



# Tactical Talk

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*"I sympathize with people who want to ban guns, but I can't agree with them. We have to be careful in our zeal to abolish guns that we don't wind up with counter-productive legislation that will leave armed only the people most likely to do harm with them."*

**-- Hugh Downs,  
veteran ABC newsman**

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## Personal Security Tips For The Workplace

Achieving personal security in the hazardous world in which we live is more a matter of mental skill than fighting skill. I am often asked, "What are the best primary and back-up weapons?" My answer is simple—your brain is your primary weapon, backed up by your eyes. Your guns, knives, etc., rank far behind those in importance.



If you get in enough fights, you'll very likely get killed or seriously injured, often quite by accident. The best way

to win fights is to avoid them, and that is a mental skill. The following tips are suggested as means of reducing your vulnerability to crime, and your opportunities to be involved in dangerous confrontations.

- ◆ Workplace violence is extremely common and poses a real threat to your safety. Homicide is now the leading cause of death among workplace injuries and one of every six workplace deaths is now due to murder (source: OSHA). Murder is not your only worry, however. Each year, there are 40,000 Aggravated Assaults at work, and 51,000 workplace rapes.
- ◆ Be alert. Do not assume you are safe because you are at work.
- ◆ Know where exits and escape routes are. Mentally rehearse crises before they occur. Have a plan.
- ◆ Take threats or oddball behavior seriously. Report to security or management and insist on follow-up.
- ◆ Equipment you did not wear today will be of no use in an emergency.

# Preventable Tragedies: Training Accidents

Negligent shootings during training exercises seem to be more and more common recently, often resulting in needless deaths or crippling injuries. In every such case I have examined recently, the root cause was simple carelessness with firearms, or failure to follow the most elemental rules of gunhandling. Here are a couple of examples from earlier this year.

In one case, a SWAT team was practicing a rescue mission involving hostages on a city bus, held by an armed man. The officers were using their duty weapons, but all had been unloaded and inspected, and ammunition removed from the training area. A designated rifleman (sniper) arrived late for the exercise, got his rifle from the trunk of his car, aimed in on the head of the police captain playing the role of hostage taker, and shot him stone dead. This was NOT an accident—this was clearly a negligent homicide, and the officer was recently indicted for that crime. Here are some key points:

1. Be on time for training. You cannot afford to miss any briefing or other information, and ALL weapons need to be cleared and inspected at one time if role play is to be conducted.
2. All guns are always loaded. If you remove a rifle from your trunk, clear it. This is not someone else's responsibility.
3. Don't point your gun at anything you are not willing to destroy. Role play should ONLY be conducted with non-firing weapons, such as red guns, air soft guns, or Simunitions kit equipped guns, NOT live duty weapons.

In Case Two, an instructor was supervising Simunitions exercises while wearing a loaded real gun. He forgot, drew his pistol, and nailed a student right between the eyes, fatally. See 1-3 above.

The most recent case, which spurred this rant, involved a police academy trainee in Atlanta a couple of weeks ago. He was  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the academy, and was undergoing firearms and tactics training. When he got home one night, he couldn't wait to show his girlfriend what he had learned that day. He removed the magazine from his Glock .40, aimed it at her chest, and pressed the trigger, killing her on the spot. Again, this was no accident, but a negligent killing. ALWAYS clear your gun properly before any administrative handling (cleaning, etc), which includes removing the round from the chamber and INSPECTING the chamber before considering the gun unloaded. Again, don't point a real gun at a live person under anything but combat conditions. These events are completely preventable and are generally unforgivable.



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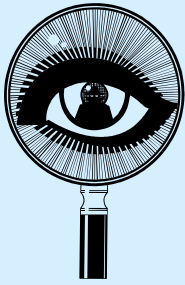
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# Improve Your Powers of Observations

*By Tom Givens*

Human beings have five recognized senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Of these, our vision is the most advanced and most critical sense. What we refer to as "sight" is actually a two-part process, consisting of seeing an object with our eyes and processing this information with our brains. Although we "see" things, we seldom "observe" them. Observation requires that you analyze and derive meaning from what you see.

You must learn to focus your attention and see more detail in the everyday things and persons you encounter as you go through your daily routine. Your level of consciousness must be raised, at first through deliberate effort. People are creatures of habit, and a bit of concentrated effort at first will quickly lead to habitual observation of your surroundings. This is the key to your personal safety.

In new surroundings, scan for anything out of the ordinary, anything out of context, or out of place. When you see these things, question them. "Why is that like that?" If you do not get a satisfactory answer, act. Your action may be as simple as leaving, but you cannot act until you perceive the problem. Get your head up, open your eyes, and move them around.

When you encounter a stranger, observe him. Does he have a weapon? Is he attempting to invade your space, or intimidate you? Is he under the influence of drugs or alcohol? Is he aggressive, angry, mentally unbalanced? How does he carry himself? Is he confident, light on his feet, capable of rapid movement? Is he dressed in a manner appropriate to the location/situation?

Remember the classic refrain of the dedicated victim, "Gee, it all happened so fast. He materialized next to me. I never saw him."



## Book Review, Handgun Combatives, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition,

by Dave Spaulding

Reviewed by Tom Givens

*Law Officer Magazine* named Dave Spaulding the 2010 Trainer of the Year. This is but one honor Dave

has earned in a 28 year law enforcement career, as a patrol officer, investigator, supervisor, and head of a multiagency drug task force in a major metropolitan area. Over the past few years, Spaulding has also earned a top reputation as a trainer and a writer, with some 800 articles in law enforcement and shooting industry publications. I had the good fortune of meeting Dave at a training event a couple of years ago, and he is the real deal. He is a wealth of information on anything re-

lated to carrying a handgun or fighting with it, and the man can really shoot.

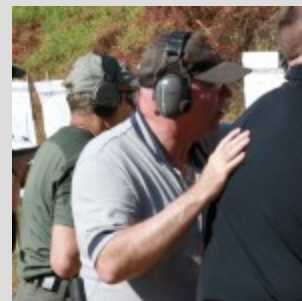
Loose Leaf Law Publications recently released the Second Edition of Dave's excellent book Handgun Combatives. Spaulding has updated the material in the first edition, and added some topics he has been working on since the first edition came out. Handgun Combatives consists of 212 information packed pages, with over 60 photos. Written in an easy to understand style, the book covers every aspect of fighting with a handgun, from mental preparation to equipment selection, to combining hand to hand skills and firearms skills for extreme close quarter fights. I highly recommend this book, whether you are just starting your journey in personal security or you have been involved for years. Cost is only \$19.95, which is a steal. Order from [www.looseleaflaw.com](http://www.looseleaflaw.com).

## First Annual Mid-Atlantic Training Conference: Huge Success!

by Rob Pincus

When training veteran [Tom Givens](#) and someone as passionate as [Craig Douglas](#) is about *doing the work* get together, you expect great things. But, the training world is a funny place and sometimes the best plans just don't come together even when good people are involved. This can often be the case with Conferences and Events that aim to high and end up falling very short. The First Annual Mid-Atlantic Training Conference managed to bring together 18 instructors and over 100 attendees, most of whom were new to the conference world and impressed on every level.

Tom Givens is the owner and lead instructor at Rangemaster in Memphis, TN. Tom is one of the busiest instructors in the history of the industry with over 30,000 documented students who have been involved in more successful personal defense shootings than have ever been studied after training from one source (approaching 60 incidents). In fact, the Lessons learned from these real world events have helped Tom evolve his training program and assist him in identifying guys who have important "pieces of the puzzle" when it comes to valuable real world training. This makes it no surprise that Tom identified relative newcomer to the private sector training world, Craig Douglas, as one of those people. Tom is, in some circles, best known for running his own annual tactical conference and shooting competition (which took place in Tulsa for the last two years.) Tom's event is always well run and features top name instructors and many repeat attendees. I have had the honor of teaching at Tom's conference for the last 3 years and it is always a highlight of my year, primarily because of the quality of the people involved at every level.



**Tom Givens where he loves to be, working with students on the range.**

One of those people involved in the Rangemaster Conference that I have come to know very well and gain a great deal of respect for over the past few years is Craig Douglas. Craig is perhaps known better by his online handle "Southnarc", which was a necessary evil back when he started contributing to the progressive training conversation in online forums many years ago and was still an active undercover police officer. Craig is the top of the field right now when it comes to what I refer to as "Inside two Arms Reach" situations: True Extreme Close Quarters. This is an area of training that I have been tied to for a long time. Year's ago when looking for a solution for extreme close quarters ambushes that mixed armed and unarmed issues, I came across High Gear impact reduction suits as a tool for facility high speed realistic contact training scenarios. That led me to Tony Blauer and the wealth of information and inspiration that he brought to the industry with his S.P.E.A.R. System and the revolutionary inclusion of Startle Response into dealing with ambushes. Along the way, I even picked up an Instructor Cert under Royce Gracie and still use several pieces of his G.R.A.C.I.E. Program in my teaching today. After over a decade of looking, I can tell you that in 2010, there is no one who has a better handle



**Craig Douglas, the driving force behind the MATC, addressing students during one of his teaching sessions.**

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on the Extreme Close Quarters Fight that involves Weapons than Craig Douglas. If you've been paying attention, Craig and his training have knocked the reality based training community on its ear over the last five years. He has a simple mantra: **State the Problem, Do the Work**. He has defined the "multi-disciplinary approach" to close quarters training and continues to look for ways to evolve. If you get the chance to train with him, do it. If you get the chance to test yourself in one of his ECQC Sim Evolutions, do that too.

When Craig, a veteran of the US Army and career law enforcement officer by trade, wanted to get a group of who he felt were the most progressive and important thinkers and teachers in the combatives world together for a conference he immediately tapped Tom Givens (and his wife Lynn, they are a great *team*) to help him organize and market the conference. Craig has a genetic level professionalism and humility that helps him seek out key people to do what they do best and pass the spotlight whenever he gets the chance. Tom agreed to take the lead on putting the conference together and solicit attendees, Craig recruited the talent to put on the training blocks and MATC was on its way.



**Attendees at the first day's CFS Session. A four hour block was taught each morning.**

This past weekend was one of the best training experiences I've had in a long time. I got to teach almost half the attendees over the course of two four-hour Introduction to [Combat Focus Shooting](#) sessions. Students ranged from a few who may never have shot more than 1 round per second in their entire lives to some very talented and experienced shooters. Housewives and retirees to active military and shooting industry leaders. I also got to learn from some of the best, and possibly least known, resources out there. Sebastian Pritchard, a former Navy SEAL with a Doctorate in Decision Science from Oxford who runs a multi-million dollar hedge fund lectured on Startle Response, Intuitive Decision Making, the way our brains work and Leadership. Sebastian's lecture was one of the best presentations I've heard on these topics, including a few at the Salk Institute and ones that have been made available online from leaders in the scientific research community... and he had never spoken at a training conference before. Sebastian is prototypical of the kind of person that Craig wanted at MATC. A true thinker who understands the context



**Sebastian discussing the importance of integrating Startle Response into training.**

in which people interested in defending themselves need to apply cutting edge information and techniques. MMA Fighters & Trainers Paul Sharp, Larry Lindenman and Cecil Birch instructed sessions which offered unarmed techniques appropriate for the street not just the mat or the ring.



**Cecil Burch demonstrating a technique during his ground skills block.**

der-rated guys in the industry as far raw knowledge goes and he shared some on the AK Rifle with attendees at his sessions. Chris Fry is another relative newcomer to the training world, but he is a thinker and he has evolved some outstanding information in relation to the AR Platform. Chris taught long gun retention and a block on AR malfunctions. Claude and Michael taught deep concealment related sessions, covering Snub Nosed Revolvers and Sub-Compact-Sub-Sub Caliber guns (respectively) in their blocks.

I think Claude's block on "mouseguns" is especially important to the community after the huge wave of popularity and sales in the sector of the handgun market over the past couple of years.



**William April, teaching attendees about the traits and behaviors of Violent Criminal Actors.**

One of the most important sessions that was taught during the weekend was also probably one of the least exciting when you looked at the class schedule. William April's "Violent Criminal Actors" presentation offered a wealth of insight into exactly the type of people that the average person is most likely to need to use lethal force against. The session is based on April's year's of experience in the legal and mental health world as a practicing therapist. He has gleaned the important pieces of information that anyone forced to defend themselves might need to be able to articulate why they needed to use force against a person acting violently and irrationally. He also offered important clues about how to identify and possibly avoid, escape or de-escalate confrontations with the most dangerous people in our society.



**In a low-speed skill developing rep with Craig in a rental car... Vehicle Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu is just one of the progressive training blocks that Craig offers.**

On the range, Tom Givens and I conducted sessions, along with Paul Gomez, Claude Werner, Michael DeBethancourt and [Chris Fry](#). [Paul Gomez](#) may be one of the most un-



**Chris Fry during his long gun retention techniques block, with an airsoft.**

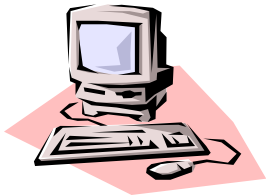
Of course, Craig himself taught several blocks, including his Managing Unknown Contacts and Vehicle Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Modules. The latter of which I finally got to take. Having done a few other sessions, include full speed In-Extremis Knife evolutions with Craig in the past, I knew that I was going to get a workout, but the technical aspect of the course and the gains from the short conference version were impressive.

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Grappling in a space with opportunities for 360 degree basing and leverage (and *really thinking* about it that way for the first time) is a whole new game.

Any conference also brings with it opportunities for information exchange, debrief and collaboration during the “off hours” and this may be where MATC was truly unique. Both Friday and Saturday night ALL of the attending instructors ate and conversed together. After dinner almost everyone continue to take advantage of the opportunity to get to know one another better and continue discussing important training and operational issues, many into the early hours of the morning. The people that were brought together were passionate about moving their own work forward. This wasn't a collection of crusty old timers who wanted to re-tell old war stories and claim to have figured everything out years ago... this was a group of dedicated professionals who wanted to learn from each other and share what they had to offer. Not all of them were mentioned here of course, but it is a group to look for and to watch and I was proud to be a small part of it.

There will be a Second Annual Mid-Atlantic Training Conference in 2011. I'm expecting that registration will be limited, so sign up early. I am already looking forward to it.



**The Cadre of the  
First Annual Mid-Atlantic Training Conference.  
(most instructors present)**