

Armed Citizens' Interactions with Law Enforcement

by Gila Hayes

Armed citizens often express a nearly morbid dread of contact with police, fueled no doubt by fear of being arrested while exercising their lawful right to carry defensive weaponry or horrified anticipation that they will be hauled off to jail after defending themselves or their families.



Fear, abhorrence or resentful subservience toward the police are counterproductive to the citizen, ruining much chance for cooperation toward a reasonable outcome should circumstances bring them together. On the other hand, educating our members about interaction with police certainly can improve contacts they may have with law enforcement.

That is the goal of this article. Drawing on interviews with retired law enforcement officers, this article offers insights into how police make decisions when responding to a call about a citizen with a gun. I chose to interview retired officers for several reasons. First, situations in which legally armed citizens act in self defense are so rare that, drawing on their entire careers, most of the interview respondents could only cite perhaps a half dozen such calls. The retiree's career-long experience provides better depth. No longer being attached to an agency alleviates defensiveness about doing an unpopular job and certainly removes pressure to represent the employing department favorably.

Police practices have strong regional overtones. Four retired officers from various regions of the country contributed to this study. In addition to addressing west coast practices Roy Huntington is the publisher of [American Cop](#) magazine. Readers of the [NRA's Shooting Illustrated](#) and the online [Tactical Wire](#) are familiar with Rich Grassi's byline; his comments in this study are representative of the mid-western states. After a 35-year career in policing and corrections, Herb Fuhman now teaches [firearms classes](#), and here he speaks to his experiences working in Connecticut. Police procedures expert [Edward Mamet](#) served a distinguished almost-forty-year career in New York City, including 20 years in NYPD's detective bureau, and he speaks about policing in large, metropolitan areas. All four answered questions candidly, and it is my hope that their information will give armed citizens better

strategies for interacting with police.

RESPONDING TO THE UNKNOWN SITUATION

Armed citizens bristle when told that they may be treated like a violent criminal after defending themselves. They forget that law enforcement enters the scene with only limited knowledge. Queried about how law enforcement approaches a call about an armed citizen, all of the respondents explained that safety of the responding officers must be foremost.

The manner in which an officer approaches a scene "is really situationally-dependent," Roy Huntington explains. Dispatcher skill and style varies, he notes, and the information given by the complainant is incomplete and sometimes unreliable. For example, a neighbor may report hearing gunfire coming from an address, a caller may say he has been threatened or harmed, or a homeowner may call and state that they've shot a burglar.

Huntington remembers responding to four or five shootings by homeowners during his 25-year career. "Every single one of them was different," he recalls. "I'd say, 'Let's have the victim come outside.' I want to meet him and make sure he doesn't have the gun visible," he adds, noting that the citizen would be asked to put the gun away. If the citizen's statement matches up with the evidence, and the shooting wasn't gang-related, a long-standing dispute between neighbors or is otherwise dubious, the job of the uniformed policeman usually becomes nothing more than to contain the scene for investigators, he explains.

How did Huntington determine if the situation merited skepticism? "I was very careful not to make any judgments until I actually looked at what was happening, so I would always say, 'Can you tell me what happened here?'" he answers. "See, the homeowner is there with his wife and children and his hands are shaking and he is obviously distraught and says, 'We were sleeping and there was a loud noise and glass breaking. I got my gun. I came out here and there was somebody in my house. I said get out of my house, and he came at me with this knife (and there is a knife laying there). I shot him, I don't remember how many times, I just shot him and he fell down. Then I called the police.' You usually hear something like that. So in that situation, I would say, 'OK, I understand completely. Sit down, why don't you? I'll cover the body up. The detectives are en route.' That is usually all the preliminary response unit would do." When I commented that I was surprised he hadn't described confiscating guns and putting the shooter in the police car, Huntington explained that the officer's actions largely "hinge on the response of the homeowner. This is especially true if you get the Felony Cop (Huntington's term for a hard-charger who enthusiastically exercises his power) who is anti-gun! They are out there, so be respectful and honest," he adds.

"You don't have to be subservient, just respectful. A good cop—one with eight or ten years in the field—can read people pretty well. If you're not being honest or if you're acting subservient but that isn't how you really are, I'm probably going to spot it and say, 'Something's up here.' Remember that as a policeman you have to figure out if someone is lying to you within seconds of when you meet them," he admonishes.

“When you have that initial communication with an officer something as simple as a gesture, a shrug of a shoulder or a shaking hand suddenly changes the entire color of the contact,” Huntington explains. “I’m watching their body language. I’m watching their skin color. I’m looking to see how their eyes are glistening. I’m very carefully listening to what they are saying and I’m watching their family react. Are the kids thinking, ‘That’s NOT what happened, Dad?’” he illustrates.

A shooter may be handcuffed or put in a police car owing to agency policy or for protection against a volatile crowd, but Huntington insists that even that can be done with respect. Even so, he adds, “I never handcuffed anybody in an obvious self-defense shooting situation unless I felt some obvious personal safety issue, it was a loony-tune or gang shooting or I felt this wasn’t a self-defense shooting,” he adds. He acknowledges that other areas of the nation where “you are presumed guilty until proven innocent” are different and there the citizen will be handcuffed and taken to the police station.

Can human compassion trump department procedure or override an officer’s world-weary outlook? “In all my years of being around cops, I have rarely seen a cop not respond to humanity if you are honest with them and you tell them the truth. Remember, too, what you say to the responding officer is going to get written down. The tone of the contact will be relayed to the investigating detectives and that will also contribute to the tone of their investigation and subsequent interviews with you.

“When the detectives arrive and they are talking outside the home, the cop is going to say, ‘When I first got here, he was really shook up but he was also really cooperative and he told me what I think is the truth. Here is what he told me...’ That is going to set the tone for the investigation,” Huntington explains. “Then they go inside and ask questions and you repeat what you told the responding officer.”

These early statements remain influential long after the initial contact. “Responding detectives usually recommend if a case should be filed—even though they are not supposed to,” Huntington warns. “They will tell the prosecutor, ‘I think this is about as clear cut a case of self defense as you’ll get. I don’t recommend that you prosecute.’ I have been privy to this many times where the prosecutor called and asked, ‘Well, Roy, what do you think? Does this guy deserve jail time?’ because he was trying to get a handle on it.”

Even if an anti-gun district attorney under pressure from an anti-gun electorate files charges, the police officer’s testimony can convey the truth to a judge or jury. “On the witness stand when they ask the cop, ‘What did he say?’ any detective who is worth his oats and knows that you are telling the truth will say, ‘Well, when I got there, Mr. Jones was obviously upset and distraught and I could tell that he so hated to have done what he had done and he said, and I quote, ‘Gee, officer, thank you for coming. I was defending my family. I didn’t know what else to do.’” Huntington details how even on simple traffic stops he jotted down what the person first said for use later in court. Expect savvy officers to offer written records of your initial conversation when they testify, he cautions.

DON’T GET SHOT!

Speaking from his experience policing in the mid-west, Rich Grassi postulates that initial contact with police may go wrong because the armed citizen knows that he or she is the victim of the attack and cannot imagine being mistaken for a criminal. “After an absolutely righteous shooting, someone has experienced a lot of physiological affects,” Grassi explains. “Then they hear a loud voice behind them and they can’t make out the words, ‘Police! Don’t move!’ so they turn suddenly with a gun. Not a good move!” he exclaims. “First, if people aren’t conversant with that aspect of it, they need to train a post-shooting procedure to survive the encounter with the police. The first things is, ‘Don’t get shot by the police!’”

Grassi explains that when responding to a shooting, “I’m taking control of the one that is upright until the one on the ground with the steam coming out of his chest is proven to me to be the problem. You should expect that. It is not personal. Police are going to talk to you in a way that sounds abrupt, like, ‘Police! Don’t move! Get your hands up! Get ‘em up!’”

“While you are hearing this, try not to take offense, just do what they say. Once they get you in handcuffs the smart cop is going to want to know what is going on. You need to say, ‘Officer, I have a permit for this firearm. This guy was here to murder me,’ and give him a précis of the situation. Just say, ‘This guy tried to murder me, officer.’ Avoid details about WHY the guy wanted to kill you,” Grassi advises. “They have to know WHY you pulled the trigger. You have to be able to articulate something. They’re trying to be reasonable,” he continues. “Try not to give the whole crime story in one paragraph ten minutes after you shoot,” he advises. “That story is going to be trash because frankly you are not going to tell the story that happened. I know that you want to help in the worst way, but if you do that, your story will be told in the worst way,” he quips. “Don’t! Just stop!”

“You can say, ‘He was near the oil spot on the pavement over there; I was here. This is what he said. When he turned around, I saw the gun in his hand. There was a witness over here, five feet, blond hair, wearing black clothes. That was all I could see. There was a guy over here with a red ball cap on, but that is all I can remember about him.’ That is the best you can do. What have I given? Approximate distance without saying what the exact distance was. I’ve given potential witnesses to the scene, and the short form of what I observed,” Grassi adds.

Asked if declining to give specific details heightens suspicion, Grassi recommends drawing parallels to experiences the officer may have had. “‘If you’ve ever been in a shooting or were around one, you know how jacked up you were? I was scared to death, so please understand that I can’t go into too much detail right now.’ Or say ‘Officer, have you ever been in a chase? Did you try to remember everything that happened in the immediate aftermath of that chase to put it in your report?’” he narrates. Asked about the risk of sounding cheeky, he adds, “You can make it that way, or you can say, ‘Well, I am sure you have had this experience.’ You are asking them to stand in your shoes.”

“Bear in mind that after a serious event your behavior is going to be dictated by the extent of your injuries,” Grassi points out. In some of these incidents when the police are talking to you, you may be on a gurney and being put in an ambulance. If you think you might have been shot and you are not sure, you might ask them to do a leak check as they are handcuffing you.”

In Grassi’s experience, the first officers that respond to a call about a citizen using a gun would also be tasked with gathering critical information, and so they are going to ask you questions. “The overwhelming majority of these incidents happen at night. As a result, there is not going to be a detective available immediately. Most police and sheriff departments don’t have detectives available 24-7,” he explains.

Where is the citizen held until it is all sorted out? Grassi predicts, “You’re going to be in the back of a police car and you will probably be held there for a while. Often these cases occur at home, and you may be held inside your home, though you would be in handcuffs.” Other situations may see the citizen taken to the police station for questioning. The Fourth Amendment allows law enforcement to seize the shooter and other evidence, Grassi explains. “Because you were part of a scene of violence, I can’t just let you wander off. I have to arrest you and I’m seizing your gun.”

Of course protocols vary from one agency to the next, Grassi notes. Where he worked, the shooter would be taken to the police station where, “I would usually get him a coffee and then we would pull out the Miranda warning.” The 1966 Supreme Court ruling in *Miranda v. Arizona* requires giving that familiar warning before custodial interrogation by a law enforcement officer. Grassi’s agency required that the interview be videotaped. “You have no expectation of privacy,” he warns. “You must assume that when you talk to a police officer that your conversation is recorded” because despite various state law on recording, the Federal rule is to allow one-party consent.

“Even if I have you in the back of a police car and I put your spouse in there to talk to you and you go, ‘Oh, gee, I guess I am in trouble now that I had to shoot that son of a bitch,’ that is going to be recorded and good luck keeping that from a jury!” he cautions.

Asked about the likelihood of being jailed until investigators were available, Grassi estimates, “In a holding cell? I don’t know it would be that way. Most jurisdictions have an interview room that is secured. In an interview room, just presume that you are being recorded on videotape. Now, don’t put on an act! If you are so shocked by what happened to the extent that you actually have no feelings, well, that happens to some people,” Grassi explains. Experienced officers will recognize the preternatural calm that accompanies severe shock, he predicts.

The victim should not give exact details including distance from the assailant or how many shots either he or you fired, Grassi reiterates, noting, “Now we get into details with which I am not going to be accurate.” Avoid details like a description of an assailant’s gun, he adds. “There would be so many things I couldn’t tell because I just don’t know and I’m not going to know until I start to settle down and that might take some help.” With a minimum 24-hour delay before taking statements in an officer-involved shooting common, Grassi asks how the same consideration can be denied the citizen.

When I express concern that failing to answer questions until 24 hours have elapsed may breed suspicion, Grassi responds, “That may be something for the attorney, not you, to bring up. Obviously, you want the attorney to be there, and they can say, ‘Fellows, a 24-hour wait is in your own policy. Come on! This guy has a business here in town. He’s married and has a history here. He is not going to run away.’”

POLICE CONCERNS AT A CALL

We start our conversation with Fuhman by asking about officer mindset during initial contact with an armed citizen who has acted in self defense. “You have to go in with an open mind because you don’t know what you are going to see or what kind of interaction you are going to have with somebody,” he explains. Today’s officers “are much more sensitized to people being victims, as it is so prevalent. It crosses into their own families even,” he suggests, adding that police—once mostly Irish or white—now come from all heritages, and “growing up in their own cultures inside the United States, they are more apt to deal with law enforcement well before they become a police officer.”

Entering a shooting scene requires considerable vigilance, he continues. “Your senses need to be very sharpened, you have to see in a 360-degree view, and you have to be able to interpret things very quickly. You may have your firearm drawn, your heart racing, because you are coming into an environment in which you don’t know what is behind a door or corner. Homes are not built as cookie-cutter homes, so you are not going to know the easy path through. You have to be very, very aware with every step you take. The safety of you and your fellow officers is the first thing,” he details.

An initial task is disarming anybody at the scene who is still armed, he continues, explaining that in his classes he teaches that, “The good guy has to make sure that he doesn’t have any weapons in his hands at the time law enforcement comes. He absolutely should not have a firearm on or near him because of the danger that the police officer may mistake him for the suspect, for the perpetrator.”

Asked how the citizen can communicate that he is not the aggressor, Fuhman advises, “Immediately disclose that you are the owner or legal occupant of that house and the victim of a crime. Say, ‘I live here and I am the victim. He tried to kill me or hurt my family,’ whatever is the case. You need to say that you are the good guy very quickly, right at the outset,” he stresses.

That is even more critical if the incident occurs outside the home. “The lines aren’t drawn as clearly when you are out in public and a lot

of people are around,” Furhman emphasizes. “In Connecticut, you DO have a duty to retreat outside your home, and that has a lot of impact on somebody using deadly force. You can use deadly force if you have no other options to protect yourself,” he instructs. “When it comes to any use of force, it is going to be investigated to make sure that you had no choice but to shoot that person, that you absolutely were in a corner.”

Initially, police will attempt to establish those facts at the scene. “Police officers are going to try to research and extract that information right then and there,” Furhman explains. Will that entail being taken in for an interview? “Some will be taken down to the police barracks. Most of the time, though, the police officer at the scene or detectives from the homicide unit will start the interview process at the scene. They’ll want to try to get as much information as possible while the incident and the crime scene is fresh.

“Now we get to what you should and shouldn’t say if you’ve gotten involved in a gun fight,” Furhman continues. “A good citizen who believes that they exercised their right to self-protection will WANT to express themselves to police. ‘I’m not the guilty person! It is not my fault he came to me. I had no choice but to fire. He tried to kill me.’ But the reality is that stress is very, very high and the citizen may not be thinking clearly,” Furhman acknowledges. He endorses the five-point checklist taught by Massad Ayoob on the Network’s second educational DVD, noting that he would say, “That person broke into my house. That person tried to kill me. I’m the victim of this incident. I can’t talk right now. I don’t feel well. I will have to get back to you once I have had the opportunity to think about what has happened to me.”

Will law enforcement push harder if the armed citizen declines to answer detailed questions? “An experienced police officer is going to know that [declining] is the smart thing to do,” Furhman replies. Police unions require that an officer is put on administrative [leave] after a shooting or other situation. We all say the same thing, ‘I will have to get back to you after I speak with my attorney. I am invoking my rights.’”

If pushed by an aggressive investigator to answer questions, Furhman suggests replying, “‘I can’t talk. I feel nauseous and dizzy. I can’t talk to you right now. In fact, I need to go to the hospital.’ The police officer is duty-bound to call an ambulance for you,” he continues. “Then you or a family member is going to call an attorney. Hopefully you have already scoped out an appropriate attorney who deals with criminal law and Second Amendment rights and they will be able to go on from there.

“You need breathing room after a shooting,” Furhman advises. “Police investigations don’t happen in two hours like on TV. It takes months to put a case together. Just because you’re not talking at that moment, that doesn’t mean anything! There will be forensics work done, there will be interviews of witnesses, there is going to be background investigations done. There are a million things that are going to transpire.

“The most important thing for the victim to know is that time is on your side. Don’t blow it by giving out information that you cannot retract later on. You may not be using your best judgment at that time, in fact you probably will NOT be,” Furhman concludes.

BIG CITY CONCERNS

New York City with its 35,000-40,000 officer police department is a world unto itself. The largest police force in the United States, NPYD serves a city in which gun ownership is tightly restricted, and legally carrying a gun outside the home is not a right many New York citizens can exercise. I was a bit surprised, then, when police procedures expert Edward Mamet did not find the concept of armed citizens carrying guns for self defense irregular.

Though referred to me by a New York City Network Affiliated Instructor, Mamet was the only retired police officer interviewed for this study who is not a member of the Network. I appreciated his “outsider’s” perspective.

Mamet recalls that when responding to a “man with a gun” call, “the first thought we always had was, ‘Is this a police officer?’” As early as the 1970s large numbers of anti-crime units served in every precinct, wearing civilian clothes and driving taxis and non-descript vehicles, he details, “so they blended with the neighborhood. The very first thing on a police officer’s mind in a big city where they have these units is, ‘Are we dealing with an off-duty police officer or are we dealing with an on-duty police officer in civilian clothes?’” Codes assigning a color of the day were established and broadcast for officers to avoid mistaken identity shootings. “Civilians don’t have a color of the day, so they have to be extra vigilant,” he notes.

Absent that protection, how can the legally-armed citizen avoid harm? “Usually the call goes out as ‘shots fired’ so it is not clear if it is a civilian with a permit who shot somebody. Every cop in the area responds and sometimes you can get twenty police officers in two minutes,” Mamet exclaims. “That would be my biggest concern: that a civilian not get shot by friendly fire.” He adds that considerable danger exists for people of color in neighborhoods where officers consistently respond to violent crimes committed by the predominant ethnic group. “Crime is very high in some of these minority areas, so you can get shot just because you fit the profile of the local criminal,” he said, relating a recent case in which a black off-duty officer was shot as he was pursuing a criminal. When the apprehending officers ordered, “Police! Don’t move!” he wheeled around with a gun in his hand and was shot.

Asked to apply that lesson to the private sector, Mamet says the citizen should drop the gun without hesitation when ordered to do so. “The worst thing you can do is have a gun out when the police arrive. Cops are going to go there all charged up because the call is going to go out as ‘shots fired,’ so they are already preparing for action. It is a highly charged situation. If the person is totally disabled and not a threat, the civilian should back away so they can keep their distance from the person they shot and holster their sidearm,” he adds.

“Now, if the person still poses a threat and you want to keep them covered you have to have the gun out. As soon as the police arrive, you will have to drop it, then yell out, ‘I have a permit; I’m a licensee,’” he advises. “When the police show up, you must freeze, you absolutely HAVE to freeze, because if you make one wrong move, you’re going to get shot,” he urges. “Often the police will come up behind you and the instinct is to turn around and see who is there, right? Well, you turn around with a gun in your hand, and that is going to be the end of you,” he warns.

Mamet recommends invoking the right to an attorney as soon as possible and then answering questions only with an attorney present. “Civilians don’t have the same rights as police officers,” he notes. For example, “a civilian in New York State has to first try to retreat before they use deadly physical force,” and he expresses concern that private citizens may not be aware of this, commenting, “They’re not like cops who deal with the law all of the time.” Mamet believes that information gathered at the scene should be drawn from witnesses, and that their testimony should be what tells the story of what happened. He believes the citizen’s attorney is the best conduit through which to transmit the citizen’s report.

In New York City, the citizen who has shot in self defense should expect to be taken to the police station house, he continues. Police will notify the District Attorney who will send an attorney from their office to question the citizen. “I would caution anybody that is in a shooting not to answer any questions [right away], because even the police have 24 hours to get an attorney if they are in a shooting,” he advises. Unlike our worst fears of being put in a holding cell with other criminals, Mamet believes the citizen would be held “in police custody, but not in a cell. He would be in an interview room and the police would have said, ‘Look you can’t leave until we get this straightened out,’ but he wouldn’t be in a cell if he is a licensee,” Mamet predicts.

POLICE INTERACTION IN LESS SERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

Thank goodness that most of the times an armed citizen prevents criminal assault, the encounter does not end in gunfire. Still, the defensive display of a firearm in public requires an immediate call to law enforcement to report the precipitating attack and to make sure that an onlooker or the attacker doesn’t misrepresent the circumstances to the police. What should the armed citizen expect when they are working with police to get the facts of this kind of incident on the record?

Mamet recalls that it wasn’t unusual in New York to be called to a situation where someone was reported to have a gun. “We would show up and maybe it was a licensed citizen whose gun was seen on his belt. We would come up to him and we would search and find the gun and then he would say, ‘I have a license,’ and show us the license,” he relates matter-of-factly.

If a citizen pointed a licensed firearm at an assailant to stop an assault then called to file a police report, how serious would the police response be? “Depends on the jurisdiction and on the witnesses,” Mamet answers. If there are no other witnesses other than the citizen who called it in, he estimates that the responding officer would merely take the citizen’s statement and no arrest or trip to the police station would be likely. On the other hand, if witnesses report that the citizen waved a gun around to scare people, “here in New York, that is called menacing. It is a felony. So if witnesses say the guy was drunk and he whipped out a gun, there you have a person with a license who is going to get arrested,” Mamet predicts. “But if it was a legitimate case and the witnesses, if there are any, back it up, I don’t think there are any reasonable police officers who would do anything more than just take a report,” he concludes.

Armed citizens walk a fine line and some are quite hostile to law enforcement, who they may characterize as “jack-booted thugs,” Huntington asserts. While cases in which an armed citizen draws a gun remain mercifully rare, he notes cops do have to “deal with lots of guys with guns, and not all of them are nice guys. If you have to use a gun in self defense, you have to do what the cops are asking you to do, no matter how unpalatable it is at the time.”

If police are excessively aggressive Huntington recommends complaining to the commanders supervising that officer. “I’m not going to tell the officer this [during the contact], but I am going to complain all the way to the President of the United States and he is going to get fired afterwards. People have to remember, that is a huge tool. Smile and take one on the chin, because later on you can really screw up these people if they are bad guys.” Acquiesce to the patrol officer’s immediate demands, and then lodge a formal complaint. “I would much rather fight the battle the next day in the Chief’s office than at 2 o’clock in the morning on a rainy street,” Huntington notes, explaining that you will not win out on the street.

Requesting a supervisor is a more immediate tool during police interaction that is going sour. “Always remain respectful,” Huntington advises, “Say, ‘Officer, before we go further with this, I would be much more comfortable if your field supervisor was on the scene with us.’ The field supervisor just wants to go home tonight; he doesn’t want a citizen’s complaint. He’ll have a private conversation with the officer, and then he’ll come up to you and say, ‘What’s the problem here?’ And you say, ‘Well, I’m not a bad guy. I’m a very law-abiding citizen. I own a business in town and I cooperate with police. This officer really copped an attitude with me...’” Huntington narrates.

Of course, armed citizens still have contact with law enforcement in a myriad of circumstances that have nothing to do with self defense. Perhaps they violate a traffic law or are queued up at a DUI check point. Some states require legally armed citizens to immediately notify law enforcement if they are armed, even if the police contact has nothing to do with guns and their use. These situations cause considerable anxiety, owing to the general prejudice that police are anti-gun, a fear doubtless bred by the chief law enforcement officers who frequently make public appearances in support of anti-gun efforts like those of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence or the Violence Policy Center. What is the attitude of the line officers toward an armed population?

Are most police officers anti-gun? Huntington does not think so, reminding us that 80% of all police agencies employ fewer than 20 officers. “Generally, smaller agencies are more rural, and we both know that rural people are more pro-gun or gun-tolerant,” he explains.

Asked the same question, Mamet reports, “They don’t like it because they feel that the citizens might be too ready to use their weapons because they are not well-trained. I don’t think the licensee is aware of the law the way police officers are because police officers deal with the law every day and it is part of their training. A civilian doesn’t really know the law. Here in New York, they get their permits and there is no training required. All they do is sign a statement that they are aware of the penal law section that covers licensing and deadly force. There is no special training given, and it is their obligation to be trained on their own once they are licensed,” he expresses.

Furhman reported similar concerns among police in his area. “I do not think police officers are as concerned about people HAVING firearms, as they are about whether people are properly trained and educated on the safety aspects of the firearm.”

Furhman says he knows officers who “say people who have firearms are only going to be a hindrance to us in our mission of protecting the public. They are against people having firearms,” he continues. Then there are others who “just love firearms like they do everything else from police cars to handcuffs to the Tasers! I know many police officers that love firearms and say everyone ought to have them. But the majority? I think the majority of police officers here are not against citizens having firearms,” he concludes.

Grassi warns that while we had spoken at length about how the armed citizen should interact with police, “It is not always what someone [the armed citizen] says or does. Sometimes the police officer brings a certain viewpoint that is counter to the individual citizen taking action. You see it all the time when the chief of police says, ‘If there is a robbery, you need to just give them your money,’” he points out.

In addition, police experience is heavily weighted toward dealing with criminals, not innocent people. Grassi offers an example of a home intrusion that occurred in the county in which he worked. An intruder broke down the threshold to the victim’s home and refused to stop when the homeowner warned him. Afraid he was about to be killed, the homeowner shot the invader. Among first officers on the scene was a newly-assigned shift supervisor who had spent most of his career in corrections, so while he had the huge advantage of knowing criminals well, “the poor guy was clueless about non-criminals,” Grassi recalls. “He called me on the radio and said ‘I’m going to arrest this homeowner here,’ and I’m like, ‘No, you’re not, I’m only listening to a radio and it is obvious to me! You’re trying to arrest the victim. This is a case of aggravated burglary and the victim is the guy who shot him.’ There are only two roles to play: the victim and the suspect.”

On the other hand, Grassi notes that gun ownership is becoming so much more mainstream that law enforcement is aware that decent men and women have and use guns. “Gun owners are now closer to being mainstream in this society than at any time since the 1950s,” he exclaims. “The overwhelming majority of states have some form of concealed carry and almost all of those are ‘shall issue.’” That started the trend toward normalizing gun ownership, he adds.

With passage of CCW legislation, “a lot of cops signed up to become concealed carry instructors” and so they are teaching the citizenry the law and gun safety, Grassi explains. In fact, he interjects, “If I’m in an area where I want to get a concealed carry permit, I’ll find an off-duty cop teaching CCW classes. I want HIM on my side. That’s an ace in the deck you can use if you are in a shooting. You can say, ‘My instructor was Dave Thomas over here at the police department.’ They’ll say, ‘Oh, really?’ and that puts you in category A as far as the detectives are concerned because they know your instructor. They may know bupkes about guns and personal defense, but they know that guy knows what he is doing and now they think that you probably know what you are doing, too. It says, ‘I’m one of you-all.’”

That is certainly the case for Herb Furhman, a retired law enforcement professional teaching CCW and gun safety classes. When I spoke with Furhman he said that his phones were ringing off the hook with citizens wanting to get into his classes, and with good reason. Well-known within the law enforcement community after a 30-year career split between patrol work, teaching at the academy and working in corrections, agencies receiving CCW applications with Furhman’s classes fulfilling the training requirement know the quality of instruction the citizen received and that can expedite the application.

REMAIN IN CONTROL

Faced with the prospect of handcuffing, arrest and interrogation by law enforcement to demonstrate why use of a gun in self defense was necessary, it is hard to conceive how the armed citizen can apply advice to remain in control.

Yet, after a critical incident the need to be in mastery of your emotions and speech is vitally important to your freedom and possibly even your survival. Researching how law enforcement works, understanding strategies for interacting with police, and working through various branching responses to likely situations all require a foundation of accurate information. Constantly bombarded by media influences that fuel our attitudes and expectations about law enforcement, it is important to avoid acting out of ideas bred by TV fiction or Internet prejudice. Law enforcement is aware of the unease citizens feel toward police and many agencies reach out through citizens academies, ride alongs and other programs that put the citizenry in closer contact with police. If you’ve not participated in an experience like this, why not contact your local police and ask about their community outreach? Participation is bound to be educational, whether allaying concerns or increasing awareness of mistakes that happen, what ever you discover could prove useful!

Any knowledge gathered before you are the subject of a police investigation becomes a basis for better decisions made under stress. The retired law enforcement professionals contributing their experiences to this article illustrate not only procedural differences from one region of the nation to another, but also emphasize the individual contributions brought by officer and citizen to contacts ranging from

routine to extremely serious. The astute armed citizen will use those discussions as impetus for further exploration into law enforcement practices in their home area.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Black Friday



by Marty Hayes

It is the day after Black Friday as I write this month's column. Since both Gila and I have been afflicted with first a cold then the flu, it hasn't been a particularly enjoyable start to the holiday season, but we are not complaining. Nevertheless, I am absolutely taken aback at the commercialization of this coming Christmas holiday. The increase in attempts to get those bucks out of our wallets and into the bank accounts of the marketers is intense. Whatever happened to free choice, and giving the consumer just a shred of respect? In college when I took business classes, specifically advertising, the theme was to use the advertising media to build name recognition, something that is called now "branding." We studied firms like banks and car companies, and tried to emulate what they were doing. This dovetailed nicely with my early lesson of "build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door." I guess that is why I am drawn to quality companies like Mercedes Benz, Honda, Weatherby, Rolex, etc. While I can't necessarily afford the top of the line items these companies sell, at least if I buy a used item from one of these manufacturers, I know I have purchased quality. These companies built their reputations on quality first.

When I built my first business, the [Firearms Academy of Seattle](#), I did it under the premise that first, the cost of our training courses should be affordable to most anyone who wanted to get some good training, and second, our training be the best there is for the money. I also gave respect to those people who were thinking about attending our training courses, by not trying to brow beat, frighten or over sell our training courses, but instead, simply tell them what we had to offer, and let our reputation close the deal. After 21 successful years in business, I sleep well at night knowing that we have fulfilled that mission, and continue onto our 22nd year of business with a staff of over a dozen instructors, dedicated to continuing that degree of excellence.

This, of course, brings us to the Network. Over the last several years, we have had many, many people attempt to persuade us to be something we are not (and don't even want to be). The first push was to make enrollment in the Network much cheaper. People wanted to join for 35 bucks a year, not \$85 per year. After all, that was the cost of many other gun owner organizations, why not ours? Well, if we wanted to build up the Network to what we think it could be—that being an organization which could seriously assist its members with their legal needs after an act of self-defense—we needed to have the income to accomplish that. And, we also knew that the most logical market for our membership to come from was the serious student of the gun, the person who took training courses and likely could afford the \$85 per year without too much difficulty.

In addition, we also knew at the time that in order to mount a legal defense, our members needed to be able to testify to documented knowledge of the legal issues involved in legitimate self-defense. That meant producing the DVDs we provide to our members. Of course, in order to do that we needed the financial resources to pay for the production up front and to warehouse several thousand DVDs at a time. And, not to be overlooked is the need to pay people to do the work of the Network. So, when we choose the \$85 yearly dues, it was with these considerations in mind.

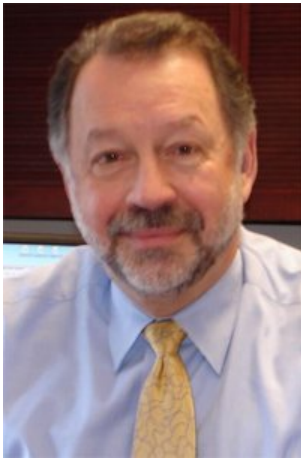
I write this column this month to let you know that you are part of something very special. You are part of a group of people who all share a common bond. Our members carry guns for self defense AND are deeply concerned about the legal aftermath of a self-defense shooting. Members of the Network take their responsibilities as an armed citizen seriously. They are likely members of several pro-gun organizations, and many are active in pro-gun politics. They take training, and if they are in a situation where the training is not easy to accomplish, they take the time and energy to educate themselves. And, they are smart enough to know that membership in the Network is worthwhile and valuable.

I also write this column this month to remind our members that while we are a business entity, we are not driven by making the almighty dollar. The ONLY reason that we structured the Network as a for-profit business was the ability to control the direction of the Network without interference from people who might not have our best interests at heart. Many years ago, I was a member of an organization of law enforcement trainers, which was formed with all the best intentions. For years it operated under the original board of directors and its executive director as an efficient, member orientated non-profit. But after a few board of director elections, power struggles and infighting ultimately resulted in the founding executive director leaving the organization. The appointment of one individual, then after a rocky term, another new executive director, and of course, more board elections followed. Eventually the organization basically imploded. For those readers who know whom I am referring to, please understand that I mean no disrespect, but only use this as an example of how things can go sideways in a non-profit organization run by a board of directors.

We don't need that drama here at the Network. What we need is a few more years of keeping the nose to the grindstone with goal-oriented decisions made by a small group of owners who only want the Network to succeed, both financially and institutionally.

With that said, I will close for now, with the thought that your Network is stronger than it ever has been and more committed to reaching our goals than ever. Have a great (and hopefully relatively non-commercial) holiday season.

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 'Tis the Season



by J. Vincent Shuck

We have just completed Thanksgiving and we are now entering the Christmas Holiday Season. This time of year offers a chance to reflect; allow me to do so.

In reflecting on the Network's soon-to-be-completed 4th year, I first focus on our members, both old and new. My heart is filled with deep respect and gratitude. Thank you for being involved and sharing our dreams. Thank you for your trust and support.

We are fortunate that the need for our ability to come to our members' aid has been rare. Something is working and I believe it is due in large part to the general competence of our members. That, coupled with our excellent educational DVDs and eJournal content, has provided our members with what it takes to avoid trouble. We will continue these efforts next year, please continue your own life-long learning, both on the range and in the personal review of our educational materials.

Our [affiliates](#)—attorneys, instructors, state representatives and gun shops—represent a key component of our success. They work diligently to share our message with others and help distribute our information. Our attorneys are in place to deal with a post incident situation, although some have served also as recruiters by recommending Network membership to colleagues and clients. The instructors pass along Network information and explain the importance of reviewing factual information, like the Network's booklet, [What Every Gun Owner Needs to know About Self-Defense Law](#). Our gun shops share the booklet and instruct customers on self-defense law and the Network's mission. Finally, our state representatives encourage friends, shooting club colleagues and gun shops to review information about the Network. Collectively, we have one heck of a group of active supporters who reach out to nonmembers by sharing information regarding the Network's benefits and mission. I am grateful to one and all.

Our sponsors, some joining us from the very beginning, while others are just learning about the Network and joining our growing sponsor support team. This growing list of familiar companies in the shooting industry donates valuable products and services that we auction to the shooting community on [GunBroker.com](#). Income from these auctions adds to our [Legal Defense Fund](#).

I hope you have a lot to be thankful for this past year. In addition to the business side of my life, I am thankful for a loving family and a great dog who always expresses unconditional love and knows where to find a comfortable lap.

As we transition from the season of thanks to the gift giving season, which is just another way of saying thanks, I hope you have safe travels, a chance to see others open special gifts from under the tree, and an opportunity to celebrate whatever you wish to commemorate. If you are looking for Holiday gift suggestions, how about those suggested by novelist Oren Arnold.

"To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To you, respect."

In closing, to our members and other Network supporters, merci beaucoup, mahalo, grazie, cheers, and thank you for a great year.

AFFILIATED ATTORNEY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Thanks to the generous help of our Network Affiliated Attorneys, in this column we introduce our members to our affiliated attorneys while demystifying aspects of the legal system for our readers.

The current question comes from concern expressed by concealed carry licensees that they don't know at which point in a developing confrontation they are allowed to draw and point a firearm at an assailant as one of their tactics to escape imminent attack. In a lot of states, displaying a firearm is termed "brandishing" and is a crime. Armed citizens aren't sure how their claim of "self defense" is invoked to avoid being found guilty of brandishing a weapon.

We asked our affiliated attorneys: *"Can you explain your state laws on displaying a weapon to stop an attacker? When does the law*

allow pointing a gun at an assailant during self defense?"

Debbe von Blumenstein

Attorney at Law
154 SW Oak Street, Dallas, OR 97338
503-831-1550
hotpotato59@hotmail.com
www.debbevonblumenstein.net

In Oregon, the charge is menacing; however, you do not even have to point the firearm. A person can see it and accompanied with words that could be construed as threatening could get someone charged. Also, sound can too: a person chambering a round can be menacing. The statute is not very helpful because it is very broad, so one would have to go to the Court of Appeals or tales from trial courts to get guidance.

I advise people that deadly force is not meant for scaring people away; at the time you employ your firearm, you need to meet the statutory requirement for deadly force self defense as well as AOJ (Ability-Opportunity-Jeopardy) being present. Be able to articulate it. Deadly force is not to be used as a tool to attempt to defuse a situation as it may escalate it and/or get the person charged with menacing or at least the unclassified misdemeanor of unlawfully pointing a firearm.

Of course, a person may have a choice of evils defense but that means the person has already been arrested and is headed for trial. I tell my folks, it is not enough to be right. You want to be right and unarrested. I also instruct my clients that just as police have a continuum of force, armed citizens also ought to have continuum of force in place so that there are other potential responses before deadly force and/or a show of deadly force.

Mitchell Lake, Esq.

Carswell Law Office, LLC
924 Noble Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06608
203-336-1111
espada129@aol.com

This question represents a fundamental lack of understanding of the nature of the law and armed encounters.

Brandishing is an unjustifiable action. It carries with it an attempt to intimidate someone via the firearm when one is not in danger, and is not justified in the use of the weapon. It is the same as negligently discharging your firearm and claiming self defense. One does not "negligently defend one's self" anymore than one "justifiably brandishes" a firearm.

Preemptively clearing a cover garment to establish a fighting grip on a firearm while it is still in the holster when someone is in justifiable and reasonable fear they are about to be imminently attacked with deadly force is not brandishing. Nor is drawing to retention/high ready or any other pre-discharge firearm positions.

It is a justifiable use of force when it is subjectively and objectively reasonable for you to do so.

In Connecticut, the standard for review of actions for the preemptive clearing of a cover garment and establishing the fighting grip on the weapon, or going further into the drawstroke itself (or the discharge of the weapon) is the same as the use of force itself: Was the action subjectively and objectively reasonable?

There are 2 standards for the use of force which operate concurrently.

#1 Ability/Opportunity/Intent (AOI) to injure you + you being precluded from leaving/de-escalating the situation = you being in danger and allowed to use force. When people say "I was in fear for my life!!" the answer to "why" is found in articulating these points.

#2 Subjective/Objective reasonability test. Are your actions reasonable to you in that you honestly believed you were going to be injured, and as such the right thing for you to do was to injure another person; and if so, will the trier of fact (judge or jury) find your actions reasonable, even if not 100% factually correct?

These standards operate simultaneously, with AOI being the basis of your reasoning for the Subjective portion of the S/O reasonability test, and the basis of reviewing your actions for the Objective portion of the S/O test. You can also think of them as the first is the standards for action, the second is the standard of review.

The standard for action in determining when to use force:

Ability: Does the person have the ability to attack you? Could this person successfully assault you, whether through physical prowess, a weapon or numerical superiority? Many women underestimate male upper-body strength and how vulnerable they are to being physically overwhelmed.

Opportunity: Does this person have the opportunity to attack you? Are you alone with him or even in an area beyond immediate help? Could anyone come to your assistance within twenty seconds or less? As many victims have found, you can be robbed in plain view or raped with people in the next room.

Intent: Is he in a mental place where using violence to get what he wants makes sense to him?

AOI is subjective to the people involved. What is a threat to you or me may not be a threat to someone else due to his size, skill, positioning, or, because of training, you may be able to recognize AOI earlier than someone without your training.

You are allowed to make reasonable assumptions in this decision making process. People almost never have 100% clear information about AOI until the attack is in progress, and that's too late; however, you are not required to have positive confirmation you are being attacked before acting.

Your decision making process must be grounded in solid, observable details and your thought process must be, REASONABLE. A reasonable belief is one which would be held by a person of ordinary prudence and intelligence situated as this defendant was. Self defense exonerates a person who uses force in the reasonable belief that such action was necessary to prevent his, her's or a third party's death or serious injury, even though this belief was later proven mistaken. Accordingly, the law requires only a reasonable, not necessarily a correct, judgment. (Language slightly changed - NJ Jury Instructions, <http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/charges/jury/justif001.htm>)

An example would be a person approaching you in an aggressive manner making a sudden movement toward his waistline. The person may be reaching for his cell phone (which was on vibrate); however, if under the circumstances he had shown intent to harm you, had opportunity to do so, you may afford his movement toward the waistline the reasonable belief he is armed and that he has the ability to harm you. Under the cold light of someone examining the situation with the luxury of safety, time and the actual facts, you may not have been correct in your judgment, but under the circumstances, you didn't have to be right—just reasonable. That is the standard of judgment. In this kind of case, if you move explosively offline and draw, you aren't brandishing, you are appropriately responding to a perceived attack.

What if it wasn't an actual attack? Doesn't matter. It matters if you were...wait for it...wait for it...wait for it...yeah...you know where I'm going...Subjectively and objectively reasonable.

Can you explain your state laws on displaying a weapon to stop an attacker? Does the law allow pointing a gun at an assailant during self defense?

In CT, this entire discussion is irrelevant. You are subjectively and objectively reasonable for your actions in a use of force situation, or you are not. If the subjectively and objectively reasonable response to the attacker's actions is to draw to high ready and tell him to back off, then brandishing (in CT, Threatening 1st degree) does not even come into play.

If it was unreasonable, we get to have an awkward discussion in the hall about the case's disposition. (I need more money than you gave me to go to trial, and by the way, I'll need that in certified funds, OK?)

The very question being asked is absurd! Are you permitted to point a gun at someone in self defense?

You are allowed to use the force needed in any given situation to resolve it—provided you are justified in the use of that force!

The answer to questions like this is a firm grounding in the laws of use of force for your location, an education in the tactics and skills of an armed encounter and the ability to seamlessly and subconsciously process incoming information through the individual's understanding of the use of force laws at real-time speed.

Subjective and objective reasonability is the determining factor, not "Is this or that action permitted?" What is appropriate to a given situation? I don't know. The answer is an individual one, for the situation and the persons in it.

Timothy A. Forshey

Timothy A. Forshey, P.C.

1650 North First Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85003

(602) 266-7667

tforshey@dmflaw.com

Great question—in fact—pretty much the crux issue to the safety, both physically and legally, of all people who carry a gun for self defense. Unfortunately, there is no “one size fits all” answer. To draw without the imminent fear of death or great bodily harm is, in all states (I believe), a serious crime. Here in Arizona, it is a Class 3 Felony, Aggravated Assault, which is designated as a “Dangerous Crime” punishable by 2 to 8.75 years in prison, with the most likely (known as “presumptive”) term of 3.5 years.

Arizona has recently passed a new law, known colloquially as “Defensive Display of a Firearm,” which allows someone to state that they have a weapon, show that they have a weapon, or place their hand on the weapon if they feel they are in imminent danger of needing the weapon. I have still not heard (nor have any of my attorney/judge colleagues) as to whether this defense has been successfully wielded in Court, but I fear it is unlikely.

The statute seems to say that if one feels he/she is in imminent danger they may warn their potential adversary that they are carrying a firearm. The statute seems almost indistinguishable from the pre-existing self defense statute, which clearly already allowed someone to draw, and use if necessary, a firearm when facing what seems to be the same level of threat. We have had a recent rash of well-intentioned “pro-gun” legislation in Arizona which seems to have been unusually poorly drafted, and we will have to sort it out in

the Courts if we can't do so in the legislative hallways.

The best "end of the day answer" is, I believe, you can (and should) draw your firearm when you believe that 12 strangers you won't meet for 18-24 months would agree that they, too, would have done so because they were in imminent fear of death or grave bodily injury to themselves or another. If there was a generic "draw NOW" answer available, most lawyers would retire (probably a very good thing for our country!).

NETWORKING



by Brady Wright, Special Projects

I hope that everyone got through the holiday in fine style and that you can all still fit into your belts and holsters! That extra helping of pie or the midnight turkey sandwich can have that effect.

Out here in Networking land, there have been all kinds of developments among our Affiliates and friends. Ken Delahunt in New York is an affiliate doing a great job teaching in his area. Even though he just finished a complete shoulder rebuild surgery, he is spreading the word on intelligent self-defense through his offerings at [Contreforce Group, LLC](#). You can reach him at kdelahunt@contreforce.com. He's one of us!

If you are a Facebook traveler, you may have already noticed that we've linked [Marc MacYoung's](#) website to ours. I expect that is because, like us, he offers freely a tremendous amount of information—just out there for the taking. He has a link to the Network on the left side of his pages and we are delighted that he is on board.

Our friend, Alex Haddox, at [Palladium](#), is awaiting the release of his new book on self defense, [Practical Home Security: A Guide to Safer Urban Living](#). We're hoping to get a copy for review here at the Network. Best of luck to Alex on this project! If you tune into his upcoming podcasts, you will hear Marty Hayes doing a guest shot or two, as well.

Frank LeFevre is instructor and president/CEO of [Saginaw Firearms, Inc.](#) He is certified to teach all NRA disciplines, certified by the state of Minnesota as an organization to instruct instructors to instruct, Utah certified, and active in the NRA, NRA-ILA (Minnesota's 8th congressional district Election Volunteer Coordinator), and Friends of NRA (Local Committee Chair). He does the State permit to carry classes six days a week and accommodates other discipline requests on a per person basis. And he starts out by introducing the Network and its value and providing an overview of our booklet What Every Gun Owner Needs to Know About Self Defense Law. Frank is elbows deep in our business and I know he'd appreciate a "Howdy" if you happen by his website or location.

I recently had a nice chat with Amjed Annabi, of Annabi Risk Management and Consulting Inc.; he is an interesting guy. He does all manner of classes and consulting, centered in Putnam Valley, New York. He is an affiliated instructor with the Network, and we appreciate his help. You can find his contact info on our affiliates page at <http://armedcitizensnetwork.org/instructor-list/20-new-york-state-ny-instructors>.

[Denny Magnusson](#) has been a test administrator since 1996 for North Dakota's concealed carry permits. In 2009, he became licensed as an instructor of dangerous weapons by the ND Attorney General. He is a firearms trainer for ND private security and investigation agents. This includes qualifying people who carry armed in industries such as armored car companies and government security personnel. He graduated with certifications from more professional training programs than I can list, but just let me say that he's a great guy and a brother who would be a solid contact if you happen to be in the North Dakota area.

I had the pleasure of getting an email from Robert Whitmire one afternoon not long ago. He is a federal firearms licensee (FFL) and SDA/CCL instructor in Norman, OK. He wrote, "I have always enjoyed teaching, so being a SDA instructor was a nice fit for a side business. After becoming a FFL I just listed my name on Gunbroker and other sites alike and the calls started coming in. I very much enjoy seeing all the different firearms that come through my hand with transfers.

"At first CCL certification classes were slow, but by word of mouth I now have a class most every weekend. I have been working with a church; a lot of their congregation wanted to obtain their CCL permits. I work with each person on the range individually to insure that they have the fundamentals of safety and firing their firearm. Then the students can take those fundamentals to their range to perfect. Your booklet is very informative which I include in every packet that I put together for every student and I encourage the protection of the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network if they are ever in an unfortunate situation to have to use their firearm to protect themselves or a love one." Thanks for the kind words, Robert. You can find him at Norman Knight Arms LLC. www.NormanKnightArms.com or call 405-370-0536.

One quick word on the upcoming [SHOT Show](#): I was looking forward to seeing many of you at the show, but another conflict is now going to keep me from attending this year. No worries, as Marty, Gila and Vincent will be there and would love to meet and talk with any members or prospective member who they meet in the aisles. In the meantime, stay safe, have fun and enjoy your holidays!

BOOK REVIEW

Gun Digest® Book of the Revolver

by Grant Cunningham
240 pages, paperback, 200 black and white illustrations
ISBN 978-1-4402-1812-5
Retail Price \$22.99

www.gundigest.com



Reviewed by Gila Hayes

Several years ago, as a friend and I devoured hot and cold meze at our favorite Lebanese restaurant, he asked about my last book. Having a year earlier submitted a grossly over-length manuscript to an editor, I had a few tidbits of hard-won wisdom accompanying my curiosity. What interest could a celebrated gunsmith with a wait list that could have extended out for years had he not limited what he accepted, have in the scribbler's trade?

Turns out not only did he possess a hidden talent for writing, he possessed the work ethic to produce a substantial book (it is not as easy as some may think). Even more important, he had the skill to communicate this embryonic book's scope to an editor with details that when passed along to the publisher moved the book from fantasy into reality. I was impressed.

And now that the Gun Digest Book of the Revolver by [Grant Cunningham](#) is in print, I'm even more impressed. Let me share some of what I learned in this jam-packed 238-page book.

Cunningham starts by explaining his bias toward the revolver, identifying strong and weak points, then moving quickly to one of the strongest points, the ability to fit a revolver to the shooter's hand, explaining just how necessary that is. He decodes the industry's frame size nomenclature, no mean feat considering the variety—S&W, Colt, Ruger, each in a myriad of sizes and models!

Grips contribute or detract much from a gun's proper fit in the hand. What makes the most ergonomic grip profile? Viewed from the bottom, an egg shape with the widest part serving as the backstrap has substantial benefits, Cunningham explains. One size rarely fits all, he notes, but unlike many autopistols, there is massive opportunity for customization on many revolver grips. Cunningham explains the grip-to-hand concerns and great solution he has worked out for both himself and his clients.

Trigger width influences both shooting comfort and accuracy, too. The wider the trigger, the more difficult to give it a straight-back pull, the author describes, but notes that as found on some traditional Colts, too thin is uncomfortable, too. Fortunately, a gunsmith can either thin an existing trigger or install a wider one.

The next variable is barrel length, as Cunningham explains the effect of barrel length on accuracy, velocity, muzzle flash, then moves on to under lugs and vented ribs. Of course, all these variations affect the weight of the gun, as does the next topic—materials. Steel may be traditional, but it is far from the only option! Choices addressed include blued or stainless steel, or the weight reduction of at least three different alloys, and now, polycarbonate components to cut the weight even more. Losing weight is good, isn't it? Cunningham outlines the pros and cons, but in the end, absent a compelling reason, the heavyweights get his nod.

In two brief and pointed essays, Cunningham hits the bullseye on men choosing guns for their ladies and follows this with a page of advice for ladies selecting a gun for themselves. Truer words were never written.

Next the author reviews the common calibers for which revolvers are chambered today. The short histories given about the common calibers makes interesting and informative reading. Again, the reader learns about several materials—bare lead, copper plated, full metal jacket and the unique Nyclad jacket. The author gives the pros and cons, then outlines the various bullet profiles, their uses, strengths and weaknesses. This section is supported by cross section photographs in extreme detail, that showcases not only the author's knowledge but reveals one of his former vocations—product photography. All of the photos in the book are sharp, clear, professionally lighted and one can only imagine the hours and hours lovingly poured into the illustrations. He includes a good discussion of +P and +P+ ammunition, self defense choices, and bullet weight in wrapping up the question of ammunition.

Pistol sights and their use receive thorough attention, focused on visibility, speed of acquisition, durability, and even technology's contribution of laser sights. Still, as Cunningham stresses that not every shooting circumstance requires or even accommodates precisely aligned, sharply focused sights, there is much more to sighting than just the equipment—indeed, sighting it turns out is really not the penultimate skill involved in shooting accurately, as Cunningham stresses in the chapter on trigger control.

Several chapters provide solutions for shooting woes that plague revolver shooters. Strategies of a firm shooting grasp, steadily paced trigger pull and release, aiming inside the natural human wobble zone, comprise a chapter bringing together techniques for more accurate shooting with a double action handgun. Discussing techniques for reloading the double action revolver, Cunningham weighs the differences between reloading methods entirely focused on speed and technique that survives the loss of dexterity common to an

emergency. Successful speedloader use plus tips for making the most out of speed strips follows. Who knew so many varieties and manufacturers of speedloaders existed? Cunningham describes at least a half-dozen alternatives, their pros and cons, and how to get the most reliable performance from each. Add to these the alternatives of speed strips and for certain revolvers moon clips, and the author's rounded out a good-sized chapter on how best to keep the lower-capacity revolver loaded.

One handed reloading is outlined in a later chapter, not from a statistical likelihood that you will need it as the result of being injured during a fight, but the author notes that people suffer disability as a result of surgery, accident or other misfortune. At those times knowing how to operate the gun under these disadvantages is comforting indeed.

Despite the oft-repeated argument that revolvers are more reliable because they do not jam, Cunningham relates a litany of malfunctions that can occur, then devotes a chapter to teaching readers how to prevent or resolve these ills. This goes a lot deeper than a failure to fire, and outlines troubles and cures including empty cases stuck under the extractor and a trigger that won't move forward or back, along with explanations of common causes and corrective suggestions. Sometimes the problem can't be resolved quickly, and Plan B, a back up gun, remains important, he notes.

A later chapter on cleaning and maintenance describes what may be the best preventive measure, and Cunningham has a lot of interesting tips to offer to make this tedious duty faster and more effective. Instructions for precise lubrication follow, along with tips for rust prevention. The chapter closes with an admonition to check your revolver's timing periodically, accompanied by instructions on how to do it.

Modifications to trigger stroke and return lead an extensive discussion on modifications gunsmiths can make to increase your revolver's ease of use. While a gunsmith can do much to smooth internal parts, when seeking either a reduction of trigger pull weight or a crisper trigger return, great care must be exercised to avoid sacrificing reliability. "There isn't a gunsmith in the world who can repeal the laws of physics: you get any two but not all three in the same gun," Cunningham quips. He offers additional warnings about reducing trigger pull weight for single action operation, and then closes with good arguments for rendering the double action revolver double action only.

Improving fixed sights on a revolver requires the gunsmith's skills, and Cunningham explains the when and how of sight upgrades. He also addresses chamfering chamber mouths, dehorning and melting a gun's sharp edges, returns to the question of serrated, smooth, thick or thin triggers, before writing about trigger stops. Customizing to fit hand size, barrel porting, finishes and even engraving wrap up the custom gunsmithing chapter.

Are revolvers harder to carry concealed than autoloaders of similar size? Cunningham does not believe so, explaining that under concealment clothing the more organic rounded outlines of the revolver are less likely to catch the eye. Thus a chapter on holster designs and materials best suited to carrying a revolver for self defense is a natural. IWB, OWB, Kydex®, leather, belt holsters or pocket holsters, shoulder holsters, belly bands, and spare ammo holders all are discussed.

The Book of the Revolver ends with a chapter dedicated to the pros and cons of the snub-nosed revolver. The author debunks the myth that snub-nosed revolvers are inherently inaccurate, but notes that the short sight radius prevents most shooters from ever experiencing the gun's full accuracy.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Journal Format Change



by Gila Hayes

Far be it from me to complain about change! This time, though, the rapidly changing world of computers, browsers and other software, is causing eJournal readers some problems. What should be a simple scheme of posting links to a monthly journal in PDF form is causing members problems when their free Adobe Reader software isn't up to date, or their Internet connection times out before a 1.5 MB document can fully download. Over the past few months other mis-matches even crashed reader's computers, and that certainly didn't earn us any friends! Many of the complaints were resolved with a current version of Reader, but the second month the complaints continued, I knew we had to get out from playing a tech support role to the myriad of problems making it hard for members to get their journals!

Thus with this edition/next month the journal's format changes dramatically. Instead of links to downloadable PDFs of journals, our monthly journal is now published as webpages, with a front page introducing the month's topics, linking to easily accessed articles. If you prefer the more permanent option of printed pages, these web pages each have a print and a PDF option displayed on the top right of each article, so you get the best of both worlds – fast, easy downloads of our monthly journal articles, plus an easy way to convert those articles into printed pages or PDFs you can store on your

own computer.

MORE COMPUTER TALK

Many of our members are prolific posters on several of the popular Internet forums in which gun owners discuss their firearms, training, politics and other issues bearing on self defense with firearms. While the Network website's search engine optimization seems to be doing a good job of getting us toward the top of a lot of searches, there is another big player bringing new and interested visitors to our website to see what we are all about. What is that big player? Our members (and sometimes even web ogres and our detractors) start discussions or introduce information about the Network into an existing thread and that gets people interested in what the Network does.

There is even a more passive tool to which our web analysis tool has alerted me. Several of our members have added a simple link to the Network's website in their signature line, along with other information about themselves including things like life membership in the NRA, graduation from elite training schools, and so on. Every time one of those members posts something to their forum the Network's link goes along. Thanks, members!

If you participate on some gun forums and have a sig line set up that automatically accompanies all your posts, would you consider doing the same? The more members that join us at the Network, the more capable we are of putting on a vigorous legal defense for one another!

FRIENDS OLD AND NEW

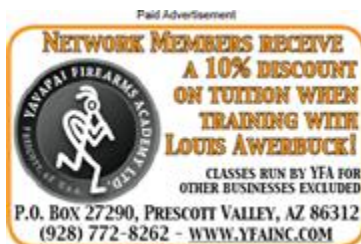
Affiliates, are you going to the SHOT Show? I bet quite a few of our Network Affiliates who are associated with a gun shop or other segment of the gun business will be in Las Vegas January 17 to 20, 2012. If you're among those in attendance, watch for Marty, Vincent and me in the aisles; we'd love to chat for a few minutes so we could put a face with your familiar name.

At a big convention, it is nice to find you have connections with people you didn't even know. How about dropping by the booths of our corporate sponsors [Blade-Tech](#), [CCW Breakaways](#), [Crimson Trace Corporation](#), [Dakota Ammunition/COR@BON](#), [GALCO](#), [North American Arms](#), [Recluse Holsters](#) and telling them thank you for their support of the Network's mission? We'd appreciate it and I bet it would brighten their day to hear a simple "thank you" during the demanding four days of presenting their product to dealers and media.

Articles from the Journal

- [Unintended Consequences of Silence](#)
- [Finding An Attorney](#)
- [3 Most Common Post-Shooting Errors](#)
- [The Tueller Drill Revisited](#)
- [Defending Self-Defense Knife Use](#)
- [You Have the Right to Remain Silent](#)
- [Rifles in Self Defense](#)
- [Is There Always a Trial After a Shooting?](#)
- [Choosing Self Defense Guns](#)
- [Lessons from Over The Edge](#)
- [The Bible and Self Defense](#)
- [Wanted: Convictions at Any Price](#)
- [Guns: Appearances Matter](#)
- [Ken Hackathorn: Training for Real Life](#)
- [Shotguns for Home Defense](#)
- [Ayooob: Courtroom Defenses for Innocent People](#)

Members Get 10% Off



(c) 2011 | Armed Citizens Legal Defense Network, Inc. | Site Designed and Powered by Computer Connections



[Template para Joomla! from JoomlaShack.com](#)