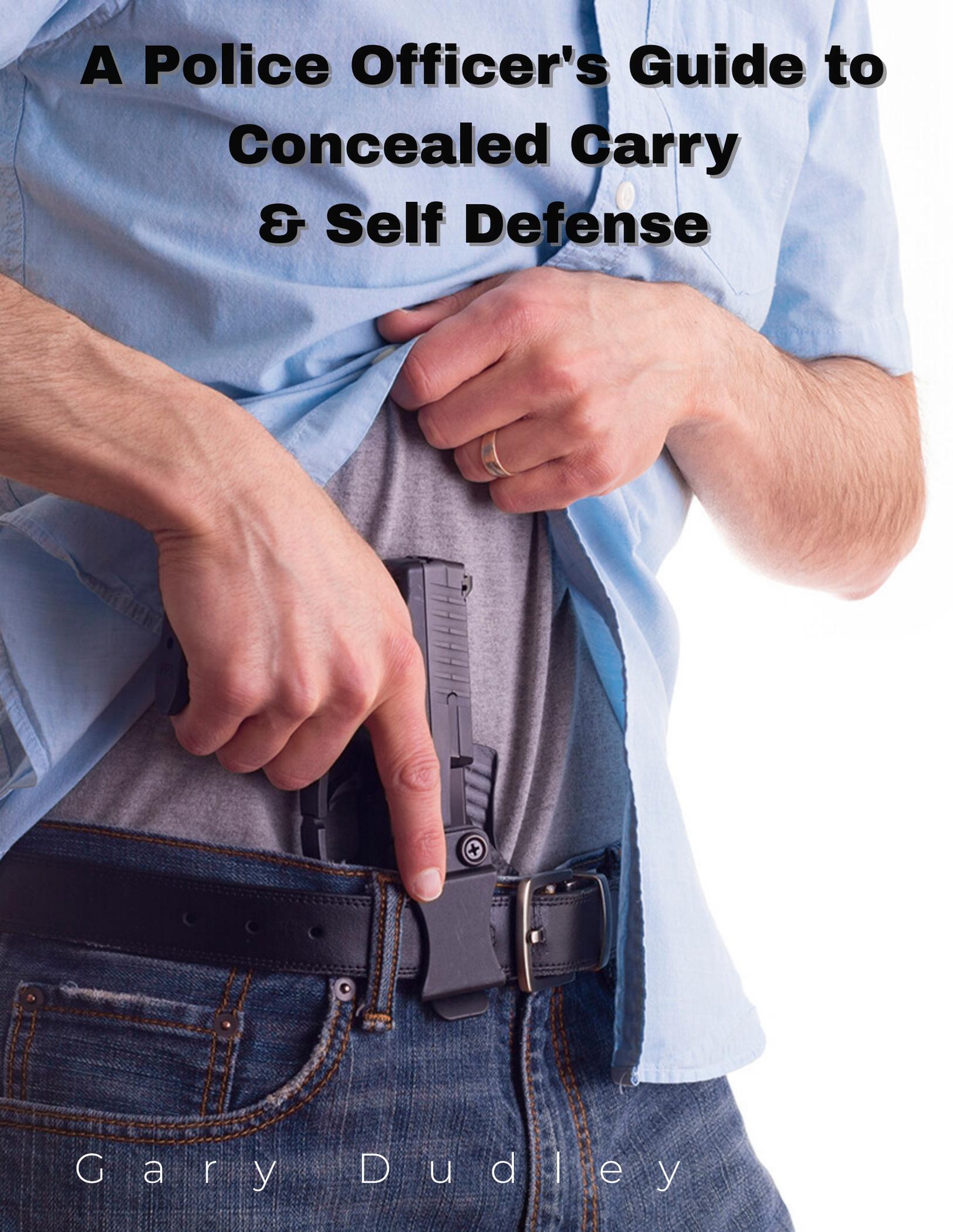


A Police Officer's Guide to Concealed Carry & Self Defense



G a r y D u d l e y

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Introduction

An ounce of experience is worth a ton of theories or good ideas. This book is based upon experience, my own, and that of others. This book is meant to be practical. Overall, my purpose is to make you think. In his last and unfinished work, *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights*, John Steinbeck wrote, "This is the law. The purpose of fighting is to win. There is no possible victory in defense. The sword is more important than the shield, and skill is more important than either. The final weapon is the brain, all else is supplemental."

One experience I will refer to throughout the entirety of this book is that of Jay Rodney Lewis. In 2012 Lewis lived in Des Moines, Iowa. One night while driving home, he became involved in a road rage incident. A minor accident ensued with the offending vehicle, and Lewis stopped. Multiple people piled out of the other vehicle and aggressively approached Lewis' vehicle.

The other driver, James Scott Ludwick, and his gang of friends began banging on Lewis' car windows. Lewis, a concealed carry permit holder, drew his .380 handgun and warned the drunken group to back off. Lewis then drove a few hundred yards down the road, got out of his vehicle, and inspected the damage. Ludwick and crew came at him again. Lewis dialed 911, and the audio of the entire incident was captured. Lewis gave them 11 different warnings to "get back." He then finally fired his handgun and wounded Ludwick.

When police arrived, Ludwick was taken to the hospital, and Lewis was arrested and taken to jail. Even though Ludwick was a two-time convicted felon, and his blood-alcohol level was more than two times the legal limit at the time of his shooting, Lewis was the one that went to jail.

At that time, Iowa did not have a 'stand your ground law.' Lewis was charged with two counts of intimidation with a dangerous weapon and one of going armed with intent because he did not back off or retreat. His bail was set at \$225,000. The ten percent required to bond out through a bail bond agent was a mere \$22,500. Lewis, an IRS employee, only made \$32,000 a year and didn't have that kind of cash lying around. He sat in jail. In fact, he sat in jail for 112 days. During that time, he was evicted from his apartment. All his belongings disappeared after his landlord left them sitting on the curb.

After sitting in jail for all that time, Lewis was acquitted and released. He won but lost his apartment, his possessions, and his job. This is a horror story to law-abiding citizens concerned with self-defense. There are many lessons to learn from Mr. Lewis' experience. Hopefully, his experience will help us avoid any similar experiences of our own.

I'm a police officer... a street cop and SWAT operator. Before becoming a police officer, I served in the military. People often ask me questions about self-defense, home security, and concealed carry. I guess you could say this book is my answer to all those questions. Theories and good ideas mean nothing to me until I prove they work or not. I only care about what works in the real world where living and dying is decided in fractions of a second, and the person who lives is usually the one most prepared. I believe it's not the tool (gun) in your hand that saves you in a violent confrontation; it's what's in your head and your heart.

Gary Dudley

Chapter One

The Decision and Right to Defend Yourself

If you're an adult human being, capable of reading this, no one is responsible for protecting you. Sure, you may have family members and friends who can protect you. They may take on the responsibility of protecting you when they are with you, but you most likely won't be attacked when surrounded by others who can protect you. You won't be attacked when a police officer is standing nearby. You will be attacked when you are alone and will need to rely on yourself for protection.

Deciding to defend yourself and what tools you will use is a personal decision. You must make it for yourself and those who rely on you for protection, like your children, if you have them. In my many years of military and law enforcement experience, I have learned that not everyone can protect themselves. It's simply not in them. I don't judge them. It's simply one of the many things that make us all different.

Since you're reading this book, it appears you have made or are in the process of making this decision. It's not a decision to take lightly. Nor does the ability to protect yourself magically infuse within you by making this decision or purchasing a gun. The decision to defend yourself is a commitment to a way of life. It's a commitment to learning to see the world around you in a way you've never seen it before. It's a commitment to learning new skills and practicing those skills until they become ingrained within you. It's an important decision.

Self-defense is not taking the law into your own hands. The media, television shows, and movies, often refer to people who defend themselves as taking the law into their own hands. This is not true.

All people have an inherent human right to protect themselves from a violent attack. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) wrote, "There exists a law, not written down anywhere, but inborn in our hearts, a law which comes to us not by training or custom or reading, a law which has come to us not from theory but from practice, not by instruction but by natural intuition. I refer to the law which lays down that, if our lives are endangered by plots or violence or armed robbers or enemies, any and every method of protecting ourselves is morally right."^[1]

Self-defense is not revenge. Self-defense happens in the moment of a violent attack. Civilized society has laws prohibiting unlawful violent attacks, but unfortunately, not everyone follows these laws. In the moment of violent attack, you have the basic human right of using force, up to and including deadly force, to stop the attack.

Once the attack is stopped and you are no longer in danger, the attacker's prosecution and punishment belong to society. You have given up this power to the society you live in. John Locke put it this way, "But though men when they enter into society, give up the equality, liberty and executive power they had in the state of nature, into the hands of the society, to be so far disposed of by the legislature, as the good of the society shall require; yet it being only with an intention to everyone the better to preserve himself his liberty and property".^[2]

If you seek to punish your attacker on your own after the attack has stopped, you are then taking the law into your own hands. As a citizen, you are not authorized to punish your attacker after the fact because you have transferred this authority to the government. But this transfer of authority to punish the attacker is not the same as your right to defend yourself with force at the moment of attack. They are two separate issues. Your human right to protect yourself and those around you from a violent attack is a right that should be protected by law, not granted by it.

Unfortunately, the law is sometimes wrong. Sometimes, as in the case of Jay Lewis, the law is interpreted wrongfully by police and prosecutors. Jay Lewis didn't carry a gun because he was looking for a fight. He carried a gun because he understood that police response takes minutes, and a deadly confrontation is over in seconds. As police officers, we rarely arrive in time to protect people. We can investigate what happened, hunt down the suspect, and take him to jail, but it doesn't alter what he did to you. You must be ready to protect yourself.

Chapter Two

Mindset

There are thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of people out there training, teaching, and talking about self-defense. Most of them are missing the point. They focus on equipment, guns, and running around filming cool videos of themselves doing stuff, but it fails to do much for people because they missed the starting line.

The starting line is in your head. It's your mind and emotions. Everything else follows from there. It's not what's in your hands that saves you; it's what's in your head and your heart! There is a lot out there about tactics and tools, but very little about purpose. It all starts with your purpose. Purpose drives tactics, and tactics drive the choice of tools. When it comes to self-defense, many people have the cart before the horse.

My purpose is to flip that around and help you learn how to think and prepare, so you're more prepared for dangerous situations. Albert Einstein is attributed as saying, "We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them." I believe you must think differently if you are going to protect yourself and your family effectively. The problem with self-defense situations is ambiguity. It's not black and white. Many people want to be safer and more prepared, but don't know where to start. Buying a gun is not where you start. Learning how to think correctly about self-defense is where you start.

The best language for defining self-defense situations that I know of comes from The Supreme Court decision in *Graham v Connor*, the foundational case on police use of force. The Court defined these types of situations as "tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving." This is exactly what makes them so hard to plan and prepare for. There is no checklist. No book tells you exactly what to do in every situation you could encounter. The reality is that you must solve the problem in 'real-time' with what you have available.

Therefore, your ability to think correctly is critical to your survival. You could have the best tools available, but you will most likely fail if you cannot think through the situation and apply the tools available. On the other hand, if you can tactically and strategically think and assess the situation, you will do better - even with improvised tools.

Most people hope they will never be the victim of a violent attack and therefore do nothing to prepare for it or learn how to avoid it. They refuse to think about it. The first step in self-defense is realizing there are bad people in the world and that you may encounter one, or a few of them, in your lifetime. Hope is not a plan. Luck is not a tactic. Plan for an attack before it happens. We do not rise to the occasion. We fall to the level of our preparation and training. Your body can never go where your mind has never been. Deciding what to do during a life or death situation is nearly impossible without prior planning and training. Therefore, many people freeze when attacked. They do not know what to do. You must plan what you will do before it happens. Then you must train according to your plan.

I've pulled my handgun in the line of duty many times. I've never had to think about doing it consciously. It just happens. It's a result of many years of training and continually thinking about "what if."

But before I get too far along, I want to stop and talk about purpose. For self-defense situations, you want to win, not merely survive. Survival is simply still being alive after it's over. Survival means after the violent physical attack, rape, active shooter, home invasion, or terrorist attack is finished... you're still breathing. While you will be grateful to be alive, I think you are interested in a little more than simply still being alive. I think you want to come through the situation as unharmed as possible. Better yet, what if you could avoid it altogether? The purpose or mission you're trying to accomplish is to avoid the situation if possible, but if not, come through the situation as unharmed as possible, but alive no matter what. This is what I call winning. I want to win, not just survive.

I rely heavily on Sun Tzu's [Art of War](#) and his modern equivalent, Col John Boyd, to win dangerous situations with his OODA Loop. Boyd understood the ambiguity of warfare and didn't try to convince people of a specific doctrine but instead tried to teach them a way of thinking. That's what I'm trying to do here. Not tell you what to do in every possible situation but teach you a thought process for dealing with self-defense situations and completely avoiding them if possible.

The book, *Left of Bang: How the Marine Corps' Combat Hunter Program Can Save Your Life*, teaches people how to be aware of the danger before it happens. Humans can make amazingly accurate observations within split seconds. "More than 100 scientific studies have demonstrated that people can make incredibly accurate intuitive judgments with just a little amount of information. These studies have researched a wide array of quick, accurate judgments made in a matter of seconds or minutes. For example, in just two seconds of observation, people can determine whether someone is a violent offender. In determining whether someone is lying, fifteen seconds of observation are better than three minutes. By looking at a group interacting for only thirty seconds, a person can accurately determine the role of each person in the group just based on body language and nonverbal signals."^[3]

You already have the ability to be aware of the danger before danger. You need to learn how to use it... and we'll work on that. Realizing the danger signs after something has happened doesn't help much. It's too late. If you can sense something before it happens, you have the chance to alter its course completely. I'll discuss this in-depth in the upcoming chapter on the OODA Loop. Once you Observe danger and Orient (understand what you observed), you have altered the situation because now your opponent is reacting to you. You can guide the situation to your desired outcome instead of his.

Again, from *Left of Bang*, "It's important to remember that the enemy stalking a Marine on patrol or a seemingly helpless woman on her way home is under duress. This stress manifests itself in physical actions. If we look for these particular physical actions when our limbic system gives us the "heads up, something's not right" signal, we'll be able to operate effectively 'left of bang.'"^[4] It's no Jedi mind tricks or mysticism. It's simply understanding the signs out there for you to read. Learning to read these signs help you avoid danger and needing to fight for your life. Winning without fighting is the main idea expressed in *The Art of War*.

But if you cannot avoid the fight, never fight directly against your opponent. You should be fighting his desire, his plans, and his ability to attack you. Defeat his desire to continue, destroy his ability to fight, change his plans, and you will win. Fight him head-on, and you may slip and lose. Most people think fighting another person is purely physical. It's your strength and skills against his. With this mindset, it's just a matter of force against force. Whoever is stronger will most likely win.

But a smart person never fights this way. A smart person attacks the opponent's plan, ability to fight, and his will to continue. Destroy your opponent's plans, abilities, and desire to fight, and you will win – maybe without evening throwing a punch or pulling a gun. It's not the tools and gear that saves you, but your ability to think. The one who thinks more effectively is typically the one who wins. Fights are won and lost in the mind regardless of the tool in your hand. Don't let your pride and emotion get you into trouble. If you get angry, you are not thinking. If you're not thinking, you're not winning. Control your temper. Remain detached and do what you need to do.

This is where I see some police officers become part of the problem rather than the solution. They let their pride and ego drive their actions. They must win the argument and always have the last word. When I'm training new officers, I always tell them to stay focused on the desired outcome and objective of any call for service or situation we're involved in. Don't let words get under your skin. In dangerous situations, you cannot become angry or afraid.

Zhuge Liang was a Chinese politician, military strategist, writer, engineer, and inventor who lived over 1800 years ago. He is attributed as saying, "Those who are skilled in combat do not become angered, those who are skilled at winning do not become afraid. Thus the wise win before they fight, while the ignorant fight to win."

This may not be as exciting as '10 Best Self Defense Guns' and stuff like "The 5 Items You Must Have in a Bug Out Bag", but all actions result from thoughts. If you can't think right, you will never act right. You might get lucky, but never mistake luck for good tactics. I want to get you (and me) thinking correctly about tense, uncertain, rapidly evolving dangerous situations, so we act appropriately. Everyone is so focused on hardware; guns, knives, flashlights, holsters, laser sights, and on and on... But it's just hardware. They're all just tools. You need the software to run the hardware... and that's what I hope to accomplish here. What good is the best computer if there's no software for it?

This is why I run into so many people who have a concealed weapon permit, but their gun is locked up at home. They don't feel comfortable carrying it because they don't have the software (training, mental preparedness, and mindset) to go with their hardware. I will eventually talk about guns and gear. Still, I really believe the missing component in so many books, videos, blogs, and conversations is learning to assess and think about dangerous situations correctly. If you don't have it right in your head, all the best gear in the world will not save your life.

The best way to remain safe is to deter any attack from happening in the first place. Potential attackers should take one look at you and know they can't prevail. This is often as simple as looking people in the eye as you're out and about. Of course, this means you must be aware of the people around you and not so engrossed in your phone that you don't even realize they are there. Display strength by making eye contact, moving with purpose, and being aware of what's happening around you. Wolves don't attack unlucky deer. They attack the weak and unaware.

Chapter Three

Violence

'Violence is never the answer' has become widely taught and believed in modern America. But this belief is wrong. Violence is simply a tool for achieving an objective. The purpose of the objective determines if violence is good or bad. Violence is often the only solution in certain circumstances. Violence was the only method of removing the Nazis from power in Europe during the 1940s. Appeasement, negotiation, and diplomacy had failed miserably, and violence was the only tool that could solve the problem. The same was true of Imperial Japan during the same timeframe.

When a person walks into a school, movie theater, business, or any place for that matter; and starts shooting people, the only thing that stops the killing is another person bringing violence to the shooter. The only solution to a bad person's use of violence is a good person capable and willing to use violence to stop them. Sometimes, violence is the only answer.

Violence Is Never Random

How many times have you heard a news report of a violent attack say something like “it was a random, senseless, act of violence”? We hear it a lot. In fact, the media seems to use the word “random” and “senseless” a lot when discussing violent attacks. Still, violence is never random nor senseless... it always makes sense to the perpetrator.



Violence is a method used to accomplish a purpose or achieve a desired outcome.

There are three basic elements of a violent attack:

1. Perpetrator/Desire
2. Target/Victim
3. Opportunity

Perpetrator/Desire:

We have no control over another person's choice to use violence. It's a choice they make to get what they want. Every crime happens twice, once in the mind of the perpetrator and again when they carry out the physical act. The desire could be to establish dominance over a spouse/partner, get something to sell for more drugs, get revenge, make a political statement... the list goes on and on.

The media often calls it 'senseless' because the rest of us don't have those same desires – or won't resort to violence to achieve them. It doesn't make sense to us that someone would do that. People, especially in Western democracies, cannot understand suicide bombers. It just doesn't make sense to us... but it makes sense to them, so it doesn't matter if we understand it or not. Our failure to understand it doesn't prevent them from doing it. In fact, the less we understand the way they think, the more vulnerable we remain. Violence is simply a means to an end for some people. We have little or no control over this element of an attack.

Target/Victim:

In law enforcement, we often say, "no victim, no crime." To have a crime, you must have a victim. The problem is we can't remove potential victims by separating the good people from the bad people. Violent people look just like anyone else. Violent predators in the animal kingdom are easy to spot. They look different from the deer and gazelles. But human predators look just like everyone else. The only way to differentiate them is through their behaviors.

Any one of us can become a victim or target of a dangerous person. We can make ourselves a hard target, but sometimes a criminal has a specific desire, but non-specific victims. An example of this would be an active shooter in a mall or movie theater. They have a specific reason for attacking, but the victims are entirely random. You took your family to see a movie, and some idiot comes in and starts shooting. I don't care what type of ex-CIA, Jason Bourne, James Bond operative you are, you can't see that one coming ahead of time and avoid it... unless you lock yourself in your fortress and remove yourself entirely from society.

I want to clarify the difference between a random attack and random victims. The attack, or act of violence, as I mentioned earlier, is never random. It has a purpose. The people targeted may be random, but this leads back to the specificity of the purpose. Some perpetrators, terrorists especially, want to harm a few, but terrorize an entire population. They do this by making everyone in that population look at the victim and think, "that could have been my family or me." Choosing random victims multiplies the devastation of the attack because it has a more powerful effect on us.

Opportunity:

The last element of an attack is the one you have the most control over... the opportunity. If you can remove the opportunity for the perpetrator to attack, you avoid becoming a victim. You can be in the water with a huge, hungry shark and not become his dinner if there's a cage around you that removes the opportunity for him to eat you. The desire in the shark is there. A couple of victims are in place, but the opportunity has been removed.



You control the opportunity. You choose who you allow into your life, who you date, who you marry, where and when you walk, whether you lock your doors, whether you can shoot back when that active shooter comes into the movie theater or whether you hide on the floor and wait to get shot. Threats exist all around you. All you can do is try to remove the opportunity for them to harm you. Think about your own life. Is there anyone who gives you the creeps or makes you extremely uncomfortable? If so, why are they part of your life? Most victims of violent crime know their attacker. They allowed the person into their life and typically have ignored many red flags.

Jay Lewis could have removed the opportunity for the intoxicated thugs to attack him the second time by driving further down the road, out of their view, before stopping to inspect the damage to his car. He could have driven away when attacked the second time instead of shooting his attacker. I'm not criticizing him but using his experience to learn from. If you're inside your car, and someone is outside pounding on your windows, drive away.

If you're involved in a road rage incident, don't pull over and yell at the other driver. Let it go and let them go. Get away from them and forget about it. It's not worth injury or death. You never know who you're confronting.

Alex Gong was a world champion Thai-style kickboxer who lived in San Francisco. In August 2003, Gong was working out in the gym he owned and saw a Jeep Cherokee smash into his [Gong's] parked vehicle. The Cherokee continued up the street and stopped for a red light. Infuriated, Gong ran out of his gym, up the street, and confronted the Cherokee driver. As the light turned green, the driver lifted a gun and shot Gong at point-blank range. Gong was declared dead at the scene. Gong could have removed the opportunity to be a victim by simply getting the license plate and calling the police. The damage to his vehicle was not worth dying over. At worst, his insurance would have paid for the damage, and his rates may have gone up. His pride may have taken a hit because he let the guy drive away without 'doing' anything about it, but he'd still be alive.

Recently I took a suspicious person report from a woman. She had been shopping in a grocery store and kept seeing the same guy behind her. She had the feeling he was following her but brushed it aside. He disappeared a short time later, and she didn't think much of it. She purchased her groceries and carried her bags through the parking lot when she sensed a vehicle driving up behind her. She turned and looked at the vehicle and recognized the driver as the man that had been following her inside the store. He slowly drove along behind her as she walked to her car. She quickly threw her bags into her car and got inside. The man exited his vehicle, walked up to her driver's side window, and knocked on the window. She put down the window to see what he wanted. Luckily for her, he only wanted to tell her how beautiful she is and ask for her phone number. She quickly told him that she was "already taken" and drove away. She's lucky he didn't pull a weapon or force himself into her car. Why did she put down the window and speak to the guy who had been following her inside the store, obviously waited for her outside, and then stalked her to her vehicle?

Even though this guy had totally "creeped" her out, she gave him the opportunity to attack her. She could have easily removed the opportunity by driving away without ever putting down the window and talking to him. Additionally, she could have walked back inside the store so he wouldn't know what car belonged to her and called the police. This would have completely removed any opportunity for him to attack her or learn more information about her.

Violence is a method of achieving a purpose. Any thug can use violence. In fact, almost all of them do. Appropriate use of violence, or the ability and will to do so, is often the only thing that stops dangerous, violent people. You don't need to be loud, pushy, or a jerk to win. You can be polite and professional while having a plan in mind of how to kill the person you're dealing with. In fact, this is what makes you a defender or guardian. Your use of violence isn't a thoughtless reaction. It's simply cold, calm, and calculated to accomplish a lawful objective. Maj. General James Mattis told his Marines in Iraq, "Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet." That's a good rule to live by.

Chapter Four

Trust Your Feelings

"Intuition is a powerful force; however, it is poorly understood. Intuition is not black magic or some inexplicable force of nature. Intuition is nothing more than a person's sense about a situation influenced by experience and knowledge." - Patrick Van Horne, *Left of Bang: How the Marine Corps' Combat Hunter Program Can Save Your Life*

It was a little before 3:00 am and the newer model, black sedan coming from the opposite direction, clearly exceeded the speed limit. Just as it passed beside me, I cranked the steering wheel of my patrol vehicle to the left to flip a quick U-turn and quickly caught up to the sedan. I flipped the toggle switch on my center console all the way to the right, and the red and blue lights illuminated the darkness and let the driver of the sedan know he should have been paying more attention to his speed.

The sedan pulled to the right side of the road and rolled to a stop. I flipped on my high-beam headlights, came to a stop behind the sedan, and focused my spotlight on the driver's side mirror. Pushing open my door, I stepped out onto the street and immediately sensed something was wrong. I physically felt something. A power or energy I cannot explain. I felt danger.

I saw the driver's side window come down as I approached the vehicle. I stayed well behind the driver's side window, shined my flashlight into the vehicle, and told the driver to place his hands on the steering wheel so I could see them. He complied. I remained behind him, so he would need to lean completely out the window to shoot me. I told him I'd stopped him for speeding and asked for his driver's license. He told me he didn't have one. I called for backup and asked for his name and date of birth to look him up on my computer. Two other officers arrived, and I told them to watch the driver carefully because "something just didn't feel right."

They moved up on the car and one covered from the rear of the car while the other spoke to the driver through the passenger side window. I was back in my vehicle looking up the driver's identity when I saw the other Officers ordering the driver from the car and telling him to stand on the sidewalk. My computer search returned information on the driver and indicated he was a wanted fugitive.

I walked back up, and we took him into custody without incident. We put him into the cage of my patrol vehicle, and my friend told me, "While I was talking to him, I just had the worst feeling, and I wanted him out of that car. That's why we had him get out and stand on the sidewalk." A few minutes later, we both understood what we had been feeling. As we started searching the car, we found a 9mm handgun in the car's center console.

Would it have turned out differently if I'd just walked up to the side of that car without using good tactics? What if I hadn't called for backup and had two Officers watching him closely while I looked up his information? What if my friend wouldn't have unexpectedly got the driver out of the car? What would have been different if we wouldn't have heeded what we were feeling?

In my experience, you will feel the danger before you see the reason for it. And my experience seems similar to just about everyone else who's ever experienced danger or violence. They intuitively sensed danger even though they didn't consciously understand why. This is not just my experience; it's backed up by science.

The amygdala is the brain's 24/7 security system. Whether you're awake or asleep, your amygdala is constantly scanning your environment for threats. The amygdala has its own dedicated circuit from your senses, which allows it to scan things you don't consciously register.

Brain researcher Joe LeDoux explains the amygdala's dedicated circuit as the "low road" and the circuit to higher-level cognitive functions as the "high road." Input travels down each road, but the amygdala functions much faster. Sensory inputs reach the amygdala in twelve milliseconds, while inputs to cognitive functions take thirty to forty milliseconds. The amygdala produces feelings or involuntary actions. You will feel the danger three times faster than you will cognitively register and understand the danger. This is why you jump when something startles or scares you. Your amygdala makes you jump even before you know why.

In fact, you may never consciously realize why if you act on the feeling and prevent the danger from ever materializing. As humans, our most basic need is survival. Self-preservation and protecting our loved ones is our highest priority, and we have built-in survival intuition and instincts that alert us to danger before it happens... we just need to heed them.

The intuition of danger isn't reserved solely to police officers or people who deal with violence regularly. In his best-selling book, *The Gift of Fear*, Gavin de Becker chronicled and documented that people nearly always experienced warning feelings and emotions before violent attack or danger.

Intuition is knowing something you probably can't explain. Before moving to the city, I worked as a Deputy for a rural Sheriff's Office. With an undiagnosed mental illness, one of our citizens routinely experienced hallucinations and saw people dumping chemical waste on his property. He would go out and shoot at them. Needless to say, this alarmed his neighbors.

Additionally, he would call 911 and report the 'trespassers' on his property. One night it came to a head, and he believed people had been pumping toxic waste into his house. He called 911, and I responded to his house with all my red and blue lights flashing, hoping he wouldn't shoot me as I came up his driveway.

He met me outside but wanted me to come inside his house to smell the chemicals that had been pumped in. I knew he had guns in the house and really didn't want to go inside. I confronted him with the fact that what he was seeing wasn't real. I told him he needed to speak to a doctor and explain what he was experiencing.

He wasn't too happy with what I told him but still insisted I come inside the house. Finally, I agreed and went inside with him. Obviously, I couldn't smell any chemicals in his house. Once again, I told him to seek medical attention for what he was experiencing. This made him very angry, and he ordered me out of his house.

As I was backing toward the door (not wanting to turn my back on him), I moved past a kitchen counter and looked over to see a handgun facing muzzle down inside a coffee mug. He and I were equal distance from the gun. I looked at the gun and then back at him. He must have seen me look at it because I saw him glance towards the gun, and I said, "Do not reach for that gun." Time froze... and then I saw his hand reaching towards the gun.

But I knew he wasn't a threat to me. I saw one thing – his hand moving towards the gun – but I knew or understood that I was not in danger. This all happened in less than a second. As his hand reached out, he grabbed the handle of the coffee mug and slid it down the counter away from us.

Afterward, I was criticizing myself because I had not drawn my weapon. I had a guy reaching towards a gun and didn't pull my own gun. It really bothered me because I felt like I had not reacted properly. Legally, I could have shot him. I was glad that I hadn't shot him, but why hadn't I at least pulled my weapon? But I couldn't get over somehow feeling and knowing he had not been a threat to me. What I felt and understood was the opposite of what I had seen.

I went back and reviewed my body camera video of the incident. I slowed it down to almost frame by frame and then understood why I felt he wasn't a threat and, therefore, had not drawn my weapon. When slowed down, the video showed his hand reaching out with only his thumb and index finger – which indicated he meant to grab the handle of the coffee mug. His fingers were not positioned in a way to grip the handgun. My subconscious mind saw the extended thumb and index finger and understood he was reaching for the cup, not the gun.

The subconscious mind communicates in feelings rather than words or ideas. Therefore I felt he was not a threat to me. Had I overridden that feeling and trusted what I was seeing, I would have killed that man. I would have been legally justified in doing so, but he would be dead. I would be living with the regret of killing a crazy old man that had talked me into coming into his house against my better judgment.

Intuition will not only tell you when you need to take action, but it will also tell you when you do not need to act. During tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving situations, you will feel what to do more than you will see what you should do. Patrick Van Horne, in *Left of Bang*, asks, "How can you discern those who want to harm you from those who are just afraid or just going about their business before the attack? How can you defuse a threat before it happens? Is that even possible? The [US Marine] Combat Hunter program has proven again and again that it is."^[5]

Your subconscious mind is almost always right. Your feeling is always in response to something. You may not consciously be aware of what that something is, but if you trust your feelings and act on what you feel, you will not be wrong.

Chapter Five

Know Your Enemy & Know Yourself

As previously discussed, dangerous people have a purpose and use violence to achieve that purpose. Humans are goal-oriented. We do things to accomplish desired results. Understanding your potential attacker's goal is essential to defending yourself. The goal of self-defense is preventing, or even just delaying, the attacker from achieving his goal. By understanding his goal, you can attack his plan and capability for accomplishing his purpose.

Your Enemy:

An adversary will often use tactics to Distract and/or Deceive You. He will also attempt to Delay you from escaping or getting help so he can Destroy (totally overpower) you and accomplish his purpose. When he does launch his attack, he will use Speed, Surprise, and Violent actions.

Here's an example... a woman is jogging alone on the backside of a park away from other people. Up ahead, she sees a man looking into the bushes along the trail. As she approaches him, he asks her if she's seen a little dog. She can't hear what he's saying and pulls the earbud out of her ear while walking closer to him.

He says, "I lost my little dog. Have you seen a white dog with brown spots"? He's looking around (for witnesses), which makes her look around as well (thinking he is looking for a dog). She hasn't seen the dog (because it doesn't exist), and suddenly he punches her hard in her nose, knocking her to the ground. He pulls her into the bushes, strikes her again across the face, and rapes her. Distraction, Deception, Speed, Surprise, and Violence of Action.

Anytime you feel someone is attempting to distract, deceive or delay you (not allowing you to leave, not letting call for a ride, not accepting your 'no' as the final answer), it should be a red flag warning sign to get away from that person immediately. Additionally, maintain your distance from strangers who want to speak to you. Never let anyone you don't know within arm's reach of you.

You:

To counter the adversary, you will use Deterrence, Detection, Delaying Tactics, and Defensive Actions. Deterring a potential adversary is best because you avoid the attack altogether. Deterrence can be as simple as making eye contact with strangers or being in a group of people. Deterrence is anything you do that tells a potential adversary, "attacking me would be a bad choice."

One of my adult daughters was shopping in the makeup aisle at a local Walmart. She was alone on the aisle. A man came onto the aisle, and he “creeped” her out. She had a bad feeling about him. She had recently completed a [RAD Women’s Self Defense](#) class and remembered her training. She stopped looking at makeup and stared at the guy making eye contact. He immediately turned and walked away. She never saw him again. Was he up to no good, just weird, or maybe picking up something for his wife... or maybe himself? We don’t know.

I’ve picked up makeup for my wife from the Walmart makeup aisle before. She wrote down the specific make and model she wanted. I sneaked onto the aisle, attempting to be invisible, got the thing I was looking for, and got out of there. I sure didn’t hang out there. Something was off about this guy, and my daughter responded with deterrence.

How could the fictional example of the rapist in the park, previously mentioned, turn out differently? I won’t even discuss not running alone or staying where other people are. It’s not always possible, and you can’t live your life dictated by the fear of what might happen. So, as the woman is jogging and sees the man up ahead of her, she could turn and go back the way she came. She should be running with only one earbud to keep one ear free to hear from greater distances. She could keep her distance from the man, and if he tries to get closer, she could yell at him to stay back and maintain her distance. This may not prevent the attack but staying 8-10 feet away from the guy gives her more warning than standing right next to him.

Let's say he rushes at her and still punches her in the face and knocks her to the ground. He pulls her into the bushes and hits her again. Rather than being stunned into submission, she has previously thought "what if" an attack like this happened to her. She resists, squirms, and yells as loud as she can. She recognizes that he's attempting to rape her and knows that he will need to remove her running shorts to accomplish his goal. He can't hold both of her arms and legs and remove her shorts all simultaneously.

She avoids panicking by taking long, deep breaths, and seeks an opportunity to counter-attack his plan. He tries to hold both of her wrists with one of his hands and is pulling at her shorts with the other. She wriggles an arm free, reaches up, and sticks her thumb into the inside of his left eye socket.

He screams in pain and shifts his body weight on top of her, and she can bring her leg up, violently striking her thigh into his groin. This allows her to roll out from under him and get back on her feet and run.

You're never out of the fight... unless you take yourself out of it by giving up. The violence an attacker uses is often desired to stun you into submissiveness so he can accomplish his purpose.

When Deterrence, Detection, and Delaying fail to stop the attack, you must Defend yourself with extreme violence. But even then, attack his ability to attack you. If he can't see because you removed one of his eyeballs, he cannot continue the attack. If he can't walk because his knee is broken or his testicles are crushed, he cannot continue the attack. Even if your actions just caused him severe pain, his desire to continue the attack may completely go away, and he simply wants to escape.

While I've used the example of violence against women, many criminals will attempt to Distract, Deceive, Delay to gain an advantage to accomplish their purpose. His attack will rely on Speed, Surprise, and Violence of Action. You will counter the attacker by attempting to Deter, Detect (to avoid or lessen the harm), Delay the impending attack, and finally, Defend yourself with violence.

Chapter Six

Tactical Thinking – Keeping Your Head Amidst Chaos

Without the right mental preparation, you will most likely freeze up during high-stress, life-threatening situations. Your body is just hardware. It's just a machine. Your mind runs your body, but it needs to have the software and programming required to respond to a life-threatening person or event appropriately. We do not rise to the occasion. We fall to the level of our preparation and training – mental and physical.

Physical preparation (having the gear, equipment, and fitness) only works when you have the mental preparation to know what to do with the gear.

The first step to mental preparation is playing the 'what if' game. Some people take this a step further and call it the 'when/what' game. The game is played by visualizing and thinking about a dangerous situation. What if I'm at work and a man comes in with a gun? What if someone tries to get into my car while I'm stopped at a red light? When someone knocks on my door at midnight, what will I do? When someone cuts me off in traffic and then begins following me, what will I do? What if, what if, what if...

Mentally rehearse dangerous situations and visualize what you will do and how you will successfully deal with them. By thinking "what if" and then solving the problem in your head, you create mental models that will allow you to react quickly and effectively to dangerous situations. But how do you keep your train of thought in the middle of a dangerous situation or attack?

My first job in local law enforcement was at a small, rural Sheriff's Office. There were no other law enforcement agencies in the county, and it was not uncommon to only have one Deputy on-duty at any given time. A couple of months after starting there, I found myself on-duty by myself. I was the only law enforcement officer on-duty in a county of 600 square miles. I felt like the Lone Ranger. If anything bad happened, anywhere in the county, I was responding without any backup. When this realization hit me, I was nervous.

Eventually, I discovered a pattern to every police call for service - whether I had backup or not. While every call was different, there was a pattern for completing every call. Now, years later, I teach this pattern to new police officers. No matter what we respond to, we follow this pattern. I call it SIIDA.

1. Secure the scene. Make it safe for everyone involved.
2. Identify everyone involved.
3. Investigate to determine if a crime was committed or what happened.
4. Decide what to do.
5. Act. You can't just decide what to do; you need to carry out the decision and make it happen.

No matter how chaotic the situation is, this pattern will guide an officer through it. It's important to realize that each step must successfully be completed before moving onto the next one. The officer cannot begin identifying and investigating if the scene is not safe.

There are also patterns in personal self-defense. Playing the 'what if' also helps you find these patterns. Here is a simple one for almost any dangerous situation. Simply remember the letters S-A-F-E.

1. Safe - Ask yourself, "Am I in a safe place now?" If yes, then stay there. If no, then move to a safe place immediately.
2. Assess - Once you're in a safe place, assess the situation, and determine what to do next... if anything. Staying put in a safe place may be the best option.
3. Find Help - Are there other people there to help you? Call 911. You don't have to be the Lone Ranger. Get help.
4. Evacuate - If there is no help available - or will take too long to get there - you should try to move as far from the situation as possible.

Remember Jay Lewis? The road rage incident caused a minor vehicle accident, and he pulled over. Upon realizing the people in the other vehicle were dangerous, he got back into his car. That's safer than standing outside arguing with them.

Upon getting back into his car, he could have assessed the situation and realized he was not in a safe place. He could have dialed 911 (found help) and then drove completely away. If the thugs followed him, he could stay on the call with 911 and continue driving until met by police. If the thugs weren't following, he could have evacuated the area and just went home.

You may think of other response patterns that work better for you. While every self-defense situation will be different, there are patterns to discover and follow that will guide us through to a successful outcome. But how do you keep your head in the middle of the chaos?

You think WIN... What's Important Now? Ask yourself, "What's important now?" and then do that thing. Once you've accomplished that task, you ask yourself again, "What's important now?" Keep doing that until the situation is resolved. This is a fundamental, effective, and simple method for successfully managing dangerous and chaotic situations.

Most people do not understand just how chaotic the event will really be. I'll discuss this in greater detail in the next chapter on the OODA Loop, but for now, understand that you need to keep things simple in a high stress, life, or death situation. But how do you really know "what's important now" in every situation you may come across? Follow me through this example...

You're at work, and you see a person collapse to the floor. You run over to them, a crowd gathers around, and you see the person is unconscious. What's important now? Do you really know what's most important now? We tend to over-analyze things and never get around to deciding and acting, so asking, "What's important now?" may cause you to consider multiple options – which will delay you (Hick's Law – more in the next chapter) from doing anything.

If this happens to you, then ask yourself, "What's the worst possible outcome?"

Answer: The person will die. Q: Why will the person die? A: Not breathing, Heart stopped or bleed to death... OK, are they breathing? No... Start CPR.

I hope this makes sense... "What's important now?" is an excellent question to ask yourself, but if you don't have a quick answer to that question... or start considering multiple options, then start at the end and work backward by asking yourself "What's the worst possible outcome of this situation." That answer will usually be death, so you start looking at what specific causes could lead to death and solve them.

"What's important now?" is common to hear in law enforcement training, and I think it's a great concept, but it's primarily designed to jump-start the thinking of people who have been trained what to do. If you don't know what to do, asking "What's important now?" may not work for you.

None of us know it all. No matter how well trained and experienced we are, we eventually come across something we're not quite sure how to handle. I tend to use both methods. I will ask myself, "What's important now?" If I get a clear answer to that question, I do it. If I find myself running into options, I quickly jump to "What's the worst possible outcome" and work back from there.

Another tactic is to speak your thoughts out loud - if possible, and you have the time. This does a few things for you. #1) If you're talking, you're breathing. If you're breathing, then you're thinking. It's possible to get so scared that you hold your breath and your mind goes blank because it's being deprived of oxygen. Start talking so you keep breathing so you can keep thinking. #2) Hearing yourself speak allows you to develop a better course of action because you will often become aware of potential problems or obstacles by hearing yourself speaking your thoughts.

A dangerous situation is pure chaos. You won't know exactly what to do. You'll never have a complete picture of the situation. Breaking it down and taking one small, simple step at a time will help you successfully navigate the chaos.

Chapter Seven

The OODA Loop

Self-defense and survival situations are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving. As stated earlier, this language comes from the Supreme Court decision, *Graham v. Connor*. The Court stated, "police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments – in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving." We could sum up the Court's description of these situations with one word; ambiguous. Self-defense and survival situations are ambiguous. Your ability to survive, or thrive, in these situations will be determined by your ability to process and think your way through them appropriately.

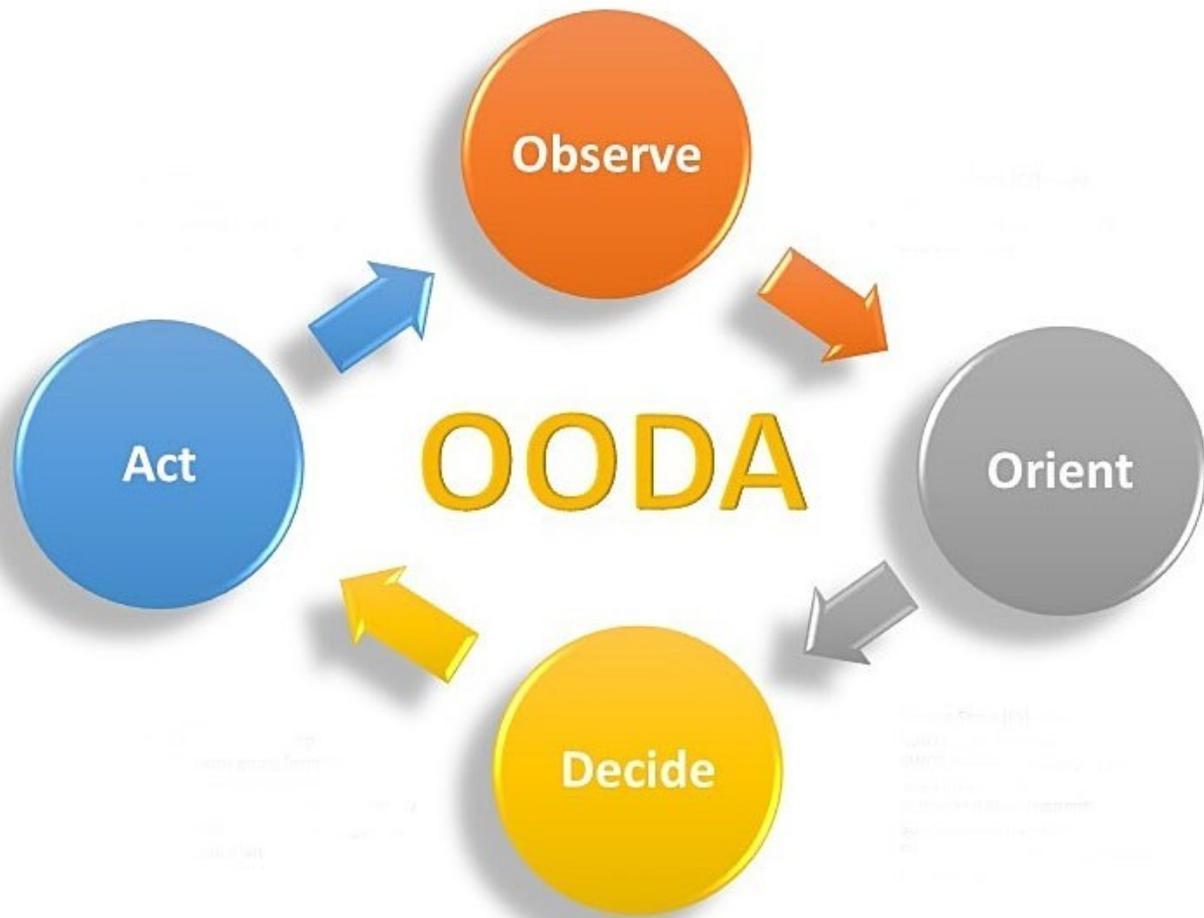
I was giving a presentation on law enforcement at a high school career day. One student asked me if someone had ever pulled a gun on me. I replied, "No, so far, I've always pulled my gun first, and they chose not to pull theirs." In these situations, the suspect may have planned on shooting me, but when I had my gun out first, it changed the dynamic, so they were reacting to me. I had simply cycled through the OODA Loop faster than they did and won the encounter without firing a shot.

OODA What?

People tend to think linearly. They try to proceed from A to Z and hit each letter along the way. Or they want a checklist, flow chart type diagram that lists every possible scenario and what to do about it. Unfortunately, real-life doesn't work that way. In a self-defense situation, you must jump directly from A to F without proceeding through B to E. Uncertainty and ambiguity are irresolvable characteristics of these situations. Using linear style thinking leads to hesitation and in-action... and as one of my former military team leaders always used to say, "Hesitation will get you killed."

Jetfighter combat, or dogfighting, is another one of these situations. Basically, it's one man inside a machine trying to kill another man in a machine. Colonel John Boyd was a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force and was known as "Forty Second Boyd" for his ability to defeat any opposing pilot in air combat maneuvering in less than 40 seconds.

Boyd served from 1951 to 1975 but remained highly involved in military doctrine and weapons development until he died in 1997. Boyd was highly instrumental in the development of the F-15, F-16, and F-18 fighter jets. In 1990, Boyd was called out of retirement by then-Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, to plan Operation Desert Storm. Boyd's ideas extended way beyond aerial combat and adopted by the U.S. Marine Corps as the basis for maneuver warfare. Boyd is best known for his discovery and documentation of the OODA Loop.



The idea of the OODA Loop is we Observe, Orient, Decide, and then Act. Many people stay at this superficial, simple version of the OODA Loop. Like many simple ideas, though, it's actually much more in-depth.

Observe:

- Situational Awareness.
- Input from your physical senses – what do you see, smell, hear, etc.
- What is happening around you?

Orient:

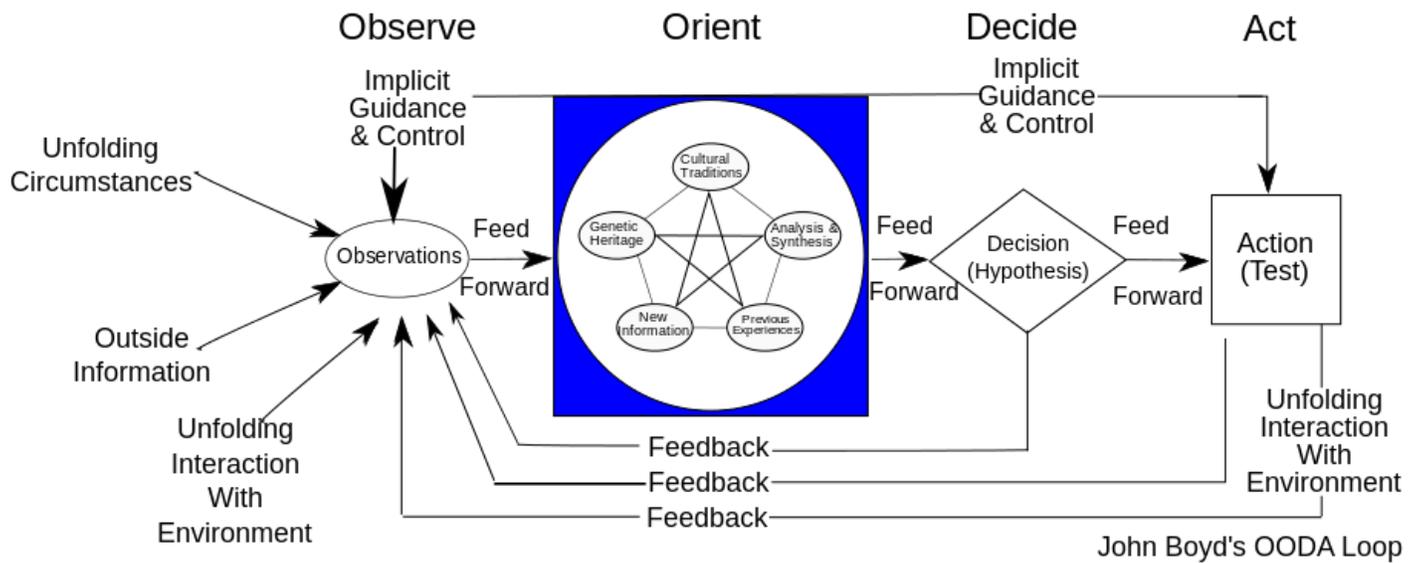
- How you feel about what you observe?
- What do you understand about your observations?
- Your culture, prior training, life experience, personal bias, personality, religion, and an on-going list of similar things develop your understanding of what you're observing.
- Who or What does NOT belong?
- What SHOULD be happening but is not?

Decide:

What are you going to do about your observations?

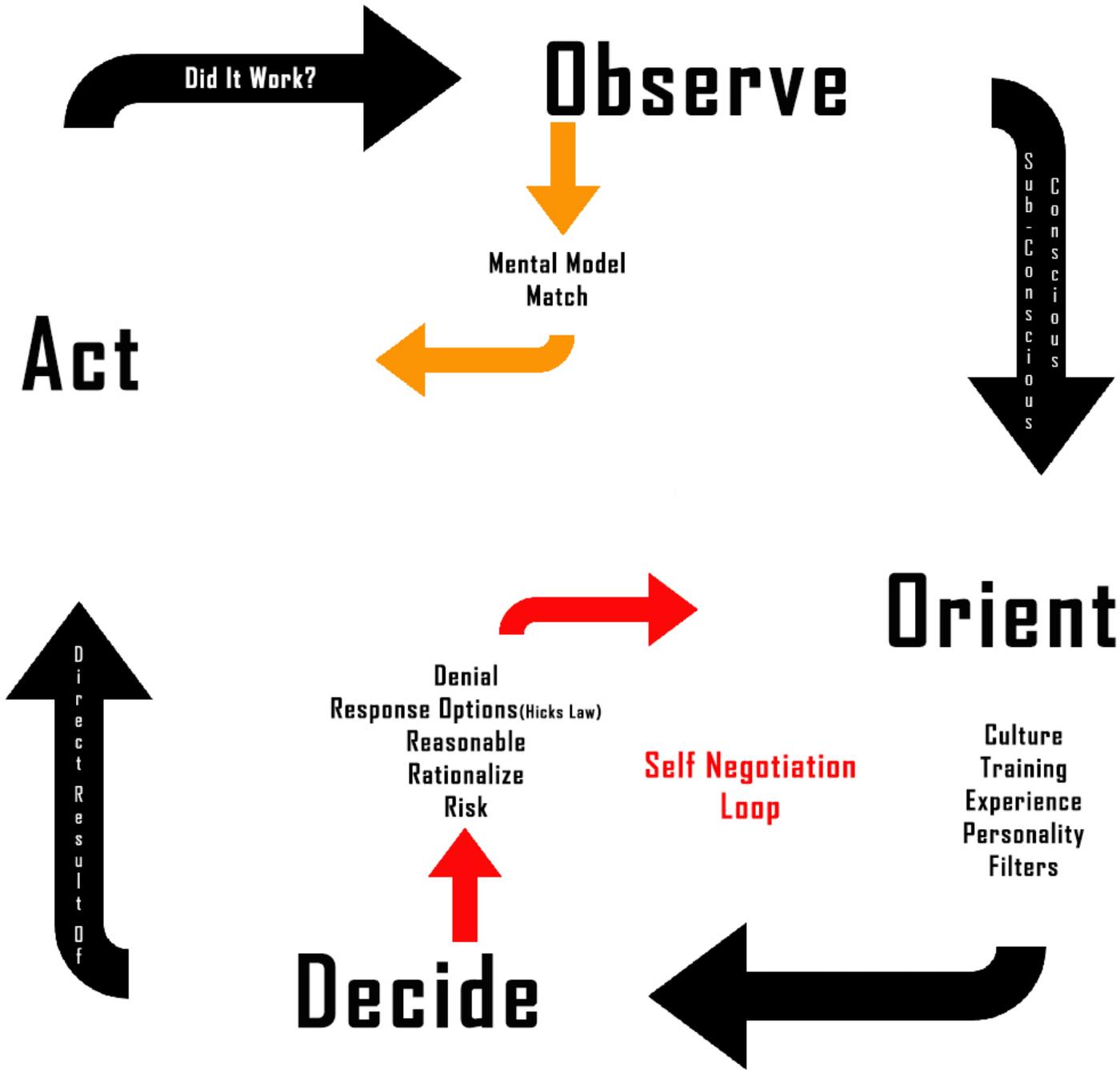
Act:

- Your action is ALWAYS a result of your decision.
- Don't act simply for the sake of doing something.
- Actions must be effective and accurate.



As you can see, the actual OODA Loop documented by John Boyd is much more in-depth than the one we typically see. The first thing we notice is the ability to skip orientation and move directly from observation to action. This is accomplished by developing mental models ahead of time and training for specific situations.

The Samurai understood the concept of "Mind, No Mind." They trained to the point their actions flowed from the subconscious mind and could move from Observe directly to Act without passing through the other points of the loop. When you observe a situation where you have an action model in place, you already know what to do. There is no need to orient or decide what to do. This is what I call a Mental Model Match. The observation matches a pre-planned/trained decision so perfectly you act. Obviously, when you're dealing in fractions of a second, this can be the difference between life and death. I have developed my own interpretation of the OODA Loop, which is shown below.



Observation is purely physical. It's what comes into your mind, both conscious and subconscious, through your physical senses. Being consciously aware of your environment is essential. As mentioned earlier, your subconscious mind is constantly scanning your environment, but if you fail to observe something consciously, your OODA loop will likely never start. In the real world, what you don't know can hurt you. If a tree falls in the woods, and there's no one around, does it make a sound? Doesn't matter. It still crushes whatever it falls on. In self-defense, situational awareness can mean the difference between life and death. Pay more attention to what's going on around you.

Have you ever watched one of those animal documentaries where the predator is sneaking up on a large herd of prey out on the grasslands of Africa? All the little deer are grazing away peacefully. They take a few bites, look up, look around, and then take a few more bites. But then suddenly, one of them sees the predator. The other deer notice the change in their friend's demeanor and start looking around. Pretty soon, they've all spotted the danger and start reacting to it.

When you're in a group of people, watch the herd. If not impossible, it's hard to observe every person in a crowd, but if you watch the herd in general, you will pick up on how individuals react to the people around them. This can give you advanced warning of something, or someone, out of the ordinary. How are the people in the crowd acting? Who or what does not belong? What should be happening, but is not happening?

Observations are input through two different channels; our conscious mind and our subconscious mind. The conscious observations are easiest to deal with because we're aware of them, and they pass directly to the Orient stage. We can point directly to the stimulus and connect it to our feelings about it.

The subconscious is obviously more ambiguous. The subconscious creates feelings within us, but because we can't directly connect to where they're coming from, we often fail to Orient to them. Even though we physically Orient to them (the emotions and feelings they produce, i.e., fear), they often get filtered out completely between Orienting and Deciding in what I call the 'Self Negotiation Loop' or Decide/Re-Decide.

The Orient step is emotional and mental. It's what you feel, think, and understand about your observation. How you Orient to Observations is based on many things like culture, personality, experience, training, paradigms, beliefs, etc.

Orientation is the most important step of the loop. If you fail to Orient, or Orient incorrectly, everything else in the loop will be ineffective, and you will need to start the process over again. But in a life or death situation, you may not have the opportunity to start over again.

The simplest way for me to explain Orient is to think about it in the sense of sexual orientation. Your sexual orientation is how you sexually feel about other people. A straight man observes a female he finds attractive, and it produces an emotion. The same man observes another man, and he feels nothing. It's just another guy. Now a gay man orients differently to the same observations.

Any decisions that lead to actions are based upon the orientation. People can observe the same thing and all orient differently. The key to achieving an effective action is how you orient. If you don't have the software in place (training, experience, knowledge, etc.), you don't understand what you observe and freeze like a deer in the headlights because there's no software in your head to telling you what decision to make. The purpose of all training, education, etc., is to help you effectively orient to the situation or environment you're dealing with.

The goal is to be so well trained, prepared, and skilled that you can process the OODA and act without consciously taking the time to think your way through it.

Animals survive by acting on their instincts. People have instincts as well, but often don't follow them because of our innate human ability to think about our thoughts. Making critical decisions in seconds or less is often difficult for people as they enter the Decide/Re-Decide or Self Negotiation Loop and get stuck there.

In self-defense situations, what we observe is often so far outside of our normal existence that we question or deny the observation. I've had experiences where I've seen something so crazy that I've questioned, "Did that really happen? Did I actually see what I think I saw? That takes us off track in OODA and into the interior of the loop.

In real life, unlike professional sports, there is no replay. You don't get to freeze the action and determine if that really is a gun in his hand. You see it for a split second in low-lighting and question if you really saw it or not. Instead of continuing through the loop and acting on a bad decision, we want more information and may work back to the Observe point to confirm what we originally thought we saw.

The first stage of Self Negotiation is denial. We deny the emotions/feelings or the way we oriented to the situation because we don't want to believe what we're feeling, or we don't have enough information to justify what we are feeling. We can't consciously connect the feeling to a fact. We suppress the initial orientation and loop back, looking for additional meaning or a way not to act on what we're feeling.

Humans, unlike any other living creature, will sense danger and yet still walk right into it. The Gift of Fear opens with the story of a woman named Kelly, who denied multiple warning feelings regarding a stranger in her apartment building who offered to help carry her groceries. She went against her gut feeling and let him help her. Once inside her apartment, he raped her.

She oriented to the danger correctly but didn't continue to the Decision and Actions that followed what she was feeling (not being polite to this nice man offering to help her) and re-decided back to suppress her orientation until she just ignored it.

I think we all do this in one way or another. We feel something; we perceive the decision and actions we need to take, but don't like that decision, so we re-decide until we get something we're more comfortable with.

The next delay in rapid decision making is something called Hicks Law. In a nutshell, Hicks Law states the more options a person has, the longer it takes to decide between them. If you have multiple response options, you can get caught in the Decide/Re-Decide Loop, playing through all the options in your head until you find one you like.

Before my time in law enforcement, officers only carried a revolver and nightstick. The options for using force were hands, nightstick, revolver. Three options. Now we have many more options – which is a good thing but can delay the OODA processing.

Now we have hands, pepper spray, Taser, baton, less-lethal round (beanbag shotgun), handgun, patrol rifle. Hesitation can occur when trying to choose the right tool for the situation.

Before making a decision, we also assess the Risk and Reasonableness of the decision and may Rationalize our reasons for making said decision. All of these thought processes take time and delay our movement through OODA. If we perceive the risk of an anticipated decision as too high, we must loop back and re-assess. We may question if our decision is reasonable or not. Additionally, taking the time to rationalize our decision within ourselves often causes hesitation. The key to eliminating the Decide/Re-Decide/Self Negotiation loop is training as realistically as possible, as often as possible, and then simply acting upon your feelings. Trust what you feel and go with it.

Once you choose a decision, your action will always be a direct result of that decision. People never decide one thing and do another. Whatever they do is always a result of a decision. You cannot make an action without a decision to act. An action is physical. It's the offspring of a decision (mental). The mental creation (decision) always precedes the physical creation (action).

Sometimes people say they spoke without thinking. Not true. It's impossible. Now, they may have spoken before thinking of how stupid they would appear, or how hurtful their words would be, but they thought about what they were going to say before they said it. These utterances are often how they truly feel because they said it before the filters in their mind (Decide/Re-Decide) could prompt them to change their words or not speak at all. In this case, they moved so rapidly from orienting to action that their words came out unfiltered. Then they often go back and try to change their story, rationalize, deny, and my favorite, "just kidding. I didn't mean that". Sure, you did!

Action is self-explanatory. It's just the result of everything preceding it. Action is always intended to accomplish an objective, so it must be effective.

One misconception people take from OODA is to make lots of quick, unexpected actions to throw off the opponent's OODA. Action must be effective. You can't miss fast enough to win a gunfight. You can fire dozens of bullets in 5 seconds at your opponent with your fancy, tricked out self-defense gun, but if they all miss and your opponent walks up and cracks you in the head with a baseball bat, you lose! You're not acting simply for the sake of acting first. It's about being the first one to take effective action.

In a violent confrontation, your opponent is also going through his own OODA Loop. OODA is best understood if you think of it as two opponents with their own individual goal they are trying to achieve. To win, you have a couple of options; 1) Accomplish your goal before your opponent accomplishes his 2) Delay or prevent your opponent from achieving his goal.

The first concept is based on speed. One person is faster at achieving his goal and therefore wins the confrontation. Imagine a home intruder scenario. It's late at night, and you hear someone inside your home. You grab your gun and go looking for the intruder. You know your home better than the intruder and quietly search through your home. You and the intruder see each other at the same time. He has a gun too and begins to raise it. You're well trained and have thought through this situation many times. Your gun comes up faster than his and fire two accurate shots. The intruder drops down and is incapacitated. You won because you reacted faster than he did. You achieved your goal of shooting him faster than he could achieve his goal of shooting you.

The downside of this direct approach is what if the bad guy saw you first, or is faster than you are. What if you saw the bad guy and shot him but didn't see his accomplice who then shoots you. It's just your speed and skill against your opponent(s).

As we'll discuss in a later chapter, a concealed permit holder in Las Vegas, Nevada, saw an active shooter inside a Walmart. He observed the shooter, oriented to the shooter but didn't observe a second shooter. He pulled his gun to put down the shooter. Before he could fire a shot, he was killed by the second shooter that he never saw. He died because he failed to observe the totality of the threat. We do not have 360-degree vision. There will always be something we fail to observe and orient to. Hopefully, it's not something that kills us.

The second concept is a bit more interesting. As you move through your own OODA, what if you could disrupt your opponent's ability to move through his? In self-defense, all you really need to do is prevent your opponent from acting. If you can 'get inside' your opponent's OODA, you can disrupt, delay, and maybe destroy his processes so he never can act. This goes back to the concept I'm always trying to drive home. You should be fighting his ability, his plans, and his desire to continue to attack you.

Let's use our home intruder scenario from above, but look at it differently. You hear the intruder inside your home. You've thought about what you would do in this situation multiple times. You grab your gun, and your spouse other grabs a phone. You both quickly move down the hall into your child's room. You lock and barricade the door. You cover the door while your spouse calls 911. The intruder attempts to open the door, but can't enter the room because the door is locked and barricaded. The intruder knows his time is running out, so he flees your home and is captured by police down the block.

In this scenario, rather than confronting the intruder directly, you prevented him from achieving his goal of hurting you and your family. This is what is called 'getting inside your opponent's OODA Loop.' You get inside his plan or his decision-making process and disrupt it, so he reacts to you.

OODA explains and diagrams how people think and act. By understanding OODA, you can better prepare yourself to observe and Act without taking time to Orient and Decide. Additionally, your opponent is experiencing his own OODA. Disrupt his OODA so he can't act, and you win. Fights are won and lost in the mind and in the heart rather than the strength of the arm or the gun in hand.

Chapter Eight

Should You Own a Gun for Self Defense

“The fact is people who can’t kill will be subject to those who can.”

– Sgt Brad Colbert, USMC

Yes, you should own a gun for self-defense if you have the will and the skill to use it. Until technology evolves, a gun is the best tool for protecting yourself from a violent attack. They have the power to stop a violent person from a distance – which keeps you safe. But, with that said, if you do not have the will to use a firearm in self-defense, or the commitment to become skilled with a firearm, you should not own one.

Do not try to bluff your way to safety by owning a gun and thinking that simply pointing it at your attacker will scare them away. Many people have been given the bad advice of purchasing a pump-action shotgun because the “sound of you racking that slide will scare the bad guy away.” That is the stupidest self-defense myth out there, and I get angry every time I hear it.

Rational, reasonable, logical people do not typically carry out violent attacks. The idea that an emotionally charged, probably intoxicated (drugs and/or alcohol), violent person will rationally respond to you pointing a gun at them is a recipe for disaster.

Some years ago, a woman in the city just down the road from me decided at some point to get a gun for self-defense. She even spent the time and money to get a concealed weapon permit. She was prepared, or so she thought. Then one day, it happened. She was alone in her home, getting ready for work, and heard someone inside her house. She retrieved her gun and went to have a look. Sure enough, there was some crack-head rummaging through her stuff, looking for something he could sell to score more drugs. She pointed her gun at him, but he didn't do what she thought he would do. Maybe it was because he was high on who knows what... or maybe his brain was so burned out from years of dope that he just didn't know that he was supposed to run away when a homeowner points a gun at him.

Instead of running away, he ran toward the woman and took her gun away from her. She started running, and he started shooting. Fortunately, he was a miserable shot and missed her, and she ran out of her own house. He took off and was picked up by the police a short time later.

So, what's my point? She had time to shoot him. According to State law, she was justified in shooting him... especially as he attacked her and took away her gun. She had everything she needed to defend herself but failed to do so. Why? Because she did not have the will to pull the trigger. Do not expect criminals to act rationally. If they thought and acted rationally, they probably wouldn't be criminals. You can't bluff them. They survive by reading people. Many of them will attack when they perceive weakness or indecision. This is exactly what he did. He perceived she wasn't going to shoot him, so he attacked her. You hear about people getting hurt and killed by having their own guns used on them, but it's because they didn't have the will to use their gun.

A few years ago, a friend of mine came to me and asked the question we're discussing here, "Should I get a gun?". She was single and had just purchased a home and would be living there alone. We talked about self-defense and guns for a couple of weeks. After putting a lot of thought into the issue, she finally decided not to purchase a gun. When I asked her how she had come to that conclusion, she said to me, "You don't half-ass a gun." She went on to explain that she knew herself well enough to know that she wouldn't put in the time, energy, and money to become skilled in using a gun, so she wasn't going to own one. I was proud of her decision. Way too many people just buy the gun, tuck it away somewhere and check the box on their self-defense To-Do list.

Owning a gun is a serious commitment, and no one should take it lightly. Owning a gun is also a personal decision, and you should not let anyone influence you into owning one if you're not willing to take on the commitment.

Things to Consider:

1. ***Would you kill someone to protect yourself or another person from a violent attack?*** This is the biggest consideration so let's start here. A lot of people say they could never kill another person. Why a person feels that way is personal and beyond my ability to get into here. But I always ask this question, "Imagine an intruder coming into your house with a knife and attacking you. Could you kill him?" I've had many people, mostly women, say they still couldn't do it even to protect their own life. If they say this, and they're in a relationship or have children, then I ask... "Ok, the same scenario, but now the guy with the knife is going after your child, spouse, significant other, etc. If I could freeze the action, put a gun in your hand, point it right at the guy, could you pull the trigger?" Most people will then say they could shoot the guy to protect a family member, especially a child, even though they wouldn't protect themselves. For most people, the real answer to this question is, "depends on the situation." Under the right conditions, almost anyone can be pushed to using deadly force.
2. ***Are you willing to spend enough money to get a quality firearm?*** Not all guns are created equal, and if you're purchasing a tool that may one day be needed to save a life, you should purchase one you can trust – and that means spending at least \$400 or more. That can vary depending on the type of gun you buy.
3. ***What are you going to do to prevent the gun from getting into the wrong hands?*** If you have children, how will you keep the gun away from them? How will you keep the gun away from an intruder or burglar? A gun safe (that allows you to access your weapon rapidly) is the best option, but an additional expense that too many people forego.
4. ***Are you willing to get professional training?*** You need to learn how to use the gun, and you also need to know how to fight with the gun. A violent attack from another human being will be the most stressful event of your life. Using your gun in that situation requires much more training than simply shooting at some targets and learning how your gun works. A violent attack is personal combat, and you will need combat skills to win it.

Are you willing to continue to train and practice to maintain and improve your skills? Like most things, shooting and personal combat tactics are perishable skills. That one class you took five years ago won't do a whole lot for you when someone attacks you tonight. The commitment to training never ends.

Owning a gun is an enormous responsibility. I believe in the Constitution of the United States. In fact, I've sworn an oath to protect and defend it and would give my life to fulfill that oath if needed. I fundamentally believe in the Second Amendment, which gives us the right to keep and bear arms. But I do not believe guns are for everyone. You have the right to be armed, but if you exercise that right, you must take on the commitment that comes with it. If not, you and the gun become a liability to everyone's personal security rather than an asset.

My purpose isn't to talk you out of owning a gun. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, I believe everyone should own a personal defense gun. If you don't have a gun, you are subject to those who own guns and are willing to use them to take what they want from you. It's a decision only you can make.

Chapter Nine

Choosing a Handgun for Self-Defense

Discussing handguns is about as controversial as politics and religion. Everyone seems to have an opinion on the subject, and many men seem to take it as a personal attack on their manhood if anyone chooses a different gun than the one they own.

As a police officer, I'm continually asked what type of gun I carry and what guns I recommend for personal defense. My department issues the Gen 5 Glock model 45 MOS, 9mm handgun, with a Holosun 509T Red Dot Sight and Streamlight TLR1 light. I carry a Sig Sauer P365XL off duty.

I prefer handguns made by Glock, Sig Sauer, and Smith & Wesson. Specific models I recommend (in no specific order):

- Sig Sauer P365 or P365XL
- Glock 43 or 43X
- Smith & Wesson M&P Shield
- Glock 19
- Glock 26
- Sig Sauer P320 Compact or Midsized
- Smith & Wesson M&P Compact

Additionally, I recommend CZ, FN, Heckler & Koch, Kahr, Springfield Armory and Walther. There are many other good brands of guns out there, but I would not choose them for defending my life. You need to buy a handgun that fits your hand as perfectly as possible. Your grip on the handgun is one of the key factors in shooting it accurately.

My first piece of advice is to buy a quality handgun that feels good in your hand. I recommend choosing a 9mm handgun. With the right self-defense ammunition, it has similar stopping power to larger .40SW and .45ACP calibers but has much less recoil and is easier to shoot. I typically don't recommend calibers smaller than 9mm, but I know people who don't like the blast and recoil from a 9mm and choose a smaller caliber like .380. It's better to have a .22 caliber handgun you're proficient with than a 9mm you don't shoot because it has too much blast and recoil.

If 9mm is too much for you right now, start with a smaller caliber you are comfortable with and then try working your way up to 9mm. If you do pick a smaller caliber than 9mm, try to stay within the brands I mentioned above. Pick the gun that's most comfortable in your hand and a caliber you're not afraid of shooting.

Now I'll get a little bit technical. There are four basic types of handguns; revolvers, single-action semi-automatic, single actions/double-action (SA/DA) semi-automatic, and striker-fired semi-automatic pistols. For self-defense handguns, especially for new shooters, I only recommend striker-fired models.

Revolvers hold only 5 or 6 bullets, are more difficult to reload, generally have tiny grips making them harder to manage and control, and therefore are not the best option for saving your life. Self-defense revolvers tend to be marketed towards women because they are considered simpler to use than a semi-automatic handgun. Ladies... don't fall for this. A semi-automatic handgun is about as complex as a toaster. If the man in your life thinks a semi-auto is too complex for you, then you might want to reconsider your relationship with him!

Single action handguns have an external hammer and require a manual safety to prevent the hammer from falling and firing the gun accidentally. The 1911 model handgun is the most popular single-action style handgun and is widely recommended and used as a self-defense handgun. I go against conventional wisdom and don't recommend the 1911 model handguns for self-defense. They cost at least twice as much as most striker-fired handguns, are less reliable and more prone to jamming, and require you to manipulate the safeties to fire the gun and then re-engage the safety afterward to make the gun safe to carry again. I love shooting a 1911, but I wouldn't choose one for personal defense. I would never recommend a 1911 to a new shooter.

Single Action/Double Action (SA/DA) handguns have an external hammer, like single-action models, but have a 'de-cocker' switch that allows you to drop the hammer without firing the gun. This allows you to load a bullet into the gun's chamber and then 'de-cock' it by flipping the lever and making it safe to carry. To fire the gun, the first trigger pull is very long and 're-cocks' the gun to drop the hammer and fire the bullet. Each subsequent shot will have a very short trigger pull because the hammer is re-cocked when each bullet is fired. When you're done shooting, you must flip the de-cock lever to make the gun safe again.

I don't like SA/DA guns for self-defense because I don't like the trigger pull variation. The first shot has a long, heavy trigger pull, and then the next shot has a short, light trigger pull. Without a lot of training and practice, it's difficult to learn to shoot them well. After an incorrect grip, improper trigger pull is the biggest reason people do not shoot handguns accurately. With a SA/DA handgun, you must learn two different trigger pulls and are therefore not my first choice of a self-defense gun. They are often sold as safer because you can physically see the hammer de-cock when you flip the lever, and it somehow gives you peace of mind. The gun is safe, even with a bullet in the chamber. It's not safer than a striker-fired handgun, and because they have more internal, moving parts, they cost more.

Striker fired handguns are my choice for self-defense because they are simple, point and shoot weapons that anyone can become instantly familiar with and learn to shoot well. A striker-fired handgun has the same trigger pull on every shot. This type of firing mechanism originated from Glock. The bullet is fired by an internal striker rather than an external hammer. The striker is 'cocked' as you begin to pull the trigger. As you continue to pull the trigger, the striker releases and fires the bullet. The trigger pull is slightly longer than a single action handgun but is the same each time you fire.

Striker fired handguns typically have three internal safety mechanisms that make the gun safe to carry and use without the need of an external safety lever that you must switch off before firing the gun. You can load a bullet into the chamber of a striker-fired handgun and throw it across a parking lot, and it will not go off. Quality, modern handguns do not just go off. That's a myth. If you hear of a handgun "just going off", it's because it was a piece of junk or someone accidentally fired it.

You DO NOT need a manual safety on your striker-fired handgun. People cannot seem to get this through their minds, so manufacturers have added external safety levers to their guns as a marketing gimmick. Many people won't buy guns without an external safety lever. You don't need one because there are three safeties built into the gun. An external safety on a striker fire handgun does one thing. It disconnects the trigger so the gun will not shoot if you pull the trigger with the safety on. Well, why would you ever pull the trigger on a gun if you didn't want it to fire? The whole idea is ridiculous to me, but I won't waste time trying to convince you of the silliness of it. The whole concept of a manual safety on a striker-fired handgun is irrational.

Let's wrap this up. Buy a Glock, Sig Sauer, Smith & Wesson, CZ, FN, Heckler & Koch, Kahr, Springfield Armory, or Walther handgun. Buy the one that fits your hand the best. Buy a 9mm unless you're not comfortable with it. Many gun stores have indoor shooting ranges and allow you to rent guns and try them out before buying. Don't ever buy a handgun you've never actually shot before. Try it out and make sure it's the right fit for you before spending money on it. And last of all, buy a striker-fired handgun... with an external safety if it makes you feel better!

Chapter Ten

Training

Simply owning a gun does not make you safe. A gun is a tool, and you must learn how to use it under the most stressful conditions if you intend to protect yourself and those around you. Knowing how to drive a car does not qualify you as a racecar driver; knowing how to shoot does not qualify you as a gunfighter.

Finding quality, self-defense, firearms training should not be taken lightly. There are literally thousands of people out there offering this type of training, so how do you sort through them to find what's right for you? Here is a list of items, in no particular order, you should consider when looking for training.

- ***Is training their primary business, or is it something they offer alongside running a gun store?*** In most cases, you should go through a company whose only business is training.
- ***How long have they been in the firearms training business?*** If they've only been around a short time, they might be great, but I'd research them more than a company with a long track record of excellent training. The premier firearms training facility in America is Gunsite in Paulden, AZ. Gunsite has been in the training business since 1976.

- ***Do the instructors have backgrounds in law enforcement?*** I recommend learning from people with real experience. There are many competitive shooters out there who teach self-defense firearms classes – and they are great shooters – but all their experience is shooting targets in a competition. You can learn to shoot from these people, but once you move on to learning self-defense tactics, I recommend learning from someone who's actually confronted dangerous people rather than paper targets. I served in the military and have great respect for anyone who served, but just because someone is a veteran doesn't mean they are qualified to train people in handguns and self-defense. Most people who served in the military received very little or no training on handguns. Rifles and machine guns are the primary weapons used in the military. Unless a person served in special operations, or some specialty requiring handguns, they probably had very little training on handguns. Depending on what they actually did in the military, they can teach excellent tactics and gun handling skills. Many of these people do have the real experience you're looking for. One of the main problems people have is knowing when to pull their gun and how to confront a dangerous person. I might be biased, but police know this better than anyone. They know the laws governing the use of force and can better help you understand various scenarios on when and when not to pull your gun. You're not in a third-world country fighting terrorists. If you pull out a gun here in the U.S., you're most likely going to be investigated, so you'd better be on the right side of the law.

- ***Do they offer Simunition or force on force type training?*** Shooting targets is great, but you haven't come close to learning real firearms self-defense until targets shoot back. But how do you do that without endangering your life? Police and military use Simunition bullets, or sim-rounds, for replicating the reality of a gunfight as close to the real thing as possible. Sim-rounds are a wax bullet filled with paint fired from specially modified handguns and rifles. This type of training is essential as it will help induce the stress you will feel in a real self-defense situation. Training with sim-rounds, the more you do it, inoculates you against the overwhelming stress and chaos of a real self-defense situation, so you're better able to respond appropriately. Warrior Creed, based in Ogden, Utah, offers excellent firearms training and sim-round training in a world class facility. You can find them online at <https://warriorcreed.us/>. I highly recommend them.
- ***What type of on-going training do they offer?*** Owning a gun doesn't make you a good shooter any more than owning a piano makes you a pianist. It takes time, training, and effective practice. There's a saying in firearms training, "There are no advanced techniques, there's just mastery of the fundamentals under adverse conditions." You won't master those fundamentals in one class. Does the facility offer additional level classes to help you master the fundamentals, or do they only offer one or two courses? Just like learning to play the piano, you can take the classes, but it's the time you spend practicing and working on those fundamentals on your own that really makes the training worthwhile and develops your skill for self-defense shooting.

A study was commissioned to see how people with little or no training would respond in a self-defense shooting situation. The study showed that knowing when and how to apply lethal force in a life or death situation is difficult.

"They recruited 77 volunteers with varying levels of firearm experience and training and had each of them participate in simulations of three different scenarios using the firearms training simulator at the Prince George's County Police Department in Maryland. The first scenario involved a carjacking, the second an armed robbery in a convenience store, and the third a case of suspected larceny. They found that perhaps unsurprisingly, people without firearms training performed poorly in the scenarios. They didn't take cover. They didn't attempt to issue commands to their assailants. Their trigger fingers were either too itchy -- they shot innocent bystanders or unarmed people, or not itchy enough -- they didn't shoot armed assailants until they were already being shot at."^[6]

As I've said previously, in a self-defense situation, you will not rise to the occasion; you will fall to the level of your preparation and training.

Recommended Training Facilities:

- Gunsite: Paulden, Arizona
- Warrior Creed: Ogden, Utah
- Thunder Ranch: Lakeview, Oregon
- Front Sight: Pahrump, Nevada
- Warrior Poet Society: Various Locations
- Sig Sauer Academy: Epping, New Hampshire

Chapter Eleven

Use of Force & Self Defense Law

NOTE: I'm not a lawyer, nor am I giving legal advice. Seek legal counsel from an attorney specializing in self-defense in your State if you have specific questions, concerns, etc.

Is it legal to defend yourself or others? This is a concern for many people, and it's difficult sorting through the myths, half-truths, and simply bad information out there. We've already discussed self-defense is not taking the law into your own hands and that you have a basic human right to protect yourself and others.

Here is the good news, each State has written laws governing what's typically called the Use of Force. Most of them will be published online for you to research and read. You will not need a law degree to understand the basic verbiage of the laws, but how the words get applied in the real world of criminal charges and courts will require the help of competent legal counsel.

Google "[Your State] Use of force laws" and look for the listing URL for your actual state government law page. There will be plenty of other results but go to the actual source on your State government website. The basic answer to my opening question is 'yes' it is legal to defend yourself and others. To my knowledge, throughout the United States, you can use force, up to and including deadly force, to protect yourself or another person from death or serious bodily injury.

All use of force must be objectively reasonable to the situation at hand. Some states have laws known as 'Castle Doctrine' or 'Castle Laws, ' which provide specific protections to people using force inside their home against intruders. Some States have 'Stand Your Ground' laws, which means you do not need to retreat from a violent person even if you can reasonably do so.

Many people who have chosen to own a gun do not know the laws governing its use in self-defense. A gun is considered a deadly force tool. Deadly force is defined as "that force which a reasonable person would consider likely to cause death or serious bodily harm." Each State may vary in deadly force, self-defense law, so you must know the law where you live.

This is the law in my State:

A person is justified in threatening or using force against another when and to the extent that the person reasonably believes that force or a threat of force is necessary to defend the person or a third person against another person's imminent use of unlawful force.

A person is justified in using force intended or likely to cause death or serious bodily injury only if the person reasonably believes that force is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury to the person or a third person as a result of another person's imminent use of unlawful force, or to prevent the commission of a forcible felony;

For purposes of this section, a forcible felony includes aggravated assault, mayhem, aggravated murder, murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, and aggravated kidnapping, rape, forcible sodomy, rape of a child, object rape, object rape of a child, sexual abuse of a child, aggravated sexual abuse of a child, and aggravated sexual assault... Any other felony offense which involves the use of force or violence against a person so as to create a substantial danger of death or serious bodily injury also constitutes a forcible felony.

In determining imminence or reasonableness, the trier of fact may consider, but is not limited to, any of the following factors:

1. the nature of the danger;
2. (b) the immediacy of the danger;
3. (c) the probability that the unlawful force would result in death or serious bodily injury;
4. (d) the other's prior violent acts or violent propensities; and
5. (e) any patterns of abuse or violence in the parties' relationship.

"I feared for my life" ...

In many self-defense classes and concealed carry permit courses, you will hear an instructor tell participants that after using force, they need to tell the police, "I feared for my life." It's not that simple, though. You can't shoot someone and simply say, "I feared for my life," and make it all go away. Your action must be objectively reasonable to the threat posed by the person you used force against. Just because someone acted in a way that made you afraid may not be justification for shooting them. The determination of reasonableness will be based on the following information:

- Would a reasonable person facing the same circumstances act the same way you did or use similar judgment?
- Based on the totality of the facts known to you at the time the force was used – no 20/20 hindsight evaluation.
- Based on the severity of the crime and threat posed by the person you used force against.

You have the right to defend yourself and your family. At the heart of all that is America is this belief, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The right to self-defense is protected in law, but you must be well aware of the boundaries and not cross the line. Knowing when you can draw and use your weapon is essential. This lack of knowledge is what gets so many good people on the wrong side of the law in what they considered to be a self-defense situation.

American police officers are the best-trained people in the use of force and deadly force and yet look at the ambiguity and controversy surrounding many police shootings. You will face the same level of scrutiny if you shoot someone. You must know the law and act within the boundaries of the law.

When Can You Pull a Gun on Someone?

In St. Paul, Minnesota, police officers attempted to stop a stolen car when it fled from them at high speed. Officers lost sight of the vehicle and ended their pursuit. A short time later, officers were alerted to a crash involving the stolen car and another vehicle. Upon arriving, witnesses told the officers multiple people had fled the stolen vehicle. A few moments later, officers heard gunshots a short distance down the road from the crash site. Officers quickly found a wounded man lying in the front yard of a home.

Another man, later identified as homeowner Vincent Trotter, was standing in the front yard with a handgun at his feet. As I'll discuss in a later chapter, Trotter made the mistake of speaking to police at the scene. Trotter told officers he pulled up to his home and saw the man standing by the door to his [Trotter's] home. Trotter stated, "I told him, 'Don't move,' he moves, and I let three or four rounds go." Trotter was arrested and charged with Second Degree Felony Assault with a Dangerous Weapon.

Two of Trotter's rounds hit the house across the street. To make matters worse, Trotter had a sign next to his front door reading, "NO TRESPASSING! VIOLATORS WILL BE SHOT. SURVIVORS WILL BE SHOT AGAIN!"

You can pull your gun on someone when that person poses an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to you or another person. Additionally, your actions must be reasonable – meaning a reasonable person facing that situation would react as you did. Other than an imminent threat of death or serious bodily, you cannot pull your gun on someone. Don't pull a gun on someone trespassing on your property, stealing your Halloween jack-o-lanterns, or vandalizing your mailbox. Don't pull a gun on someone standing by your front door, as Vincent Trotter did.

Know the Law and How to Apply It

An upcoming chapter will deal specifically with what you should do immediately after a self-defense shooting. As previously mentioned, I'm not a lawyer, and nothing in this book constitutes legal advice. Read your State laws governing self-defense and use of force. Read the book mentioned below. If you have questions beyond that, find a lawyer in your state experienced in self-defense.

Anyone serious about armed self-defense should read the book, *The Law of Self Defense: The Indispensable Guide to the Armed Citizen*. This book is written by Andrew F. Branca, a renowned expert in self-defense law, and "teaches you how to make quick, effective, legally appropriate decisions in life-and-death situations. His easy-to-understand analysis thoroughly covers the laws of all fifty states. Key legal principles are illustrated with interesting, sometimes heart-wrenching, true-life examples of people defending themselves and how their decisions helped, hurt, or even destroyed their case. This thoroughly updated third edition includes an all-new chapter on interacting with the police, including what to say (or not say!) to 911, first responders, and detectives. Don't be a victim. Stay safe from both the physical attack and the legal aftermath. This book, with a foreword by legendary use-of-force expert Massad Ayoob, will teach you the powerful legal truth that protects your life, wealth, and freedom. The world is a dangerous place. That's why you're prepared to protect yourself and your loved ones. Now arm yourself for the legal battle that happens after an attack. The first fight is for your life – the second for your liberty."

Deadly force can only be used to meet a deadly force threat. Deadly force (a gun) cannot be used to protect property. Law-abiding citizens can easily end up on the wrong side of the law because they do not fully understand when to use a gun.

I read a news story a few years ago regarding a man who was coming home from shopping. As he pulled into his driveway, he saw a burglar run out of his front door carrying his [the homeowner's] television. The homeowner, a concealed weapon permit holder, was armed and jumped out of his car. The burglar was now running across the front yard, and the homeowner drew his handgun and started shooting.

All his shots missed the burglar and ended up inside his neighbors' homes. The homeowner was charged with a list of serious crimes. He was never justified in shooting to prevent the theft of his television.

A somewhat common problem across the nation is a homeowner catching someone attempting to steal or vandalize property outside the home and holding them at gunpoint until the police arrive. You can easily catch an Aggravated Assault criminal charge by pointing a gun at someone who was stealing or damaging property. If you own a gun for self-defense, ensure you know the laws governing your use of it. Don't believe what you hear at the gun-store, shooting range, or social media.

Chapter Twelve

How to DO Concealed Carry the Right Way

So, you have a handgun for self-defense. Now what? I'm not going into detail about getting your concealed weapon (CCW) permit and all that stuff. You will need to check your State and local laws regarding concealed carry.



Holsters Basic Inside-the-Waistband (IWB) Holster

You will need a holster. I recommend a Kydex IWB (Inside the WaistBand) or OWB (Outside the WaistBand) type holster. Kydex holsters are form-fitted to your specific gun and provide excellent retention, so the gun doesn't inadvertently fall out of the holster. Additionally, re-holstering your weapon is easier as the Kydex holster remains open and does not collapse down on itself when the weapon is drawn out of it.

I'm not a fan of leather or nylon holsters. Leather holsters look nice, and many are form-fitted to your gun. Over time though, as the leather breaks in and wears, it may lose its retention and ability to hold your gun in place.

Nylon holsters require some type of retention strap (thumb-break strap) to hold the weapon inside the holster. Both leather and nylon holsters tend to collapse back down on themselves after the handgun is drawn, which makes re-holstering more difficult. Leather is the traditional material for holsters and is still very popular, but Kydex is much more effective and affordable.



Outside the Waistband (OWB) Holster

IWB holsters tend to conceal the firearm better than OWB holsters but are typically less comfortable because they fit inside the waistband of your pants and press up against your body. OWB holsters attach to the outside of your pants belt with belt loops, clips, or a paddle. The paddle style is convenient as you can add or remove the holster without unbuckling your belt and running it through the belt loops.



Paddle Style Holster

If you don't know what you want, I recommend starting with a Kydex OWB holster. They're simple, safe, and easy to start out using. Unless you have a crystal ball or some other method of seeing into the future, the only way to be ready to protect yourself is to always carry your handgun with you. I'm amazed at how many people tell me they only carry their weapon while traveling. It's impossible to predict when you will be attacked. Just carry your gun everywhere you go – within the boundaries of the law in your State. Better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it.

Unfortunately, most people who have a concealed weapon permit do not carry their gun with them very often – if at all. I know this from personal experience working as a police officer. In my state, every time I check a driver's license, the computer tells me if they have a concealed weapon permit. The driver is not required to tell me if they are armed, but if I see they have a CCW permit, I usually ask them if they're carrying a weapon. Most of them are not carrying their weapon. My point is this... get your permit and then carry your gun everywhere you go.

How You Do Concealed Carry the Right Way

- Load a round into the chamber of your handgun. Carry your handgun with a round loaded in the chamber. It's safe to carry a loaded handgun. The gun will not "go off" unless you inadvertently pull the trigger.
- Insert your handgun into your holster.
- Attach the holster to your belt.
- Go out and do whatever you're doing.
- When you come back home, remove the holster, with the handgun still inside it, from your belt.
- Place the holster, with the handgun still inserted in it, inside your safe.
- Lock the safe.

It's that simple. You never need to pull the weapon from the holster unless you need it for self-defense or to clean it. Just load it, put it in the holster, and leave it there.

You can safely keep your handgun loaded for years. The only time my duty and self-defense handguns are unloaded is when I'm cleaning them or attending some type of training where they are required to be unloaded.

Should you carry an extra magazine? Yes, you should. You don't know what you're going to run into. If you're going to the trouble of carrying a loaded handgun, why not carry an extra magazine? Just do it – especially if you're carrying a sub-compact handgun that only holds six or seven rounds. In a real gunfight, you will most likely shoot more rounds than you think you will. Additionally, under life or death stress, it's likely some of the rounds you do shoot will not be as effective (accurately placed on the target) as you might have hoped. Having a few extra rounds is always a good idea. Keep the spare magazine in a pouch on your belt where you can easily access it. If you need that magazine, you have a serious problem and need it in your gun immediately. Not knowing exactly where it's at or searching through pockets trying to find it will get you killed. There are times I do leave the house without a spare magazine on me. If that's the case, as a minimum, I'm carrying a handgun loaded with 16 rounds of ammunition.

Flashlight

In addition to your handgun, holster, and spare magazine, you should carry a quality flashlight. A flashlight is an excellent de-escalation tool as well as necessary for identifying targets in low-light situations. If someone is harassing or disturbing you, pull out your flashlight and shine it in their eyes. Activate the strobe if necessary to get away from them and escape the situation. If you find yourself confronted by a dangerous person in a low-light situation, you need to illuminate them to identify and reasonably assess the threat.

Are they armed? What's really in his hand? The light helps you see the threat more clearly and therefore make better decisions. You can walk down the street with the light in your hand, and no one will even notice. If confronted, you can activate the light and send the message you're not an easy target – and make it nearly impossible for them to see you because you shined it in their eyes. If they can't see you, they'll have an even harder time attacking you. It goes back to the idea of fighting smarter rather than harder and avoiding the need to pull a weapon in the first place.

Police Encounters While Armed

If you carry a concealed weapon, there is always the chance of being stopped by the police while armed. I'll provide two basic scenarios that I hope will answer any questions you may have. A traffic stop is the most likely police encounter for the average person. Whether you are armed or not, the best thing to do is pull over to the side of the road, put your window down and keep both hands on the steering wheel.

Some people feel like they need to have their driver's license, registration, and insurance ready in hand when the officer arrives at the window. Don't worry about that stuff. Just pull over, put your window down, and keep both hands at the 12 O'clock position (top) of the steering wheel. The officer will tell you what documents he or she wants to see. Then you can retrieve the documents. If they are in a place not clearly visible to the officer, tell him or her where they are. Do not reach towards the floor or into the backseat area. If the officer wants you to retrieve them from that area, he or she will tell you to do so. Officers can look up your information on the laptop computer in their vehicles.

If the documents are in the trunk, do not open your door and try to exit the vehicle. Never, ever exit your vehicle on a traffic stop unless specifically told to do so by the officer. It may sound dumb, but people do it all the time. An officer stops a car; the driver gets nervous because her license is in her purse in the trunk. She pulls over, opens her door, gets out, and starts walking to the rear of her car to open the trunk to get her driver's license and then can't understand why she's looking into the business end of the officer's handgun. When a person does this, all an officer sees is a person advancing towards them and takes it as a threat.

It's really very simple. Pullover, put down your window, keep both hands visible on top of the steering wheel. Wait for the officer to tell you what he or she wants to see.

Depending on your state, you may be required to tell the officer you are armed. If so, or just out of courtesy, tell the officer you are armed and where your gun is located. Do not reach towards it; just tell him or her where it is.

The second scenario happens anywhere outside. An officer may walk up and ask to speak with you, or you may suddenly be confronted by an officer shouting commands at you. Either way, you're the focus of a police officer's attention, and you instantly remember you're carrying your weapon.

Again, it's a straightforward process. DO WHAT THE OFFICER TELLS YOU TO DO. Let's play what if... You're out and about doing your normal thing, and a police officer approaches and asks to speak to you. You remember you're carrying your gun and get a little nervous. You ask him what it's about, and he explains that an assault had just occurred and wonders if you saw or heard anything. You tell him you didn't see or hear anything. He thanks you for your time and walks away. It was a simple conversation, and there was no reason to mention your concealed weapon.

Building upon the same scenario, you tell the officer that you didn't see or hear anything, and he asks to see your identification. I'm not delving into whether there is reasonable suspicion for him to ask for your identification. It's just a simple request, but in reaching towards your wallet, you know you'll also be reaching towards your weapon the officer is unaware you have. At this point, the best option is to tell the officer you are armed and specifically where your weapon is at. Keep your hands plainly visible, and don't move them. Additionally, tell the officer where your ID is located and ask if he still wants you to retrieve it. Just follow his instructions from this point on.

If you encounter police while armed, communicate with them. Tell the officer you're armed. Do not reach toward your weapon or attempt to remove it. Officers will never ask you to handle your weapon and remove it yourself. Unless they are detaining you, they should not remove your weapon either. If they detain you, comply and allow them to take you into custody and remove your weapon. Even if you disagree and know beyond a shadow of a doubt, they're making a mistake, comply and do what they tell you to do. You can work out your lawsuit later!

Safely Storing Your Gun At Home

As mentioned earlier, you should keep your loaded handgun inserted in its holster in a safe. I recommend the GunVault or Hornady Rapid Safes. Both allow instant access to your firearm when needed but prevent it from falling into the wrong hands.



GunVault Safe



Hornady Rapid Safe

Concealed Carry Simplicity

I hope this gives you a basic idea of how to do concealed carry safely and effectively. The whole point is having your gun when you need it. That means everything in your system needs to be as convenient as possible. If your holster is a pain to attach and detach from your belt, you'll leave your gun home more often than not. Carrying a weapon is a huge commitment, but if you follow these simple steps, you'll be safe and ready when you need it most.

Chapter Thirteen

Physiological Responses to Life or Death Situations

Knowing how to shoot a gun and effectively defending yourself from a violent attack with a gun are two different things. Too many gun owners fail to understand this simple fact. During a violent attack, your mind and body will experience things you've never experienced before.

The most stressful event a human being can experience is a violent attack from another person. The most dangerous experience people commonly have is a vehicle accident – and the other driver wasn't intentionally trying to hurt or kill them. It was an accident.

When someone intentionally tries to hurt or kill you, it's a whole other level of stress. [*On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace*](#), by Lt. Col. David Grossman, is a groundbreaking look into what really happens to the human body and mind when faced with life or death situations.

I've had the honor of hearing Lt Col. Grossman speak and meeting him in person. He holds nothing back, whether in person or in his book. If you want to pull back the curtain of mystery that shrouds violent encounters, you need to read *On Combat*.

Most of us understand what we see in movies and television is not real, but for most people, the only knowledge they have of violence is what's portrayed on screen. The real human experience of violent encounters is drastically different from the heroes of the silver screen.

It's prevalent for people to experience one or more of the following phenomena during a life-threatening, high-stress experience. I typically experience auditory exclusion, tunnel vision, and slow-motion time, but it varies from person to person.

- Auditory Exclusion – sounds are muffled are not heard at all
- Tunnel Vision
- Automatic Pilot – Responses occurring without consciously thinking about them
- Heightened Visual Clarity
- Slow Motion Time
- Memory Loss for Parts of the Event
- Memory Loss for Some of Your Actions
- Dissociation or detachment from the situation
- Intrusive Distracting Thoughts during the situation
- Memory Distortions
- Fast Motion Time
- Temporary Paralysis

Being aware these things will happen is important to surviving and thriving in a life-threatening situation. Once you understand it's a normal response, it's not so frightening when it happens to you. But simply knowing what's happening to you is not enough. You need to inoculate yourself to these conditions through force-on-force, Simunition type training. This is why I highly recommend training beyond shooting paper and steel targets and allows you to train for self-defense scenarios against real people using paint bullets. Nothing else will prepare you for real-life combat, as well as this type of training. During this type of training, you will experience some of these physiological responses to stress. The more you can experience this type of training, the better you will perform in an actual violent encounter.

My police friends and I joke about what we consider stressful is so off the charts that most people can't even comprehend it. We're this way because we've become so conditioned to dangerous situations that what most people consider very stressful is just another 'normal' day for us.

One time I was returning home from attending training in another city. At the time, I was working as a Patrol Deputy for a rural Sheriff's Office. As I drove into our town, I heard one of my friends come over the radio, saying they had tried to arrest a wanted fugitive, and he had fled into his house and was barricaded inside. I responded to the scene to help. That's small-town law enforcement. You're never really off-duty. If something happens, you all take care of it.

Once I arrived at the scene, we set up a quick perimeter around the house. We didn't know if he had a gun, but since everyone in that community had multiple guns in their homes, we just figured he was armed as well. I called his wife and made sure she wasn't in the house with him and then had her meet me outside of the perimeter. She called him on her phone and handed it to me.

I talked with him, and we came up with a plan for him to come out peacefully. I let everyone know he was coming out. He walked out, and we took him into custody at gunpoint. I got back in my car and drove home.

Later, when my wife got home, she asked about my day and how training had been. "It's was good," I said... and never mentioned anything about being involved in talking a barricaded fugitive out of his house and arresting him at gunpoint with the other Deputies. It just wasn't a big deal. It wasn't until that day I realized crazy stuff had become normal to me!

The ability to deal with a potentially dangerous, stressful event is learned through practical training and experience. You will not rise to the occasion; you will fall to the level of your training and preparation. If you're going to carry a gun for self-defense, you must train under stressful conditions to inoculate and prepare yourself for the physiological responses you will experience. Additionally, it's precisely because of these responses, you should never talk to the police immediately after a self-defense shooting. You will inevitably say something you will come to regret—more on this in a later chapter.

Chapter Fourteen

Active Shooter Response for the Armed Citizen

A young woman inside the Borderline Club shooting in Thousand Oaks, California, said, "I heard the gunshot. I turned around and saw him shoot a couple more times and within a split second everyone yelled 'get down'... a bunch of us that were on the dance floor ran off the dance floor and dog piled to the side."

Now I don't fault these young people for their actions and responses to the shooter. It's what we've been telling them to do... it's just that it's the wrong thing to do, leading to even more people dying. If someone is shooting people in your immediate vicinity, why get down? As we know from many previous shootings, the shooter will walk along shooting people lying on the floor or hiding under tables or desks.

Getting down doesn't stop him from shooting you. Dog piling off to the side won't save you. It just gives him a mass of bodies to shoot at. Students got down under those little college desks at Virginia Tech and waited for their turn to be shot as the shooter walked down the aisles shooting everyone in the room. Is this really the best we can do? Is this the best advice we can give our children? Is this what our society has become?

What is the goal of the shooter?

To effectively deal with an active shooter, we must understand his goal. Forget their motivation... we'll let the media and psychologists argue over that one. We only care about their purpose, and their purpose is simple... to kill as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time.

Shooters know they have approximately 3-5 minutes before law enforcement arrives. Shooters come prepared to make the most of those 3-5 minutes. Can we stop people from wanting to kill us? No, and because of that, we have very little control over the people who choose to commit mass murder.

Can we stop them from getting a gun? No, not really. Most of these shooters legally own the guns they use. Even if we stopped producing all guns in the United States, there are still hundreds of millions of guns in America. Additionally, if you were to shred the Constitution and get rid of the 2nd Amendment, you would never be able to round up and confiscate all the guns. It's impossible. It may sound like a good idea to some people, but it's not possible.

Mass killings happen in countries with the strictest gun control on the planet. Just look at Mexico and see how well gun control works. Even the European utopias, such as Norway, have mass shootings. Here are the hard facts; we cannot prevent people from choosing to kill other people, and we cannot completely prevent them from getting a gun. We only have control over how we respond in these events. And I mean what I just said, "in" these events rather than responding to these events.

Police respond to these events and do it very well, but if we want to stop mass shootings, the people caught in these events must stop running and hiding.

What do we know about mass murderers? They're cowards. Think about it. This is a person who takes a gun and attacks unarmed men, women, and children. They don't call up the local SWAT team and say, "Hey, let's meet next Tuesday at 2 pm and have a gunfight." Nope, they walk into a church, a school, a mall, a movie theater, or anywhere else where they are certain to find unarmed people and begin to shoot them. These shooters are the ultimate cowards. And cowards quit when someone fights back.

What makes the shooting stop? Research and statistics show the killing stops when the shooter is attacked. The only way the shooter stops is when another person with a gun begins to shoot at him, or multiple people attack him and physically overpower him. Many shooters will kill themselves as soon as law enforcement arrives on-scene. Often all it takes is the sound of a police siren, and the shooter takes himself out.

This has recently begun to change. More and more shooters are choosing to surrender when confronted by police and live in their infamy. But whether the shooter commits suicide or surrenders is irrelevant. They stop killing when confronted by the good guys with guns.

Fight or Evacuate – Reality for surviving an active shooter attack

There are only three human responses to danger; fight, flight, or freeze. We've been told to Run, Hide, or Fight during a shooting attack, but it's backward. Probably because we've become a society that teaches 'violence is never the solution.'



I included the graphic above showing this backward thinking to "fight only as a last resort." Nothing could be further from the truth. Violence against the shooter is the only solution for stopping the attack. If you are within the immediate vicinity of the shooter, you should immediately attack him.

You don't have the time or distance to run because you can't outrun a bullet. Hiding won't do any good because he already saw you. Hiding means just waiting for your turn to die. Fighting is your only real option. Hopefully, you are never in an active shooter situation, but if you are, then I hope you decided to carry your gun that day. Only you can decide specifically what to do, but I will offer some guidelines I hope will be helpful.

I recommend using what I refer to as a 'zone defense' for armed citizens in an active shooter situation. If you can effectively escape, you will need to decide to escape or set up a defensive position. You alone must make that decision. If you decide to stay, then find a place of cover and concealment and set up a defensive position. If the shooter comes to you, shoot him.

I do not recommend going hunting for the shooter. Every law officer within miles around is driving 100 miles an hour to get there, and all they know is they are coming in looking for a person with a gun. There will be multiple shooter reports, and the responding officers will have no solid information about him.

They're just coming in looking for a guy with a gun. You don't want to be that guy. If you're out hunting for the shooter, how will law enforcement know the difference between you and the bad guy? You will most likely make the situation even more chaotic. Set up a defensive position and wait.

There is no checklist or a list of dos and don'ts that apply perfectly to every situation. If you hear the shooting close to you and feel you can safely close that distance and end the threat, then use your best judgment and do what you feel you need to do. I won't say never go hunting for the shooter, but you need to understand the situation's dynamics.

Many people who carry concealed weapons do not like it when I tell them not to hunt for the shooter. First of all, you've most likely never trained for it. How will you tell the difference between the shooter and another CCW permit holder, or plainclothes police officer, out looking for the shooter? How will another CCW permit holder know that you're not the shooter? When you come around the corner, face to face with a police officer pointing his gun at you, will you have the control not to shoot, or will you see the gun and shoot him? Police train for this stuff. How much have you trained for it?

At the moment of truth, you will be the one there. In critical situations, I believe in trusting the person actually on the ground, eyes on the situation, to make the best decision. I'm not going to tell you what to do in this book. You will have to assess the situation and make the best decision you can to end the threat. If that means moving out of your defensive position to put shots on the shooter, then do it. I seldom say 'never' or 'always' because it's impossible to know beforehand exactly what will be required to bring this type of situation to an end. Train for it and be prepared.

You know that police will be there within minutes. Once the police arrive, put your gun away. If you've shot the bad guy, get behind cover and keep your gun low. As police come into your area, lay your gun on the ground before they can see you (if possible) and don't make any sudden movements. Follow their commands.

We've seen active shooter situations ended by armed citizens around the nation. On May 24, 2018, Juan Nazario was sitting on a park bench in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, when he suddenly heard gunshots. He ran to his car to get his gun.

Bryan Whittle was driving down the road and saw a commotion outside a popular grill and pub. He pulled into the parking lot to help and pulled up just yards away from an active shooter. Whittle grabbed his gun and jumped out of his truck.

"In a matter of seconds, the two armed citizens became self-appointed protectors, moving to take up positions around the shooter, drawing their weapons and shouting for him to drop his. Time stretched and warped. There was an exchange of gunfire. The gunman was hit several times and fell. As Nazario and Whittle converged over the man to restrain him, police arrived. Unsure who was who, officers handcuffed all of the men and put them on the ground as the shooter bled out into the grass and died."^[7]

Local police later praised Nazario and Whittle for ending the situation but "also noted that armed citizens can complicate volatile situations. The first of 57 uniformed police officers arrived just a minute after the initial 911 calls and found a complex scene with multiple armed people and no clear sense of what had happened or who was responsible."^[8]

While this situation may seem like the 'poster child' for concealed carry, there's more than meets the eye. Nazario is a former police officer. Whittle served 20 years in the Oklahoma Air National Guard. Both had formal weapons training. Do you have the training for this type of situation?

Neither Nazario nor Whittle was aware of each other, both moving towards the shooter. Whittle confronted the shooter. The shooter fired at Whittle, who dove for cover behind an SUV. Nazario came upon the scene, fired at the shooter, and believed he'd hit him. The shooter stumbled, came back up, and pointed his gun at Nazario. Whittle then fired, and Nazario fired additional shots. The shooter went down, and Whittle moved forward to kick away the shooter's gun... and became aware of Nazario for the first time. "It was the first Whittle and Nazario knew of each other, and both made the snap decision that they were friends, not foes."^[9]

The first police officer arrived on-scene at that moment, yelling at both of them to get down. Officers had no way of knowing who the bad guy was. They had been told there were three shooters.

"The FBI examined 160 shootings between 2000 and 2013 and found that most of the violence ended when the assailant stopped shooting, committed suicide or fled. Unarmed citizens successfully restrained shooters in 21 of those incidents, according to the FBI. Two attacks stopped when off-duty officers shot and killed the attackers. Five ended in much the way the attack at Louie's did — when armed civilians, mostly security guards, exchanged fire with the shooters."^[10]

But it doesn't always turn out well for the good guy. In 2014 Joseph Wilcox pulled his gun to stop an active shooter in a Las Vegas, Nevada Walmart, and was killed by a second shooter he never saw – the active shooter's wife.

Nazario and Whittle discussed the event later and talked about how things could have ended differently. "Bryan would have entered the front," Nazario said. "I would have entered the back." There they would have been, two good guys with guns, face to face. "He could have thought I was the shooter," Nazario said. Or vice versa. And if Nazario had asked — and Whittle refused — to drop his weapon, Nazario said, "I would have had to take action."^[11]

Active shooter situations are the most dynamic, chaotic self-defense situations imaginable. You must assess the situation, how close you are to the shooter, and if you believe law enforcement is on-scene before running into the middle of an already bad situation and making it worse. Remember, your purpose is to win – which may mean getting out of the danger as quickly as possible.

Chapter Fifteen

What Really Happens When You Shoot Someone

Another part of self-defense that isn't talked about enough - or avoided - is what really happens when you shoot someone. I'm not talking about the investigation and all that. I'll discuss that topic in the next chapter. This chapter will discuss what really happens when bullets hit people.

Before we jump into this, I want to state that I have never shot another human being. The information I will go over here comes from incidents I have personal knowledge of, police reports, the training I've attended, and my own experience as a hunter.

Ok, so why do we use guns for self-defense? It seems like an obvious question, but basically, it's because guns are the best tool we have invented for quickly stopping someone from hurting another person or us. The purpose of shooting an attacker is to stop their dangerous behavior as soon as possible, but in these situations, seconds are a long time, and minutes can seem like a lifetime.

In the real world, people don't get blown backward through walls and die immediately when you shoot them... as you see in the movies and TV. And this reality is important for you to understand because when you shoot someone, even when you put multiple rounds into their body's vital areas, they will not die immediately. They will live for a minute or two... and that means they can still be a threat to you or others. In fact, the only way to create instant, non-voluntary incapacitation in a human is to put a bullet through their brain, and more specifically, the brain stem, which connects the brain to the nervous system.

More often than not, when someone falls after being shot somewhere other than in the brain, it's what I call voluntary incapacitation. Being shot does not knock a person to the ground. It's a response to the pain and trauma inflicted on their body. To some degree, they choose to stop their attack and fall but don't bet your life on the fact they are out of the fight.

Handguns are not great for stopping people. The only reason we use handguns is that they are easy to carry with us. But even rifles do not immediately kill people or large animals. If you've ever hunted deer or other big game, you know this to be true. You can shoot an animal with a large caliber rifle, completely blow its heart out, and it will run 100 yards and then die.

This is reality. People will not die immediately after being shot, and so that means they are still potentially dangerous. You need to be ready and understand this reality, so you win the encounter. Just because you shoot someone and they go down, the fight is not over. They can still access their weapon and shoot you, and you'll both lie there and die together. Don't let this happen to you.

If you're involved in a self-defense shooting, stay behind cover even after your attacker goes down. Take up a defensive position and hold your ground. There is no reason to approach your assailant. Additionally, don't be surprised if your attacker gets up and runs away. If this happens, let him go unless he's an imminent threat to someone else.

I hope you never need this information. It may be hard to talk and think about, but understanding and being prepared for reality could mean the difference between living and dying.

Chapter Sixteen

What to Do Immediately After a Self-Defense Shooting

I'm a street cop. If you use a gun for self-defense, someone like me will be there to begin the investigation. I believe there is a lack of good information out there on this subject. Additionally, I believe many CCW instructors over-simplify this topic by telling you just to say, "I feared for my life". Well... In the real world of homicide investigations, "I feared for my life" won't cut it. Too many people teaching armed self-defense oversimplify what happens after the shooting - or don't know what happens.

I'm going to take you through the process and teach you what to do. First of all, shooting another person - even in self-defense - is the most serious and significant thing you can do in life. You will be investigated for homicide or attempted homicide. This is true of law enforcement officers as well as anyone else who uses a gun for self-defense. You don't say the magic words "I feared for my life" and it all goes away. You will be investigated. What you say and do after the shooting will have a significant impact on your life.

To begin with, I want to take you through the process of what happens when a police officer shoots someone in the line of duty. I remind you that police officers are citizens just like you and have the same Constitutional rights as you do. The basic process used for Officer-Involved Shootings is the process I recommend you follow if you are ever involved in a self-defense shooting.

The first police supervisor on the scene will ask the officer who fired his weapon only three questions; (1) How many shots did you fire, (2) What direction did you fire, and (3) Are there additional suspects or witnesses we should be looking for? That's all they are going to ask the Officer immediately after the shooting. This is known as a public safety statement or public safety information. Asking how many shots were fired is not to trick the officer or be used in the criminal investigation. The supervisor asks that because each round must be accounted for. This will also be determined by checking the officer's gun - which by the way, will be taken as evidence.

The initial on-scene supervisor should not attempt to order any involved officer to provide any information other than answers to those three questions. This is a written policy for most departments.

The officer will then be given a ride home and allowed at least two sleep cycles (three days) before being interviewed. During those few days, the Officer will obtain legal counsel and have them present during any interview and recommend and/or review any written statement by the officer. An outside police agency will conduct a criminal investigation into the shooting and provide results to the district attorney. The district attorney will then decide if the shooting was justified or if criminal charges will be filed on the officer.

The officer's department will also do an internal investigation to determine if the shooting was within department policy. Now I go through all of this to help you understand what police officers go through after a shooting and suggest you follow the same procedure. Of course, you won't have a police department behind you so it will be a bit different and you will need to remember what I'm going to tell you here.

We're going to start with the second you pull your gun to defend yourself and work through the whole scene from there. Ok... you've just pulled out a gun to defend yourself against another person. You decide you must shoot to prevent this person from harming you and fire three shots.

Depending on the situation and where it occurs, witnesses may have already called the police, and they are on their way. All they've been told is there is a disturbance involving two or more people, and at least one of them has a gun. It's important to note the police will not know you're the good guy when they arrive, and you must be prepared for their arrival. So, you've fired your 3 shots, and the bad guy is down. He's not moving. Either keep your gun on the bad guy or holster it. Do not approach the bad guy or try to kick his gun away. If you're not behind cover (something that stops bullets), then move to a cover position that allows you to see your attacker still.

If you're alone, you will need to call 911. If the bad guy gets up and flees, let him go. Don't chase after him. If he picks up his weapon, then you will need to shoot him until he's no longer a threat. But if he tries to flee, let him go.

If you still have your gun in your hands when the police arrive, put it on the ground BEFORE THEY GET OUT OF THEIR CARS, step away from it with your hands above your head and kneel down. If your gun is in the holster, leave it there and just put your hands up and kneel down. Remember, THE POLICE DON'T KNOW YOU'RE THE GOOD GUY. To them, you're just a guy with a gun, and that makes you a threat.

As the police arrive, you're most likely going to feel some relief and want to identify with them as the good guys. Since you're the good guy, you're going to feel like the police are on your side. They are not on your side. They are not on your team. They are there to investigate a shooting - not to be your friend. Their job is to find out the truth of what happened.

Depending on how obvious the scene is, the police will most likely handcuff you and take you into custody. Don't resist. Just go along with it. At this point, detectives and crime scene investigators will be called to the scene and take over the investigation.

You have just been through one of the most traumatic experiences a human can go through. You'll probably want to share your story, but that's a mistake. It will be a blur, and you will not be able to remember all the details accurately.

In his excellent book, *On Combat*, Dave Grossman reports that nearly half of all law enforcement officers involved in deadly encounters have significant chunks of memory loss from the event. Within 24 hours, most people will recall only 30 percent of the situation. 50 percent of the incident after 48 hours and 75-95 percent after 72-100 hours after the incident.

Immediately after the incident, you will not remember enough details, and you may remember things that did not actually happen the way you recall them. You are in no shape to make legal statements that will have a huge effect on your future freedom.

The only thing you should tell the police. "I acted in self-defense. I believe I fired {number of} shots, but I'm not sure. I fired in that direction - whatever direction you fired - and that guy [bad guy] is the only other person involved [unless there are more]. I will fully cooperate with your investigation, but I will not say anything else without my attorney present."

Depending on the investigators, they may not be happy with you because they want to get all the information as quickly as possible. Good investigators should understand you will need more time to remember the incident and be willing to take the time to arrive at the truth.

You may get arrested, but don't worry about it. There is a difference between the truth and what happened. You can be arrested on what happened, which is Probable Cause, but you can only be convicted by "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt," which is the truth. It often takes time to arrive at the truth.

Spending a few hours in jail is a small price to pay to get your chance, to tell the truth after a few days of remembering more and more of the incident and with your legal counsel present. Don't be in a hurry to tell your story. You want to help investigators get the truth, not just what happened... because what happened is you killed or seriously injured someone, and depending on the facts and perceptions, you could lose your freedom if the truth doesn't come out and only what happened is presented.

You will either get arrested, or investigators will make an appointment to interview you. This will depend on what they can determine from the scene and any witnesses because you're not making a statement at the time.

If you shoot someone inside your own house, you are much less likely to be arrested than if it happens out in a parking lot with no witnesses, no video surveillance, or other quick ways of determining the truth of what took place. If they are leaning towards it being self-defense, they will most likely not arrest you. If they can't determine it was clearly self-defense, they will arrest you. It's not personal; they are just doing their job. And the reason for arresting you is so you will post bail and are more likely to show up to any court proceedings. It's not punishment, it's just part of the legal system.

They will take your gun and ammunition as evidence. This will happen whether they arrest you or not. Yes, you will need to get an attorney. Not just any attorney. You will need a criminal defense attorney with experience in self-defense cases.

During this time, don't go into detail telling friends and family what happened. Save your story for your attorney and then follow his or her counsel on what to tell family, relatives, and friends. This isn't the time to have your cousin blasting your story all over social media.

Once you and your attorney sit down with investigators and tell your side of the story, they will complete their report and send it to the district attorney. The district attorney will review the report and decide if the shooting was justified as self-defense or not.

That's the process. You never, ever see this on TV, but it's what happens in real life. I cannot over-state this... Shooting another person is the most serious and significant thing you can do in life, and society demands a full and complete investigation.

Chapter Seventeen

Killing & Dying

I glanced down at the speedometer, and the digital display showed 133mph. Another Deputy and I were pursuing a motorcycle that had fled from Highway Patrol Troopers. It was early in my career, and I share this experience as **an example of what not to do**. Right after realizing my speed, I literally heard a voice in my mind. It said, "Is this worth dying over?" It wasn't, and I slowed down.

There are very few things in this world worth killing or dying over. If you carry a gun for self-defense, you must know the answers to these two questions.

#1) What am I willing to kill for?

#2) What am I willing to die for?

I can't answer those questions for you. But personally, a road rage incident, a drunk saying unkind things about your spouse, doorbell ditching teenagers, and other non-life-threatening situations are not worth killing or dying over. Don't get me wrong; there are definitely things worth killing and dying for. All I'm saying is that you need to know what those things are ahead of time, so you don't sell your life, or take a life, for something of little or no value.

The situations leading to self-defense confrontations are usually highly charged, emotional, and egotistical. You may feel like shooting the guy that just stole your television and is running down the street, but it's simply not worth it. You must control your anger and emotions. As I've said before, any thug can use violence to prove his point. A truly powerful and dangerous person is the one who could use violence but shows sufficient restraint and wisdom to choose not to when appropriate. Always getting in the last word, or winning a fight that never should have happened in the first place is actually more a sign of weakness than victory.

In *The Art of War*, Sun Tsu wrote, "Therefore those who win every battle are not really skillful – those who render others' armies helpless without fighting are the best of all." Walking away from an unnecessary fight is winning.

Remember Jay Rodney Lewis? Stopping to check his vehicle's damage after the road rage incident was not worth all that happened to him. I'm sure if he could relive that night, he would have just driven home, making sure the thugs didn't follow him and dealing with the damaged car. At worst, he would have had to pay an insurance deductible. Remember Alex Gong? Similar story.

There are very few things in this world worth killing and dying for. Decide now where those lines are for you.

Conclusion

You are the only one who can protect you. Other people and the police may help, but when you're attacked, they most likely won't be there for you. It will be you, your training and whatever tools you have with you. I hope you're more prepared and ready to defend yourself and others from violence. Most of all, I hope you're able to avoid the situation completely and win without ever pulling your gun.

Suggested Reading:

- [When Violence is the Answer](#)
- [Left of Bang: How the Marine Corps' Combat Hunter Program Can Save Your Life](#)
- [The Gift of Fear](#)
- [The Law of Self Defense: The Indispensable Guide to the Armed Citizen](#)
- [On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace](#)
- [The Art of War](#)
- [Don't Be Deceived](#)
- [What Every Body is Saying](#)
- [Inside the Criminal Mind](#)

About the Author



Gary Dudley is a police officer and U.S. military veteran. He loves the United States of America and what it stands for. He believes armed and trained citizens are essential for a peaceful, stable, and free society. He loves to read, hike in the mountains and follow dirt roads just to see where they go. Keep in touch with him at <https://evaqu8.com>

1. **Cicero, Marcus Tullius; *Pro Milone*, 52BCE** ↑
2. **Locke, John; *Second Treatise on Government*, Chapter 9** ↑
3. **Van Horne, Patrick. *Left of Bang: How the Marine Corps' Combat Hunter Program Can Save Your Life* (p. 42). Black Irish Entertainment LLC. Kindle Edition.** ↑
4. **Van Horne, Patrick. *Left of Bang: How the Marine Corps' Combat Hunter Program Can Save Your Life* (p. 49). Black Irish Entertainment LLC. Kindle Edition.** ↑
5. **Van Horne, Patrick. *Left of Bang: How the Marine Corps' Combat Hunter Program Can Save Your Life* (p. 6). Black Irish Entertainment LLC. Kindle Edition.** ↑
6. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/07/28/watch-what-happens-when-regular-people-try-to-use-handguns-in-self-defense/> ↑
7. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/national/wp/2018/07/13/feature/in-all-reality-there-were-three-shooters-oklahomans-kill-an-active-shooter-and-its-not-as-simple-as-it-sounds/> ↑
8. **ibid** ↑
9. **ibid** ↑
10. **ibid** ↑
11. **ibid** ↑

Everything you wished you'd learned in your Concealed Carry class!

Most people who teach concealed carry classes, or write books about the subject, have never actually confronted a dangerous person or pointed a loaded gun at another human being. They talk and write a lot about it, but they've never actually done it. I believe an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theories and good ideas.

As a police officer and U.S. military veteran, many people ask me about guns, self-defense, and concealed carry. This book is my answer to all those questions. There are a lot of books out there on this topic. The main difference between this book and many of the others out there is that it's based on real-life experience (mine and others') in confronting dangerous people. My primary purpose in writing this book is to help you avoid dangerous situations, so you never need to pull your gun. But if you can't avoid it and need to pull your gun, you'll know what to expect and what to do. And just as important as winning the gunfight, I'll also help you know what to do after the shooting and the subsequent police investigation.

This book will teach you how to think correctly before and during high stress, dangerous situations, so you perform correctly. We do not rise to the occasion; we fall to the level of our preparation and training. Your body can never go where your mind has never been. Think of this book as the software that will run your hardware (your body and the gun in your hand). Your mind is the real weapon. Everything else is just a tool.