

GRAYMAN BRIEFING - Consultation with a Grayman

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The article is a feature we call "Consultation with a Grayman" where we get a first hand tip/story from another Grayman (really anyone who is experienced in a relevant field such as on the concepts of situational awareness, self-defense, cybersecurity, etc). Here's the guidelines for writing the article if you're interested.

///See next page.

TOPIC / INTENT

Article should be an informal conversation style that incorporates a real-world example or past experience.

The topic should be of interest to the Grayman (prepared citizen). It should teach a lesson or tip (typically start with the story and transition into the training session or takeaway).

- urban survival tip such as using a silcock key
- how you created a one time use phone # / email for an online profile to protect anonymity
- an example of a home defense plan your family uses
- how to detect and react to a would be mugger prior to attack

Basically we want a story of an event that can lead into a lesson for others. It doesn't have to be anything major, just thought provoking to open the door into a conversation about a topic relevant to those that want to be prepared, aware, and able.

- For example, the story could be a minimal event that you could tie into a training session. Like how you were in a fender bender and how some driving tactics and situational awareness could have helped you avoid the crash.

///See next page.

FORMAT

Write in the first person. It's about your own knowledge and experience. Use "I", "we", "my", etc.

Keep to about 2000 characters (about as long as an instagram post).

Title it with a concise 2 to 4 words such as "Preemptive Denial of Carjacking.

Give it a summary sentence at the top, i.e. "BLUF: Tactical parking, awareness of the people/vehicles around you, and enacting simple safety practices can help you deter and avoid a parking lot carjacking."

OTHER

Provide a 2 sentence bio to include your first name (or nickname) and a URL we can include to cite your contributions.

SUBMISSION

When complete, send the article to contact@superessestraps.com

EXAMPLES

///See following pages for examples of past contributions.

Consultation with a Grayman: Tradecraft for Detecting Street Criminals

»The following is an experience shared from Sonny, the founder of sixsight.co. Sonny served as a commando & spent time in the clandestine world of corporate espionage as a spy & a surveillance operator, as well as a bodyguard for some of the world's elite.

"I finished a solo protective surveillance job on the wealthy and exclusive Italian island of Capri a few years back. I was tasked with looking after a client and his family from the shadows, the problem being the only people on the island are rich businessmen and local Italian workers. My white linen pants, gold framed sunglasses and flowery shirts had the locals speaking to me in Italian, I had passed the test of being an insider, something I was extremely proud of in true grayman fashion. After escorting my principal to the airport on the mainland city of Naples, I had a night on my own before my flight back home the next morning.

I celebrated a successful operation with a few beers out in the local bars. The stay wasn't planned, so I had no reserved attire for this change of environment. The flowery shirts and white linen pants didn't blend in so well in this notoriously high crime rate area.

I knew I stood out like a sore thumb but I wasn't going to miss the opportunity for a little R&R. I headed out to the shopping district with my designer sunglasses and headphones in. Do as I say, not as I do!

It wasn't long before I spotted a guy scanning the crowds. He was standing tall, with his head on a swivel and was in a good tactical position on the side of the walkway with his back against the buildings.

I knew from my research that eastern European street gangs are prevalent here. His clothes fit the profile and his situational awareness was like a beacon to the trained eye.

As I approached I saw him notice me and gesture to someone else on the sidewalk out of my sight. They fancied their chances of a pickpocketing attempt.

I lowered the volume to my headphones whilst my hand was still in my pocket. As to not give the game away to my awareness I continued to pass the guy without altering my behavior.

I noticed a large department store window running parallel to my right. As I strolled past I glanced to check my hair in the reflection, or so an onlooker would have thought. Instead, I got a clear look of the guy approaching my rear. A scraggy looking fellow whose jagged movements stood out as he hurried to get closer behind his unaware tourist victim.

Still, I stayed calm and continued on. Ahead I saw a large glass advertising board on the side of a bus shelter and lined myself up to walk toward it for another perfect reflectional look-back opportunity.

I could clearly see him scurrying up behind me, 6 or 7 yards to go.

I passed the bus shelter and relied solely on my hearing to monitor his whereabouts.

After a few more yards I could hear his steps behind me, he thought I was easy pickings.

All of a sudden, I spun 180 degrees in an "about turn" and was face to face with the guy. I said in my thickest British accent 'alright mate how you doing?'

He nearly fell over backwards in shock like a rabbit caught in the headlights.

After that, he cracked a smile and we both communicated without words- I heard "ok bro you got me". I laughed to myself as I headed to the next bar.

It wasn't a smart idea on my part, but I do like to run my own little training exercises.

Reflectional look-backs are shown in movies usually just before the spy spins around and disarms the crook with a flashy move. The gun disarm may be a bit far fetched but the reflectional look-back is a great tool for seeing close distances behind yourself without giving the game away of your awareness. Reflections are often utilized to see what is directly behind you whilst walking on the street. If someone is about 20 yards away, you'll struggle to see them. This technique is better for seeing closer distances of 5 to 10 yards.

This means a reflectional look back could give you just enough time to prepare for an imminent attack like a mugging from a person you'd previously spotted behind you. It could give you those few extra seconds to draw a firearm or mace to defend yourself in some circumstances."

- Sonny

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Consultation with a Grayman: Passing Life Saving Skills to our Children

»The following is an experience shared from Andy Murphy, the founder of www.thesecuredad.com/podcast. For more than 5 years Andy has empowered families to live safer, happier lives with The Secure Dad Podcast and best-selling book. He believes that every parent is a protector.

"On August 21st, 1999, like millions of other high school students, I returned to school after learning of the horrific shooting at Columbine.

In homeroom, I thought if a shooting began in my class, there would be no possible way our school resource officer could get to us in time to stop the threat. That day I had an epiphany that would change my life forever - my safety is my own responsibility.

From that day forward I began to look for points of egress in every environment. This was long before I knew the phrase, "situational awareness." Over the years I began to naturally find exits and note similarities in public buildings that would help me escape a violent situation or fire.

Now, being a father I do my best to pass these skills onto my son. Instead of sitting a three-year-old down for a discussion of geographics, I came up with a game, Count the Doors.

I would prompt my son to count all of the doors that he saw when we entered a restaurant. This would help pass along a new skill and reinforce counting.

Doors would include exits, bathrooms, and any kitchen doors. Then I'd explain where each door went and even talked about an unseen door in the kitchen where deliveries were unloaded.

Then, I would ask him where we'd go if there were a fire in the kitchen and he'd point to the door on the other side of the restaurant. The scenarios varied as time went on.

We did this so often that one night at dinner I asked my son to count the doors and he told me... without counting. He was now counting the doors on his own.

BOOM! Skill acquired.

On his own, my son was now scouting the egress options for environments. This wasn't scary, it was simply a counting game like he played in pre-school. It didn't seem out of the ordinary and that was the point.

While we as protector parents have acquired a variety of skills, we can't maximize the safety of our loved ones unless we share what we know."

-Andy

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Consultation with a Grayman: Staying Focused on Your Training in Crisis

»The following is an experience shared from Justin, the founder of @archangeltacmed (<http://www.instagram.com/archangeltacmed>). Justin is a Paramedic having served at both inner-city metro and suburban Fire Departments. His operating environment has exposed him to severe trauma calls on a routine basis from which he draws his experience to train and teach others.

"I had been a medic for a year. I was 23 years old and I was working with a brand-new medic who just passed his test weeks prior. I was the lead. We got sent to a patient with a "self-inflicted" Gun Shot Wound (GSW) to the head. Aside from Law Enforcement (LE), we were the only help coming. I completed my mental checklist while enroute. What would I do to correct the problem? What would we see when we arrived on scene? Is the scene secure? Are there more patients we'd have to stabilize that dispatch doesn't know about? Anxiety set in as my mind raced.

As we arrived on scene, from our cab the victim appeared to be deceased but as I approached on foot he could be observed breathing. We only had one patient. No other casualties. Quickly, we package the patient on a backboard and move him into the ambulance. The patient was unconscious, unprotected airway, breathing but not stable.

Up until this point, I was the rookie who got excited and anxious. Some guys questioned how I would respond to a situation just like this. I took a deep breath and FOCUSED on my training. This was the most serious injury I had faced up until this point in my career. This victim needed me to perform to the highest standard.

When we initially arrived, LE appeared to have just secured the scene but had not yet provided aid to the victim. In basic Stop the Bleed classes that are available to both Civilians, LE, as well as military members; the primary FOCUS is to control major hemorrhage and make sure the patient is able to breath on their own. It's easy to gain tunnel vision, especially in an incident where lives are on the line. Without advanced medical training, it is easy to see how the focus could be on the initially observable injury, GSW to the head in this case. As a first responder or bystander civilian, what should you do prior to Emergency Medical Service's (EMS) arrival?

Apply direct pressure to stop the bleeding. Reposition the victim into a recovery position to make sure the airway does not become compromised further. Check for other wounds. What if it had been a domestic that was staged? What if the patient needed a tourniquet placed on their leg because they had another injury that was not noticed because the focus was the head?

You're taught in a Basic Life Saver (BLS) class you fix the ABC's. They're breathing so they have a pulse, focus on the airway and bleeding. What if they weren't breathing? Start CPR. There's so much more you can do, even without equipment, as a bystander to begin to stabilize the patient. This carries over into your everyday life as well. What do you do when you are faced with a crisis and you are forced to perform on demand? You FOCUS. You try not to get tunnel vision, observe what's going around and what you can do to mitigate the situation.

Stay FOCUSED. If it's a medical emergency, provide BLS care if necessary and instruct someone else to call 911, or call 911 first then begin first-aid. Sustain life long enough for EMS to arrive, this involves remaining focused long enough to remember to summon aid while also keeping the victim breathing. Not faced with a medical crisis? This applies across all forms of Life Altering Events (LAE). If you're in a gas station when an armed robbery occurs, stay focused on the protection of life followed by the collection of information that could aid in the investigation such as collecting the license plate number. Life comes first, intervening with lethal force should only be considered if the suspect's place you or others life in imminent danger. No matter the crisis, stay focused on preserving life, both your own and others. Focus on your training. Don't get tunnel vision."

-Justin

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Consultation with a Grayman: Carrying Concealed Comfortably

»The following is an experience shared from Tessah, the founder of “Armed and Styled (<https://www.armedandstyled.net/>)”. As a concealed carry advocate, Tessah shares real-world advice on the common issues that the everyday civilian faces in their daily carry.

“In 2019 hubby and I moved to a town in West Texas, and within the first two months of our arrival a mass shooting occurred at a store near my home. That woke me up. I decided that concealed carry was no longer in question, and that I needed to make it a reality in my life. After carrying for several months the crazy of 2020 hit, and I decided that I wanted to become more proficient with my self-defense tools. Since then I have been trying to pursue a more active lifestyle and training with my pistol.

I’m still a fairly new concealed carrier, having struggled at first to find the best way to carry a gun on my person comfortably, I was told that carrying a gun shouldn’t be comfortable, but comforting. There are certain levels of discomfort that are considered “normal” for sure, especially as a beginner! For instance, carrying a gun will NEVER be as comfortable as not carrying one. Although, something that is often missed when choosing to “embrace” certain levels of discomfort, is the inevitable 'fidgeting' that can come with it.

Last year, I had been carrying for a few months, and I had embraced a certain level of discomfort that I would now no longer consider acceptable. I had just started carrying a considerably larger gun. It was my first time carrying that gun in a public setting. Carrying in the one o’clock position, I walked into a coffee shop. I felt sharp pain from my stiff gun belt making contact with my hip bones, and the small of my back. Without even thinking about it, I grabbed my belt through my shirt, and shifted it. I messed with my belt a few more times after entering the coffee shop trying to find some way to relieve the pain to no avail. After an hour or so of sitting I gave up, and headed home. As I drove home I realized just how much I had messed with my concealment, in a public setting, over the last hour. Mind you, I made every attempt to be discreet, but at some point messing with my concealment could have easily become a “tell” to those around me who might have been paying attention, and I think this is something often missed by new and seasoned carriers alike. A notable lack of comfort can lead to fidgeting, which can ultimately lead to enough of a “tell” that your concealment no longer matters, because your visible discomfort effectively acts as a form of printing. Embracing that level of discomfort would have eventually given away my concealment, but it could have also led to leaving my gun at home. These two truths are what caused me to seek out more comfortable and practical carry options. Carrying a gun should be a lot of things, but being considerably uncomfortable shouldn’t be one of them.”

-Tessah

Debrief by GBC: Don't be afraid to try out different holsters and carry locations. Go in person to a place where you can physically test out the type of holster carrying position before purchase and when it's time to buy search online and read reviews. Gun stores don't usually carry quality but can be a great place to get a feel for what works best for you. Don't skimp on quality, retention, and comfort. If you find yourself leaving your firearm at home because of comfort/convenience then reconsider your holster and carry location selections.

-GBC

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Consultation with a Grayman: Assessing your failed Situational Awareness to improve future outcomes.

»The following is an experience shared from Doug Patteson, a former CIA officer. Doug now teaches intelligence and consults on security as well as for film and TV. He and his partners run www.ingloriousamateurs.com, which highlights the history of CIA and the IC.

“We got off the plane in Tel Aviv expecting hyper security everywhere we went. Our situational awareness was high for our first trip to Israel. We knew that in general Israel was safe, but, as publicly acknowledged former CIA officers, we also knew that we would be attractive targets if we weren't careful. We would be visiting both the Golan Heights as well as the West Bank. We were pleasantly surprised however. The visible security presence was in fact much lower than we expected throughout Israel.

And as a result, we began to relax our SA a little. After a week in Israel and a few days in Jerusalem, we reached a bit of a dangerous place of complacency. As a result we didn't think through a choice we were making and almost ended up in a very bad place. So, this is something of an AAR on that experience.

Midday on a Friday afternoon and we knew that Shabbat would be starting in a few hours. We knew that it would obviously have a significant impact on the Jewish Quarter that night and the next day, but failed to think through what the end of the week would mean for the Muslim community.

For those not well versed in the patterns of the Middle East, on Fridays, the normal Zuhr prayer (one of the five daily prayers, or salat, that all obedient Muslims pray) is said just after noon wherever they might be. This prayer is often performed individually.

On Fridays, however, the Zuhr prayer is replaced with the Jumu'ah. Jumu'ah is a congregational prayer typically attended by the male Muslim population at the local mosque. It is led by a local imam and preceded by a sermon. Jumu'ah often has a very high attendance rate among the local populace. At Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque, upwards of 250,000 faithful attend Jumu'ah.

Why does all this matter? We were on our way across the city heading to The Mount of Olives. We had a couple of different route choices, but decided to head through the Muslim quarter to see the first part of the Via Dolorosa and exit via the Lion's Gate, nearest Gethsemane. This was a part of the city we had yet to visit in any depth, outside of some of the souks.

Well, approximately 20 minutes prior to our entering Old Jerusalem by way of the Damascus Gate, Jumu'ah had ended (not that we were paying much attention to time, we were on vacation after all). The net result was upwards of 2/3 of those worshippers all leaving the Old City to return to their homes, most of whom were heading out the Damascus Gate to the bus station located there. A teeming throng of Muslim men, from 14 to 80, packed shoulder to shoulder made their way from Al Aqsa to the Damascus Gate. There were a few women as well, but very few.

We noticed a lot of folks leaving the gate as we entered, but didn't think much about it. We also noticed a significantly higher security presence at the gate (larger numbers, better armed, more vigilant) as well. We even asked a soldier about if we COULD go that way, but perhaps we should have asked if we SHOULD go that way. He said yes, but his strange look at us should have provided an additional warning.

So we entered and my wife and I found ourselves in the midst of this tide, two lone fish wending their way upstream. Every hundred yards or so we came across a very tense group of young Israeli soldiers, carrying M4s and grenade launchers and wearing body armor, very intently watching the passing crowd. Eventually we asked someone what the crowd was about and he explained it was the end of Friday prayer.

The throng was relentless in its push, and I was grateful we kept our feet, fearing that had we tripped and fallen, little would have prevented the tide from sweeping over us. I worried my wife was at risk of being grabbed or manhandled, possibly separated from me. The risk too was high that among this mob were radicals with strong anti-American sentiment. Could we be pick pocketed or mugged? And sometimes, it's just that bad things can happen in large mobs.

In the long run, we were fortunate. Nothing bad happened to us, other than a few bumps and bruises, almost unavoidable in that crowd. We saw a few hostile glances, more surprised ones and we even caught a few wry smiles from some of the passersby as they acknowledged our predicament. After 20 minutes or so, we found a place of respite, just out of the crowd where we could wait while the procession tailed off. And we stared at each other, still shocked at how quickly the situation had developed and we found ourselves in the midst of it.

We began to ask ourselves a few questions – What mistakes did we make? Could we have predicted this? How could we have avoided this? What signals should we have picked up on? What were our escape routes? Did we violate our own Rule of the Stupids (Don't do stupid stuff with stupid people at stupid times in stupid places)? Etc. We definitely knew that it was an SA fail and we worked through the answers to those questions.

Clearly we should have thought about Friday noon prayers being different (congregational rather than individual) and the impacts on the narrow streets of the Old City. We should have paid attention to the timing of our transit (30 minutes earlier or later would have made all the difference). We could have chosen one of the other routes to our destination (around the city instead of through it). We should have had my wife put on her shawl (with her dark hair and skin making her less noticeably western).

We should have asked ourselves about the heightened security – why was it necessary? Some basic research on that section of town would have revealed information about multiple incidents/attacks in the area of the Damascus and Lion Gates in the last 9 months, some politically motivated. At least one of those incidents resulted in canceling the Jumu'ah at al Aqsa (for the first time in 17 years) and an Israeli ban on any Muslim males under the age of 50 attending the Jumu'ah when it was reopened. As a result, security tensions in that area have been heightened for quite some time.

As to the rule of the stupids – the incident serves as a great reminder that certain places and times can be harmless, while at other times can become very dangerous. Stupid times don't just mean after midnight, and stupid places don't just mean dark alleys or late night bars. Be aware of how your situation can change as the environment changes. What was once a safe place and time can change rapidly.

As noted, we had an SA fail, but fortunately, were none the worse for the wear. Failures however, often teach us far more than success, and so it is important to learn from this incident. We might not be so lucky in a future one.”

-Doug

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