



CONCEALED CARRY

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RAGING RAINIER SELF DEFENSE:

WYOMING'S NEW SELF-DEFENSE LAWS
AND THE CONSTITUTION

WILL CALIFORNIA'S
EXTREMELY STRICT
LAW

THE BOSTON STRIKE





Gabe Suarez



Andy Stanford



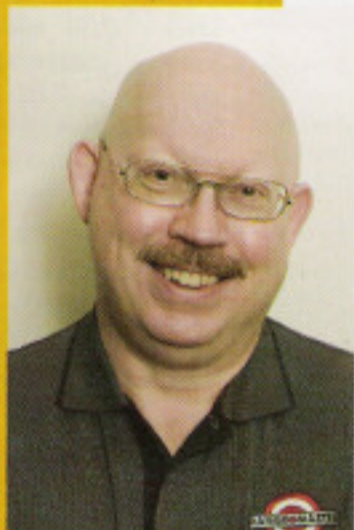
Martin Cooper



Leo Daher



Paul Gomez



Tom Givens



Matthew Tempkin

Ever since reading the book, "Tactical Advantage," written by Gabe Suarez, I've been curious about the man. An interesting writer with many years of police work in his background, Gabe has been one of the most unapologetic, controversial figures in the field of firearm training. Last September, he launched *warriortalk.com* forum to provide a venue for personal development of members as fighters. Within half a year, the forum grew to over two thousand members with a cohesive culture. To Gabe, a real-world gathering was the next logical step.

"Our mission is the advancement of the art of personal defense through open minded, non-dogmatic discussions and exchange of ideas," said Suarez. The participants were almost all members of Warrior Talk forum. The cost of the class was symbolic \$40, just enough to cover the cost of the venue.

Gabe chose Memphis, TN because of its central location and because it is home to the superb Rangemaster indoor range, operated by Tom Givens. Tom's fame carries so far that, more than once, when I asked about a good course in Nashville for concealed carry permit and skill set, his course in Memphis was recommended to me despite the distance! The facility is, indeed, clean, well designed and maintained. Rangemaster staff has been competent and very helpful.

The classes were planned in two-hour increments from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday. Eight different instructors from several organizations, each with different and impressive credentials, provided a variety of perspectives to the participants. Some of the ten courses provided a complete picture in just two hours, others were to whet the appetite for more training and study.

Paul Gomez, of Options for Personal Security, a man with both military and police experience, explained the uses and maintenance of AK47 type rifles. His course provided much hands-on time with several makes of that rifle, a lot of basic information and some trivia. For maximum safety, inert blue guns and magazines were used to demonstrate firing stances, in addition to real guns used for disassembly and maintenance part of the lecture. His approach packed a months' worth of research into a short, info-rich lesson.



Tom Givens taught his excellent basic pistol course. Consisting of classroom and range segments, his lesson covered the legal, technical and tactical aspects of carry and deployment of sidearms. His approach was so detailed and systematic that even expert shooters found his content useful and the supervised practice helpful. Again, excellent safety practices were evident throughout the course. Tom also taught a segment on low light techniques with handguns, with and without mounted flashlights. That lesson prompted serious reflection by the participants on their current methods and equipment. No amount of talking about such things could have replaced



Top: Keeping an "enemy" at bay from the ground. That drill emphasized combining armed and unarmed techniques to win. Left to Right: Simunition Glock, Hands-On training and William Aprill shows how to disarm. Photography by Oleg Volk (www.a-human-right.com).

relevant and instructive range exercises in dim to non-existent light. His approach was certain to shake anyone out of complacency in regard to defensive actions in low light.

Matthew Temkin, a law enforcement officer from New York City, taught point shooting. He took the students from the technique's origins with Fairbairn and Applegate to the modern refinements. In the field dominated by Jeff Cooper's "modern technique" which stresses sight use, teaching point shooting requires a certain chutzpah or, more likely, practical experience suggesting that his methods work in the real world. Temkin is a character whose personality makes his teaching entertaining as well as useful. The range time was just enough to outline the direction of study required to master the methods which were presented, but it provided a sound justification for learning alternatives to sighted fire. In effect, Tom Givens and Matt Temkin provided two ways of getting the same result, stopping an attack.

William Aprill taught an eye-opening course on disarming a gun-wielding opponent. He taught how to fight when taken by surprise or when without a weapon of your own, showing that the only sure way to die is giving up the fight before it is over. Again, his course could cover but a sliver of the available techniques, but it served to educate the participants about the wide range of options available.

As a movie character once said, "We got to start thinking beyond our guns." William is a deceptively mild-looking man who delivered powerful and rapid counter-attacks during the demonstrations. They served to remind that anyone, no matter how inoffensive looking or devoid of visible weapons, could be a credible threat. As with other such courses, the disarming lesson underscored the wisdom of not borrowing trouble no matter how many guns we might carry.

South Narc (name withheld for security reasons), a SWAT commander in his police agency and an assistant commander in a narcotics prohibition task force, taught the other side of that interaction: retaining a pistol in close quarters and using it effectively. His class used Simunitions to good effect, and provided an invaluable introduction to the reality of fighting at bad breath range. The versatile use of all available tools, including Airsoft, Simunitions, inert guns and live weapons really set Warrior Talk Symposium apart from others.

Andy Stanford, the man who has set up many training programs, including Martial Marksmanship Institute, informed us about the future of firearms training. His information synergized nicely with Gabe's lecture on the integration of force on force training with square range time. They discussed the ways to identify omissions in the personal skill set in order to fill the gaps.

They stressed that pistolcraft is just another martial art, and so the variety of learning approaches has to be similarly diverse for them to be useful in combat.

Martin Cooper, a cop from the UK, brought a uniquely British perspective to the classroom. Coming from the jurisdiction where self defense is almost entirely prohibited by law, he developed a slapping technique designed to stun the opponent and break contact without exposing the defender to undue legal liability. The concept caused smiles all around, but most participants became convinced of the viability of the fluid, percussive slap he demonstrated. In the US, his methods may be of most interest to those who live in similarly restrictive jurisdictions, such as New York City.

The Symposium provided an opportunity to meet several well-known trainers, a chance for Warrior Talk members to meet face-to-face, and a motivation and directions for further training and study on several fronts. I got to meet several members of my own forum, *thehighroad.org*, as well. The diverse competencies of the participants were quite impressive. In sum, much team building and learning happened—as promised by Gabe.

Oleg Volk runs *thehighroad.org* forum for the advancement of responsible firearm ownership. He is a multimedia professor and advertising designer in Nashville, TN.