

Rangemaster/Tom Givens 3 Day Instructor Development

[HiTS](#) hosted Tom and Lynn Givens for their 3 Day Instructor Development Class on Oct.3-5 in Dallas. We had 14 students of various backgrounds, genders, and occupations. If there was a "theme" to the student backgrounds it was that there was no theme. It ranged from guys like Wayne and I who have our own training company but like to be students regularly, to active duty military, to several very squared away female instructors doing CHL type courses, to active law enforcement, regular folks who just train their friends and families, to other part time trainers. It was a solid mix.

Even though we had people from Oklahoma, we had perfect weather. Normally, when the north of the Red River folks show up we get terrible weather. The jinx has been broken, which is great. I think most will agree, we have a great facility for classes and things went great. We do have some very tight facility rules that we have to abide by, but overall things went well.

Typical of most instructor classes Tom ran two lines with one coaching while the other was shooting. He was able to maximize things by partnering many of the newer instructors with more experienced ones and moved people around. I found everyone to have a great attitude, super positive vibe throughout the class, and most importantly, safety was taken with the level of seriousness that it should be. I saw no major issues and some of the minor things like getting early on the trigger or too fast back to a holster we quickly corrected and everyone was open to the coaching. Many of the shooters were obviously established competition shooters based on technique and gear. Again, super receptive to adapting both to street work, better safety protocols for teaching to CHL holders and just a great overall attitude.

Tom and Lynn have done this show a lot, and it shows. Totally squared away logistically, very well organized, and exceptional delivery of the material across the board. Their workbook is big, well organized and really everything a basic instructor would need to be effective. Essentially, it is a well oiled machine. Tom is Tom. I think that is good, and I didn't note anyone who had any issues with Tom's style of teaching. The guy has been doing it for 40 plus years. Guys like Tom you simply watch and learn. Even with stuff I don't agree with that Tom teaches, I am able to understand how Tom got where he got on philosophy because Tom is EXCEPTIONAL at explaining the "why's" "how's" history and origin of many things.

Equipment wise was as diverse as the group with a little of everything. Generally most everything ran okay. A few gizmo's were gone after day one. Some of the equipment was seen first hand that it wasn't a good choice for the application and the users made adjustments based on their own experience from the class rather than being told "that doesn't work". Seeing it first hand is a much better way to figure things out, and this was a great environment for that. This is especially true for newer instructors. I saw a few issues with magazines binding up from being dropped on asphalt with a good load on board. Tom isn't big on Tac Loads, so a lot of in-battery speed loads were conducted post shooting and prior to holstering. I tried it Tom's way out of respect day one and then went back to my normal SOP. We had three VP9's in class, and all ran well, including filthy. I had a single failure to fire due to an out of spec UMC 115 FMJ 9mm that would not chamber. The VP9's are fairly new to us, so I appreciated Tom letting me get a bit more diagnostic with it rather than clear it, and it was good to hear "I am not big on blowing up

guns for no reason" from Tom, which is my thought as well. It was a very good example of Tom's teaching style....common sense over dogma.

Performance. What can I say other than this class was exceptional as a whole. Four perfect scores were shot which has never happened before and was a record. Two of those were by old guys with HK VP9's.....take note-🤩. A perfect 300 combination score that combines the shooting with a fairly detailed written examination has never been done. We had two. Wayne Dobbs and a Federal Agent who is one of "everybody's" favorite students were both perfect. I was at 298.8 and we had two US Army active duty studs who tied for third with what I seem to remember was around 297.5. Tom is really at the top of the food chain on his instructor courses. Signing up is not a guarantee of passing, and many do not. We had one of Tom's previous students come to shoot the final test to try to pass. Her enthusiasm and determination was infectious, and I think everyone who was near her felt a sense of victory when she passed based on her obviously putting in the extra work on her own. Her sheer joy was real, and I am sure the fact that she earned that Instructor rating was far better than getting something that said "instructor" just because she paid tuition and showed up. This is what it is all about. I have been through many types of firearm's instructor schools. Some good, some bad, and some exceptional. If your goal is to teach regular folks how not to be victims, this course is exceptional.

Some positive observations.

This is not an Amway program buy into a system. This is a get educated to the how's and why's, and a set of serious standards.

Watching Tom demo stuff. For true students, watching Tom is the culmination of over four decades of history of what we do. Also, Tom gets his points across through various means to connect with learners of different types.

Lynn Givens-she is a very good balance to Tom and together they make a very efficient teaching team.

The students-this class worked hard, were professional and it was a good mix.

A special thanks to Tom for letting Wayne and I simply be "students" for a few days. It was nice to be challenged hard as simple students again (as a note.....if you are an instructor of any level.....you need to be taking classes from other people as a student so that you can not only grow, but also get some verification of what you are doing).

Final note-If you are teaching armed citizens in any capacity, this class should be on your priority list.

AAR written by Darryl Bolke, retired police officer and current firearms trainer. Co-owner of [HiTs with Wayne Dobbs in Dallas, Texas](#).