishment or if I am at a fast food restaurant, I want to be as far away from the cash register as I can, because the cash register is the target. I'll sit near a door, so I will be able to get out. I'll sit facing the cash register, because if a problem is going to occur, it is probably going to start there, and that way I am behind everybody that comes past me to head to the cash register.

For this discussion, I look at the pastor as the cash register. I want to be far away from him, and facing him. I want to be close to an exit so I can get out and not be involved in the stampede; I want to be ahead of the stampede. I am watching in the direction that the problem is going to occur and I'm able to extract myself and Lynn from the place very quickly.

I am not concerned with protecting the pastor who is 50 yards in front of me, with a thousand people between him and me. I am going to be hustling out the door. The individual congregant essentially has a hundred and eighty degree difference in focus from the security detail. The security detail should be moving toward the pastor, but the congregant should be moving toward the door.

eJournal: You stole my next question! I was going to ask you to prioritize what we should do.

Tom Givens: Get out!

Lynn Givens: As a couple, we have a plan to split, to divide the attention. We have actually done this before. We were in a McDonald's and a fight broke out in the check out line. I looked at Tom and he looked at me, and we said, "We are out of here!"

Our plan is to separate to divide the person's attention. They can't keep their attention on both of us if we're moving apart. If Tom's going at a 45-degree angle to the right and I'm going the other way to the left, what's the person going to do? It divides their attention and makes it more difficult to target either of us.

Tom Givens: He can't watch both of us. The wider you can split their attention, the better. Then, if you have two groups, maybe you can put one group between you and the other, stacking them up and blocking the other's view. By moving apart, our path can't be blocked, one or the other of us can move away. We don't want to be huddled up and both trying to get through the door at the same time.

eJournal: Do you have any immediate concern about calling law enforcement?

Tom Givens: Well, there's no point. Memphis is just an example I use because I'm intimately familiar with it, but the average wait time for a 9-1-1 call is about ten minutes. Then the average response time after that for a priority one call is 17 minutes. The only thing you call for is for somebody to come pick up the mess and do the paperwork.

It is not physically possible for police to come and intervene. It is just not going to happen. They can't take the call, move that information to a dispatcher, radio that to a car, and the car go through city traffic from where they are to where you are, and then enter the church and then do something in time. It is not going to happen. It is just not possible. By the time they get there it is going to all be over. The only way anybody is going to be able to do anything is if they are on the scene when the whole thing starts. If somebody calls the cops, it will be over by the time they get there.

eJournal: Have you any altruistic hopes of using your gun to save your fellow worshipers?

Tom Givens: Once the first shot goes off, everybody in the place is going to be up and milling around. You are not going to be able to engage somebody down front 50 yards away through a milling crowd of panicked people coming toward the exits in a panicked stampede. So

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again, the attacker is the security detail's problem. If I am on the security detail, that's my problem.

eJournal: To what standards do you hold yourself before you would ever consider going to guns in such a crowded environment?

Tom Givens: You better be pretty good! As you know, your skill degrades a good deal under stress, so if you can barely hit a silhouette at 25 yards you are not going to be able to hit a person under those conditions at 25 yards. 25 yards is almost five car lengths, and lots of churches are a lot bigger than that. I've been in mega churches and cathedrals where it is 100 or 150 yards across the nave, or the auditorium if you want to call it that. Some churches are huge, and the idea of a thousand people milling around between the target and me is pretty daunting, and I think I'm a pretty decent shot. [grinning]

eJournal: While you can't control what a panicked congregation does, what about the safety of your children or grandchildren attending the church? How can you help them if the children are in the youth center and your spouse is in the infants' nursery while you're in the main sanctuary? What are you going to do?

Lynn Givens: You need to have a plan to deal with yourself and your family. You need to get training and need to understand that it could happen to you and be prepared for it. Don't be passing it off as something that it is not. Have a plan, talk to your kids.

Tom Givens: You are not going to be able to coordinate your escape. You do need to plan ahead. The kids need to be taught what to do in that case, "Go out the nearest exit and go to our car," for instance. I'm not saying that is the thing to do; I'm saying that is an example. You may tell the children, "If there is ANY emergency, maybe the fire alarm goes off, or you hear what you think are shots, or if you see people screaming and running down the hall, don't wait to see what people are screaming about, get out and go to our car."

Lynn Givens: I think it is important for people to learn to recognize what sounds are. When a gun goes off, people say, "Oh, that was a firecracker!"

Tom Givens: That's right—at Virginia Tech, people thought the gunshots were hammering, because there

was construction going on. They try to rationalize it. "Oh, it couldn't be shots!"

eJournal: From a practical viewpoint, the single directive, "If there's a commotion, leave the building," solves a wide variety of possible problems.

Tom Givens: At least you have a plan! If it is a fire alarm, it gets them out of the building. If people are running and screaming, I am going to assume something scared them. The last thing I want children to do is just hang around and watch to see what is going on, because it is probably bad, what ever it is.

eJournal: Good point! Can you teach very small children to get out of the building?

Tom Givens: Well, if they are old enough to be separated from you, then they are big enough to understand that they are to go to the nearest exit and leave the building.

eJournal: Not to be argumentative, but I have seen churchgoers drop off some pretty small children for Sunday School then go off to another part of the church!

Tom Givens: Well, you'd better have a conversation with the caregivers in those rooms, hadn't you? I'm more and more reluctant to leave my children in the care of anybody else.

Lynn Givens: Me, too. When they are that young, I am more inclined to have them with me, and if they get disruptive, I would leave the sanctuary and try to settle them down. But at this point, I would not leave my child until they were old enough to understand what to do if something happened. We sit in the back row, bring coloring books, crayons, or videos with the sound turned off, but I would not leave them.

eJournal: I respect that, although I was dropped off with all the other toddlers for little kids' worship. I think that the church of my childhood did not confront the challenges faced by congregations today.

Tom Givens: We don't live in the situation we lived in 50 years ago. People just need to understand and recognize that. I would be willing to bet that when I was ten years old, going to a church of 5,000 people, there

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wouldn't have been more than one or two handguns in there, if that, and they were on off-duty policemen.

eJournal: And today?

Tom Givens: Now that is not the world we now live in.

Lynn Givens: A church is now a public forum that handles all kinds of people with problems. Our churches have changed their outreach. When I was younger, we didn't have Alcoholics Anonymous at the church. We didn't have a group going on for the mentally disturbed, now we have all these groups in churches that reach out to people with problems, and they come to the church to get food, they come to get clothing, all sorts of things. Then if something happens in their lives and they retaliate, the church is the place where they end up going.

Tom Givens: I am not by any means saying abandon these programs. What I am saying is be aware that you have heightened your risk and take appropriate counter measures. We cannot say, stop dealing with alcoholics, or stop dealing with drug addicts, or stop dealing with battered spouses. We are saying, understand that raises your risk for violence and prepare for it.

Lynn Givens: Because I was raised in a church family, I may be more aware of this. A person needs to stay relevant, stay up with today's times. Our culture has changed; people have changed. We cannot any longer say to ourselves that man is born inherently good, because they are given the choice between good and evil and a lot of times man chooses evil. So talking someone down from doing something in a church environment isn't going to work. When you try to talk people into putting the gun down, not doing a violent act, it usually does not work, and you actually are giving up your choice whether to live or not.

eJournal: Any time you have large groups of people, you have natural leaders: the minister, priest or rabbi, the elders, the deacons and other church officials. What is your message to the men and women who lead large numbers of worshipers to gather together in one place where they're vulnerable to attack?

Tom Givens: Recognize the threat exists instead of hiding your head in the sand and hoping it goes away. Recognize it and take some simple, intelligent countermeasures. Don't wait for the attack to happen.

Almost every time I find a congregation putting security into place, it is AFTER a critical incident. "Oh, my! So-and-so was killed in the parking lot! We need to do something about the parking lot!" Well, if you had done something before, maybe he would still be alive. Don't wait until you have the event to start planning for the event.

Know that the possibility exists on any given day. Playing with probabilities is silly, if you are involved, you are 100% involved. I once had a statistician tell me that everything in the universe has a 50-50 percent chance, either it will happen or it won't. That's kind of the way I see things. Is it possible? Yeah, but why worry about it?

eJournal: Knowing you and Lynn, I doubt you stay awake nights worrying, although you are prepared to solve safety problems.

Tom Givens: Worry is the wrong word. There is not much that I worry about, because I am a "coper." As Jeff Cooper wrote 50 years ago, the world is divided up between copers and non-copers. The idea of training is that when bad stuff comes along you just have to cope with it. It is the way I live. If it is a foreseeable problem and I can take reasonable steps to reduce that threat, then I'll simply do that. Like Teddy Roosevelt said, the problems you prepare for don't happen. It is the problems that you don't prepare for that happen.

eJournal: That is our most important message—be prepared. I'm not suggesting that people stop congregating for worship. We want people to be able to worship with their fellow believers without being paralyzed by fear.

Tom Givens: Part of the purpose of getting quality training and being armed is peace of mind. I don't have to be concerned with, "Well, what if this happens? What if that happens?" because I have the equipment to deal with it. Now, if anything happens, I'll fix it. I don't have to live like a mouse at a cat show, thinking, well, if something bad happens I won't be able to do anything. I won't live like that. I will not have my options taken away from me.

Understand that violence actually does happen. When it does happen, don't stand there denying it! Don't say, "I can't believe this is happening!" If you recognized before

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hand that, "This may in fact happen," then when it does, your response is, "Well, I knew this might happen and I know how to deal with it." When you spend so much energy trying to convince yourself that it is NOT going to happen and then it does, then your response is, "I can't believe this is happening." Accept that, "Yes, it may happen," and then when it does your response is, "OK, I can deal with this."

Recognize that this is a hazardous world—I don't consider it a dangerous world, there is a difference—if you are not trained and equipped, it is dangerous. If you are trained and equipped, it is merely hazardous. I can control a hazard; I can cope with it. I can foresee and figure out what might happen and take steps to ameliorate that threat and then forget about it; live happily. That is what I encourage people to do.

eJournal: We are fortunate to have your guidance so we become "copers," too. In addition, the Network really appreciates the direction you give us as a member of our Advisory Board. Thank you for supporting the Network since its earliest days and for sharing this thought provoking discussion with us today.

Tom and Lynn Givens travel the nation teaching a variety of defensive firearms classes as well as instructor development programs. They are also rightly famous for the popular RangeMaster Tactical Conference and the Polite Society Match. Learn more about their training, the schedules, locations and other details at <http://rangemaster.com>.

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President's Message

Report from the NRA Meeting

by Marty Hayes, J.D.

Once again, the Network had an excellent three-day promotional outreach, setting up and working our new booth at the 2016 NRA Annual Meeting and exhibits. Of course, whenever we all go out of town, the work piles up here at home, so this will only be a quick message this month as we try to get caught up.

First off, my apologies to our members who stopped by the booth and whom I missed. At least you got to meet either Vincent or Gila. At these shows, I spend some time touching bases with industry friends, and of course, being a consumer. I didn't buy much this year, but did happen to add a few goodies to pack in my luggage for the trip home.

The highlight of the three days though, was the interaction with both current members and those new members who signed up at the show, after talking with Gila, Vincent or me. The Network is stronger due to the increased membership, and I feel it is very important to touch bases with our current members.

Many Network Affiliated Instructors came by to say hi and order more materials to be sent to them for their classes, and we even saw a few of our old attorney friends. I know I was going to take pictures of everyone who dropped by, but that quickly went down the hole known as "good intentions, but never fulfilled." Just too busy.

We Were Not Alone...

Two of our competitors in the "after self-defense" business were also at the meeting. As I walked the show, I stumbled across both booths, but made it out before anyone recognized me. (Ha, ha). But what struck me as a little sad, was that both were busy collecting e-mails for marketing purposes, taking drawing entries for gun giveaways, and one even traded

a t-shirt for an e-mail address. I guess I am still firmly rooted in Gun Culture 1.0, as I believe one should simply make a better product, and entice people to join because they understand the benefits that you offer, as opposed to having to be inundated by spam e-mails. In fact, I was discussing this very thing with Josh Amos, our new Affiliate Liaison who also has an MBA, and he said that, "The sophisticated consumer knows you don't get something for nothing." So, please understand that because we don't have an aggressive presence in your "inbox" it doesn't mean we don't love you. We just like to show it in a different way!

Good News for *The Best Defense* Fans

This month, I will be flying to Denver for a production/planning meeting for the next season of the Outdoor Channel's award winning self-defense show, *The Best Defense*. This popular TV program has been renewed once again, and I look forward to another season of participation.

When I started my life in the gun business, I never dreamed I would have a few hundred fans show up at a booth and want to shake my hand and tell me how much they liked "my show." My co-hosts Michael Bane, Michael Janich and Mike Seeklander will smile at me saying this, because the reality is that they get most of the airtime, but as an objective journalist, I am just reporting the facts!



Mike Janich, Marty Hayes and Mike Seeklander pictured at a previous filming effort. Not shown is the other Mike, Michael Bane.

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Attorney Question of the Month

For the past several months, this column has discussed armed citizen interaction with police. Now, in the final installment of the closing question about use of deadly force and the immediate aftermath, we share the last of the responses from our Affiliated Attorneys to this question:

If an armed citizen shoots and kills someone who threatened them with violence (and it is apparent that the criminal is dead) what if anything should the armed citizen say to police when they arrive?

Gary True

Summers Compton Wells LLC
8909 Ladue Rd., St. Louis, MO 63124
314-872-0331

<http://www.summerscomptonwells.com/gary-e-true.html>
gtrue54@gmail.com

The answer is very similar to the situation where the attacker is alive and talking, but the defender may feel less of a pressing need to talk. First, the defender should check himself or herself to determine if he or she is injured and, if so, request medical assistance. The adrenaline dump from the gunfight might mask the pain and it may be necessary to physically check for wounds.

The defender should then give the police the basic facts, such as:

1. I was attacked by the person who appears to be dead. He pointed a gun at me, pulled a knife, or whatever other facts will show that deadly force was required. He was going to kill me, I feared for my life, or similar words to show the state of mind of the defender are also worthwhile.
2. Whether the attacker had any accomplices and, if so, a brief description of them and the direction they headed when leaving, a description of the car in which they drove away, and any other relevant information to help the police apprehend them.
3. Point out any evidence, such as the attacker's weapon, shell casings, bullet marks on nearby property, trees, etc. It is important to point out the evidence before it is picked up, shell casings blow away or moved, stick in the treads of an officer's boot, or otherwise cease to

help provide a picture of the events that required the defender to shoot.

4. Point out any witnesses to the attack and shooting. It is important to identify the witnesses to the police before the witnesses walk or drive away. Conversely, if people who appear to be sympathetic to the attacker arrive on the scene after the shooting, the defender should tell the police, "Those people just arrived and were not here when I was attacked and had to defend myself."

After stating the above, it will be time to say, "I want to cooperate fully, but I am too upset to talk now. I will be happy to give a complete statement after I have had a chance to calm down and speak with my attorney. Until then, I invoke my right to have my attorney present during questioning and my right to remain silent." Of course, it will then be necessary to actually remain silent.

If at any time before completing the statement of basic facts the defender is interrupted by the police insisting on more information, the defender should attempt to stick to the basic facts, but it may be necessary to state "I want to cooperate fully, but I invoke my right to have my attorney present during questioning and my right to remain silent because you will not let me state the basic facts. I am too upset to be interrogated."

The basic facts should be stated only to the responding officers, not to investigating officers. Detectives or other investigators will likely be trained interrogators and it will be very difficult for the defender to prevent himself or herself from saying too much.

If at any time a defender feels unable to deal with the police, it may be appropriate to request medical attention. Stress-related heart attacks can happen well after a catastrophic event such as a shooting incident and having tightness in the chest after having one's life threatened would not be unexpected. In any case, spending the night in a hospital room will likely be better than spending the night in a jail cell and requesting medical attention may be a good idea if it appears the defender will be taken into custody.

While it may be too obvious to state here, the defender should never consent to a search of his or her cell

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phone, vehicle, or home. When given the opportunity, and possibly even before the police arrived, if possible, the defender should call home and tell his family not to consent to a search of the home. Of course, contacting an attorney as soon as is practicable will always be a good idea.

The defender, having just shot a person, will be too upset to remember much of this. Persons who carry may be able to help their ability to cope with the situation after a shooting by running through mental exercises and rehearsing the script that will be stated to the police after a shooting.

Samuel C. Feinson

Faber Feinson PLLC

210 Polk St., Ste. 1, Port Townsend, WA 98368
360-379-4110

<http://www.faberfeinson.com>
sam@faberfeinson.com

It may be helpful for a person in this situation to inform police of where his or her gun is, and whether he or she is in possession of any other weapons. This indicates to law enforcement that the person is not a threat. The only other words out of the citizen's mouth should be a request for an attorney. Nothing good can come of speaking to police at the scene of the incident.

John Chapman

Kelly & Chapman

P.O. Box 168, Portland, ME 04112-0168
207-780-6500

thejohnchapman@msn.com

The involved citizen should say the minimum necessary to summon law enforcement and rescue, and not get shot by responding police.

FIRST, unless you are still in jeopardy, HOLSTER YOUR FIREARM !!!! Alternative: put it off to the side, one step away, butt toward the likely approach avenue; or on the ground directly in front of you.

Indicate the basic nature of what the bad guy did. "I've just been attacked/robbed/witnessed another person attacked."

ALWAYS ask for rescue. Even if you are a medical examiner, you don't want to process your own attacker. Civilians don't pronounce people dead. (If asked why later, there is an explanation "for the witness stand," but you won't need it there.)

Indicate where you are, and how you are dressed.

Give your cell phone number and ask that the responding officer call if he needs directions—then hang up. Alternative: have someone else call with this information.

When the officer or rescue arrives, say, "There he is," (pointing to the attacker). "Thank you for responding so quickly. You'll have my full cooperation just as soon as I meet with my lawyer."

If prodded, say: "I want to talk to my lawyer before I answer any more questions."

Three nonstandard situations:

1. multiple assailants, and one or more got away;
2. you are injured or significantly injured;
3. third parties try to grab the bad guy's weapon or otherwise muck up the scene.

That's for another segment.

Lynne Torgerson, Esq.

222 South Ninth St., Ste. 1600, Minneapolis, MN 55402

612-339-5073

612-886-9111

<http://www.lynnetorgerson.com>
ltorgerson@visi.com

The only thing they should say is:
I don't want to talk and I want a lawyer.

Marc S. Russo

Attorney at Law

25 Plaza St. W. #1-K, Brooklyn, NY 11217

718-638-5452

mordvin9@gmail.com

If the citizen is in his own home, business, or "turf" and the dead person was indeed armed and actively threatened deadly force, the citizen should cooperate with police, especially if there are witnesses that will corroborate his version of events and he possessed the weapon legally. But if the shooting occurs on the dead man's turf or even a neutral area with no corroborative witnesses or strong circumstantial facts, he should clam up until he speaks to a lawyer. This goes double and triple if any witnesses are adverse to him or if the dead person isn't armed.

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Guy A. Relford

The Law Offices of Guy A. Relford
1 S. Rangeline Rd., Ste. 110, Carmel, IN 46032
317-844-4297

<http://www.relfordlaw.com>
<http://www.facebook.com/relfordlaw>
guy@relfordlaw.com

"I will be glad to cooperate fully and give a full statement after I've had the opportunity to calm down and my attorney is present. I cannot answer any additional questions at this time."

That's it.

And by the way, to the "the cop will think you're guilty" crowd:

Who cares? The cop doesn't decide whether to charge you with a crime or not—the prosecutor's office or the grand jury does that; and 2) that cop likely has standing orders from his or her commanding officers to say exactly the same thing if HE or SHE is involved in a police-action shooting.

Shawn A. Kollie

Short Law Group, P.C.
12755 SW 69th Ave., Ste. 200, Portland, OR 97223
280 Court St. NE, Ste. 290, Salem, OR 97308
503-747-7198

<http://www.shortlawgroup.com>
shawn@shortlawgroup.com

In Oregon, the best advice I can give someone would be brief and to the point. "I was fearful for my life (or the life of another). I was forced to use reasonable force to defend myself (or the life of another). I intend to cooperate, but I would like a lawyer before I make any further statements."

Graham Kistler

Law Office of Graham W. Kistler
114 Old Country Rd., Ste. 200, Mineola, NY 11501
516-294-9200

<http://www.kistlerlaw.com/Bio>
gklaw@optonline.net

He should state to the police "I was acting in self defense and I wish to cooperate fully with you but first I want to speak to my attorney."

John Cabranes

Cabranes Law Offices LLC.
840 Lake Ave., Ste. 100, Racine, WI 53403
262-638-0529

johncabranes@yahoo.com

You politely decline to answer any questions until your lawyer is present. Your lawyer will speak on your behalf, if at all, to the authorities until the time is right for you to make a statement.

Adam J. Schultz

Attorney at Law
211 W. Abriendo Ave., Pueblo, CO 81003
719-542-9559

<http://www.aschultzlaw.com>
adamjschultz@gmail.com

There are no magic words.

I feel that "Hello, my name is John Smith. Ambulance and law enforcement are needed at 333 Memory Lane. There has been a shooting." (Not "I just shot someone...") "There is no threat to first responders" (if accurate) is about the best you can do.

A big "Thank you!" to all of the Network Affiliated Attorneys who responded to this question. Please return next month for a new topic of discussion.

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

Book Review

What They Don't Tell You About Church Safety

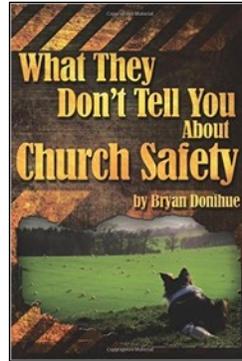
By Bryan Donihue

Sheepdog Development

ISBN 978-0692216347

Paperback: \$14.99; eBook: \$5.99

<http://www.sheepdogdev.com>



Reviewed by Gila Hayes

Although the Network is an individual member services organization, a surprising number of calls and emails come in from armed citizens who are working with their churches to improve security. Naturally, we point those leaders toward traditional insurance for liability and errors and omissions coverage, as a church's responsibilities are very different from those of the individual armed citizen. Still, those questions and a desire to understand the issues faced by church security teams, led me to buy and study several books. The one that impressed me most was Bryan Donihue's *What They Don't Tell You About Church Security*.

Donihue was drawn into leading a safety team for his church family owing to earlier work in law enforcement, the military and corporate security. Besides, as a pastor's son, he grew up as a church insider. Seems like a natural match, doesn't it? He relates how violent events at other churches led him to create a safety team for his church. He discovered that many churches not only lack a safety team and plan to counter attackers, but also are unprepared to help parishioners who suffer heart attacks during worship services or broken bones during a church youth activity. Too many assume that emergencies and suffering don't happen in the Lord's house, he comments.

Providing safety for congregating worshipers is an entirely different challenge than providing commercial security guard services, Donihue emphasizes. He stresses from nearly the first page through the last, that church safety teams are a ministry, and team members need to think like ministers and servants to the flock, not like guards, police or soldiers. He holds a profound conviction that church security functions healthily only if each safety team member comes to the role with the heart of a servant and is driven to help and care for their fellow churchgoers.

Donihue urges participants in church security to give honest consideration and answers to these questions:

1. Is our team a "safety team" or a "security" team?
2. Are we a ministry, or simply "hired contractors?"
3. What is the culture of our team?

Even the title given these safety providers is important, the author writes. He tells of originally titling his team the Emergency Response Team, ERT, for short, but it gave the wrong impression, he explains. He settled instead on calling his team the "Frontline Safety Team," since their church is the Frontline Community Church. A "warm, visible presence" is the highest service the safety team provides, he asserts, with the happy side effect of often detecting danger before it strikes, discouraging theft or embezzlement and other crimes.

"Your church, and the church as a whole, does not need a security guard," Donihue emphasizes later. "They need servant leadership in a safety ministry. You must have the character, leadership and integrity to go with the competence. On the flip side, if you have the character, leadership and integrity, but do not show the competence, your ministry will also end very quickly," he adds, stressing that team training is vital.

Retooling what had once been a security team, Donihue created a safety ministry and complaints dropped off almost immediately, as parishioners became aware that the team existed to look out for their well-being. "Although we still train vigorously for security issues, our language and internal thinking shifted to reflect an ideal of safety. At that point, we no longer acted like security guards or bouncers," Donihue reports, commenting later that moving away from standard security models "breaks all of the current conventions, especially for those who come from a corporate security background."

This thinking applies not only to perceptions amongst the safety team and the church members, but in larger church organizations it influences the chain of command, the part of church leadership to which the team leader answers. Donihue urges congregations to put their safety team under the same umbrella as the church greeters and ushers, not under those overseeing church assets. In fact, the author recommends that safety team members serve alongside the greeters and ushers, explaining, "By working with and among your greeters and ushers, your Safety Team Ministry can serve with warmth and caring, while helping protect the church and her ministries." Serving here encourages a nearly invisible presence with the safety team camouflaged amongst

[Continued next page...]

the greeters, instead of standing in the signature bodyguard pose, nearly at attention and giving everyone who walks through the door a hard looking over. "I do not allow my team to stand in the back or off to the side and simply glower with their arms folded. One of the tremendous changes that came from our re-design was to bring the safety team to the forefront on Sunday mornings. My team is trained to mingle with the crowds in the lobby, opening doors and greeting people," he stresses.

Perhaps when church leaders oppose safety teams for their church, they have suffered from earlier encounters with security done wrong. Donihue advises fledgling safety teams on how to approach church leadership about the need for church safety. He goes on to address team member dress codes, whether the team should blend in with the other worshipers or be subtly identifiable through nametags or matching shirts.

The church safety team needs training in dealing with fire, weather hazards, active violence and medical emergencies, he enumerates. In other words, it is a lot more than carrying a gun and looking hard at everyone who comes in. Donihue asserts that safety team members need skills ranging from First Aid, CPR and Automated Electronic Defibrillator (AED), to assisting lost children, detecting security threats, patrolling the facility, with some team members trained and practiced in firearms use, as well. Before addressing the latter, however, he stresses that training needs to address "basic security topics of observation and awareness. By being aware, your team has the potential to spot trouble before it starts. From subtle cues in body language, to clothing and packages, a state of awareness will help keep your church and your team safe," he urges.

Do not fail to provide full medical kits, Donihue repeats and again emphasizes that no church should be without an automated electronic defibrillator (AED). "The very first training that your team should receive is First Aid/CPR/AED training. By contacting local certified instructors, your team can gain valuable training and depending on your church's insurance, may even see some discounts to your policy by having trained personnel on staff." He later concludes, "Your safety team must know how to treat injuries and medical emergencies if they are going to be able to serve the congregation."

In large facilities safety team members also need equipment to coordinate their efforts, whether they carry handheld radios or wear ear buds. Radio communications instead of using cell phones is preferred, Donihue recommends, noting that radios can get word of trouble to multiple team members simultaneously.

What is the role of armed team members and armed churchgoers? Donihue notes that some states regulate gun carry in churches, adding that in his own state, Michigan, approval of the presiding church officials is required. In any case, "Firearms are a polarizing subject in any polite company, and the church is no exception. In fact, I would say that the church is even more sharply divided," he comments. In formulating policies, he recommends that church leaders determine—

1. Is gun possession in a church legal in the jurisdiction in which the church is located?
2. Does the congregation include law enforcement officers who can be asked to carry in church for greater safety?
3. Will the church's pastor(s) allow it?

Once those questions are answered, he recommends recruiting suitable armed citizens for safety team participation, giving the nod to, "Someone who already carries a firearm every day," and is thus comfortable with going armed. He states a strong preference for someone who carries concealed and undertakes frequent and realistic practice. In addition, strike up alliances with local law enforcement tactical (SWAT) teams, perhaps even offer the facility during non-use hours for them to train in, so they gain the advantage of known ground, he suggests.

The book ends with a great bibliography and linked resources including <http://sheepdogdev.com>, the website of another church safety proponent, Carl Chinn, and several others, as well as links to Lt. Col. Dave Grossman's work. At the end, an article written by Donihue discussing *The Dichotomy of the Armed Christian* is added for the edification of any whom may be troubled by the idea of use of force in defense of the church. A second appendix gives the entire text of Lt. Col. Dave Grossman's *On Sheep, Wolves, and Sheepdogs*, excerpted with permission from his seminal book, *On Combat*.

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



News from Our Affiliates

Compiled by Gila Hayes

As many of our readers know, your Network leadership team has only recently returned from a very rewarding visit to the NRA Annual Meeting in Louisville. Meeting our many affiliates and members and hearing how they are sharing knowledge with armed citizens in their communities all across the country is an important benefit of attending this event. The Network booth was rarely quiet, with visits from affiliates Dennis Fater, Robert Keller (pictured below), Larry Bignall, Bill Martin, George Roe, Brad Smith and many, many more. In fact, one of the interesting differences between this year's NRA Annual Meeting and those in previous years was how many more Network members stopped by to shake hands, say a few words of appreciation, or to introduce a friend.

One affiliate, Henry Lievens, serves Network members as both an Affiliated Attorney and instructor, as well as taking our Foundation's complimentary booklet *What Every Gun Owner Needs to Know About Self-Defense Law* with him when he promotes gun safety training at preparedness events and other conventions in his area. I had a great visit with Henry, and toward the end, he pointed at a young woman standing patiently across the aisle with a baby stroller, indicating that his wife and infant were attending the NRA meeting with him. We stepped across the aisle and exchanged a few words, and got several cute smiles from the baby, too. Henry's was only one of many family groups seen at the meeting, which is indeed heart warming.

In other affiliated instructor news, we recently heard from Jon Abel who owns *Phoenix Firearms Training*. He's currently busy pioneering the use of the Jedburgh Target System at his training academy. This is a steel target system that is programmable to present the shooting student with a number of randomized variables, including differences in the number of rounds required to neutralize a target, the order in which targets appear, the numbers of targets, plus other parameters the firearms instructor programs into the system. Jon notes that his school is currently the only private sector

training group with access to the Jedburgh system. Learn more about Jon's training opportunities with this system at <http://www.phoenixfirearmstraining.com/jts-coaching.html>.

I enjoyed the story of how our Affiliated Instructor Sara Ryan started her *Athena's Armory*, when she and I exchanged several emails last month. Sara told me that as she was starting her family, shooting and personal defense became a lot more important. "I'm just five feet tall and wondered how I would protect the little one if really put to the test," she related. While shopping for holsters and other gear, she discovered that the big box sporting good stores had inadequate options at best, but the smaller gun stores were intimidating to shop in, and "besides, they didn't really carry any woman-specific products," she related. Sara and her husband were interested in opening their own business, and they

combined their passion for self defense with their belief that to succeed in business, one must solve a problem people face.



"During this same time period, I had good and bad shooting instructors and saw firsthand what a difference the instructor can make, especially for new shooters and women

that may have a fear of firearms or have been put off by too many bad experiences with alpha-male egos. It seemed like a natural fit for me to help other women solve their personal defense issues and learn to shoot," she explained. Sara went on to earn instructor credentials, and she and her husband opened an online store selling holsters and other products for armed citizens. The same website also gives details about their training classes, as well as sharing information through product reviews, blogs and articles. Check it out and get to know Sara at <https://athenasarmory.com/train/>.

While the focus of this column is usually on our affiliates, I want to digress slightly to share a tidbit about the Network's growth. With the Network's growth steady, recently exceeding the 11,000-member mark, we've brought on a new team member to help us engage more dynamically with Network members, affiliated instructors and armed citizens who need to be Network members.

[Continued next page...]

June 2016

It is my pleasure to introduce to you our newest staff member, Josh Amos, who will be helping with Network marketing and Internet presence. Here's an "early-days" example of his efforts, a cost-free outreach that I would have never thought of on my own. Under Josh's guidance, we have been building up the Google reviews of the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, so potential members can easily find the feedback they need to make a decision to join. This is an ongoing effort and we invite your participation. Just Google Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, then click "view all Google reviews" link at the bottom of the module on the right side of the Google web page and add your reasons for being a Network member to all the comments other members have posted there.



Now, a bit about our newest team member: Josh is a former Marine, a 2014 MBA graduate of Saint Martin's University, in Lacey, WA and a graduate of many classes with Network President Marty Hayes' training organization, the Firearms Academy of Seattle. When you have needs, ideas, thoughts and questions about Network promotion, outreach and growth, I hope you will see Josh as your new "go to guy!" You will be hearing more from Josh in coming months, as he begins helping me with this fun, newsy column as well as many other projects here at the Network. Welcome aboard, Josh!

I want to emphasize that the Network would not be the strong member support organization it is today without the friendship, feedback and continued support of all of our members. Josh and I are looking forward to working

together to keep you informed of the Network's latest efforts and accomplishments, fun events hosted by Affiliated Instructors, as well as more membership growth ideas that Josh is dreaming up. Please contact us anytime with your own ideas and inspiration at 360-978-5200 or email him at josh@armedcitizensnetwork.org.

We have long dedicated this Networking column to introducing our affiliate members to our readers, sharing their event announcements, news of affiliate accomplishments, business growth and other interesting tidbits. Affiliates, please send us an email if you have any special events like open houses, seminars, classes or other interesting tidbits that we can announce in this column. If announcing an event, about 60 days advance notice is best since we publish only once a month.

Also, please let us know when you need more copies of our Armed Citizens' Educational Foundation's booklet *What Every Gun Owner Needs to Know About Self-Defense Law* and our tri-fold brochures by emailing josh@armedcitizensnetwork.org or calling 360-978-5200.

We're all in this together! Let's work as a team to get the word out so armed citizens in your community have a better understanding of lawful, judicious use of deadly force and what to expect in the aftermath.

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



Editor's Notebook

by Gila Hayes

We just got back from the NRA Annual Meeting, where we visited with many members—long time Network supporters and new members, too—while we promoted Network membership in a booth in the

exhibit hall. It was great to see how many women and children were in attendance, sometimes with the whole family, mother, father and an assortment of kids of all ages all strolling through the rows of booths together.

A remarkable number of the gentlemen walking alone or with another fellow would come up and comment, "I sure wish my wife/daughter/mother would learn to use a gun for personal defense." I agreed with the gentlemen, then, often as not, suggested, "Just start by encouraging greater awareness of what is around your wife or daughter. If she starts to see where she might fall prey to crime, she may be more open to learning how to defend herself."

Awareness is something that we talk about a lot, but it is somewhat ephemeral and hard to teach. A few months ago, I was talking with Mike Seeklander of American Warrior Society, and he made a great point about just building the habit of doing a full area scan anytime you walk through a door. It was a great point, because we walk through a lot of doors in every day life, so setting going through a door as a trigger makes for a pretty easy habit. The trigger event is already present in daily life.

Mike said, "We always preach avoidance, but it is very hard to put that into real life action. Anytime you go through a door, it doesn't matter whether it is that door [points to double doors at the end of the room], your car door, or the door you use to come out of the mall or the door at Wal-Mart, you need to do a swivel. So you need to look to your left and right and look at every person in your environment.

"Now, I know that sounds like common sense, but here's the reason: when we look at how these attackers select

their victims, they look for a couple of different things. They look at how big you are, how strong you are and what you are carrying. One set of attackers looked for everyone who came out of the mall carrying a bag from Apple. Big money, right?

"Across the board, the attackers clearly say that if at any point someone makes eye contact with them, they had a doubt, 'Hey, I don't know this person. Why are they making eye contact? Maybe they have some level of awareness and I think they saw me,' that they would call off the attack," Seeklander observed.

I will add personally that often ladies say they don't like to look strangers in the eye. A student once told me that her workplace violence training taught her and all the other sheep running that probation office that meeting a stranger's eye incites attack. "Oh, come on!" I retorted. "A potential assailant does not want you to recognize what he is doing! I'm just going to meet his eyes and move on."

When I mentioned that to Seeklander, he commented, "If it seems weird, just say, 'Hi!' and the average person who has targeted you, is going to go away. They are not going to attack you. I hate to say it, but they are going to attack somebody else who had their head down, looking at their iPhone.

"Anytime you walk through a door: your car door, your home door, walk in or out of the mall, you look left, look right, make eye contact with anybody in your environment. There is probably a 75% chance that you completely dispel any kind of an attack that someone might be considering. Those are easy things! You just get in the habit of looking and asking, "Who's that?" Or look at them, just look at them," Mike exclaimed.

He's right and I've been using his advice about the door habit since having that talk with him. You should try it, too, and teach it to the people you wish could live more safely.

*[End of June 2016 eJournal.
Please return for our July 2016 edition.]*

June 2016

About the Network's Online Journal

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Marty Hayes, President
J. Vincent Shuck, Vice President
Gila Hayes, Operations Manager

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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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