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# RANGEMASTER

DEFENSIVE TACTICS  
FOR THE **REAL** WORLD

## Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Most of us conduct almost all of our training in broad daylight on an outdoor range, or in a well lit indoor range, largely due to convenience. We tend to overlook the fact that the majority of defensive confrontations take place in conditions of reduced lighting. Confronting an intruder in your home at night, or facing a stickup man on the restaurant parking lot, you will probably not have full daylight to shoot in. This is, however, grossly misunderstood by an awful lot of people.

by  
Tom Givens

## Functioning in Low Light

Many times over the years I have heard or seen in print that 80% of gun fights occur in the dark. This statistic is tossed around in an effort to sell everything from night sights, to flashlights, or laser aiming devices. Too bad it's not true.

A much more accurate statement would be that 80% of pistol fights occur during the hours of darkness. For statistical purposes, the hours of darkness are 6 PM to 6 AM. As you can see, in much of the country during much of the year it is not dark during a good bit of that timeframe. The second issue is that crime does not occur in a vacuum. If it's too dark to see, why the hell are you there and why would a criminal be there?

Some years ago, someone coined the term "street crime" to describe violent interpersonal crime. The truth is, almost none of it occurs in the street. You'd get run over! The fact is, most

violent crime occurs on parking lots, but "parking lot crime" isn't as catchy as "street crime." The parking lot of the convenience store, the grocery store, the Wal-Mart, the apartment complex, the office building, the bank or the liquor store are where the vast majority of defensive shootings take place. Please note that these are not dark. Anyplace they are trying to sell you something the parking lot will be fairly well lit. In fact, I have seen my sights far better lighted and more clearly on the convenience store parking lot at 3:00 in the morning than on an overcast day at 3:00 in the afternoon.

The time of day is irrelevant. All we care about is the ambient light. At the kind of distances involved in interpersonal confrontations and in the lighting conditions found on the typical parking lot you will be able to do just fine. In typical urban settings, true darkness is rare. Street lights, vehicle

headlights, and storefront lighting, add to moonlight and starlight to form a fairly well-lit environment. Under these conditions, at normal engagement distances, your frequent practice will pay off. By presenting your weapon consistently and using the sights every time, you have trained your hands and eyes to bring the gun up align the sights with the target pretty reliably.

Dry practice, over and over, forms a sense of kinesthesia or muscle memory that will suffice at close range. If you consistently present the weapon and look at the front sight, whether you can see it or not, you will get a hit. Your front sight is right there on the end of your pistol, so shift your focus to that point as the gun comes up in front of your face, just like you do every time when shooting in daylight. If you practice, this will result in your hands automatically aligning the gun with the target. The purpose of looking at the

front sight every time the gun is presented is to train the hands to bring the gun up on target. Once you have practiced sufficiently, the sights are not used to achieve alignment. They are used to quickly verify alignment.

Tritium night sights are often proposed as the answer for this reduced light environment, but the truth is they are not as valuable as you might believe. If you are in an environment that is well enough lighted to see who your opponent is and see what is in his hands, you will be able to see normal sights. If it is too dark to see your sights, it will be too dark to see his hands or even be certain it's not a family member in front of you. Under those conditions, you will need flashlight to illuminate, identify and justify your target. If you have to light them up with a flashlight, you will see non-tritium sights just fine. Night sights do not help you find the target, they do not help you identify, and they really only help you hit in fairly narrow circumstances. Frequent practice in sighted fire will do you

more good if you have to use the gun under less than optimal lighting conditions.

A lot of shooting schools or instructors spend a fair bit of time working on flashlight techniques. This is another example of training taken out of context. Those are critically important skills for military and law enforcement personnel, who are tasked with going into dark areas to seek out and confront people. This is the opposite of the civilian paradigm, where we wish to avoid armed confrontation if at all possible. We've had over 60 civilian students involved in shootings over the last few years. None used a flashlight, and not one student indicated to me they felt like they needed a flashlight during their confrontation. This goes back to why a private citizen would need a handgun in the first place. If someone is trying to rob you on the parking lot you don't need a flashlight to see them, see who they are, or see what they're doing. Flashlight skills are very low priority item for the private citizen.

About the only need for a private citizen to use a flashlight and a pistol at the same time would be in the home defense scenario in which you are awakened in the dead of night by a suspicious noise, burglar alarm, or breaking glass. Under those conditions, it would be wise to have a flashlight along with your handgun, primarily to avoid shooting a family member. If parts of your house are actually dark, you would need to illuminate a potential target to be certain of its identity before engaging with your handgun.

By the way, this means you need a handheld flashlight, not a weapon mounted light. Again, the weapon mounted light is intended for the military and police paradigm. In your case, if you use a weapon mounted light in your home, you are pointing your gun at an unknown person in order to light them up and see if you need to point a gun at them. WTF? Pointing your weapon-mounted light at a possible family member requires you to point a loaded firearm at a family

## Rangemaster Firearms Instructors

# 20th Anniversary

# REUNION

and  
Workshop

*We* began offering our Rangemaster Firearms Instructor Development Course in 1997, so 2017 is our 20th year of teaching this important course. To commemorate this milestone, we are gathering the clan at a very modern and comfortable training facility in Shawnee, Oklahoma, smack dab in the center of the United States. Entry is strictly limited to persons who have graduated from one of our instructor development courses at any location since 1997. We will gather to discuss new information, training techniques, equipment issues and other items we have observed in conducting training courses around the country. There will be classroom presentations, plus live fire on the modern indoor range to

check out and refine our skills. This is a great networking opportunity for Rangemaster certified instructors from all over the country. The BDC Gun Room is a new, modern facility with excellent classrooms and a modern indoor range. There will be presentations by Rangemaster staff instructors, including Tom & Lynn Givens, John Hearne, Tiffany Johnson, Lee Weems, John Murphy, John Correia, and Warren Wilson, plus live fire training on a state of the art indoor range. This promises to be an epic event for trainers. Space is limited, and the event will fill far in advance (it's

already filling). Don't miss out. Sign up on the Rangemaster Eventbrite page today! ■

RANGE • MASTER

Eventbrite



member under highly stressful conditions. This is a recipe for disaster. With a handheld light, you can illuminate the shadowy figure without pointing your gun at it unless you decide to shoot. This all goes back to context.

One thing I would suggest is reducing the possibility of ever needing that flashlight in your home. How can we do that? Well, here's what I've done. First, all the exterior doors to my home are metal doors in metal frames. Wooden doors in wooden frames are ridiculously easy to kick open, even if they have a decent deadbolt. A powerful kick simply tears the deadbolt through the wooden frame and the door flies open. If one kicks a steel door correctly mounted in a steel frame all he accomplishes is making a loud noise. Next, I have a burglar alarm system and I use it.

Third, I have spiral florescent light bulbs installed in several lamps on both floors of my home. These only cost a few pennies a day if you just leave them on 24 hours a day. Turning them on and warming them up requires more energy than just leaving them on. There are two lamps downstairs and two lamps upstairs with these bulbs that remain on 24/7. This accomplishes two things. First from the outside, my home looks the same all the time. This keeps anyone casing the neighborhood guessing as to whether I'm home or not. Second, once I emerge from my bedroom I can see. Both floors are well illuminated by these lamps that do not need to be turned on, since they are on all the time. Consequently, my need for a flashlight is greatly diminished.

If you are going to use a flashlight and a handgun at same time, we need a technique that allows us to check an area or a person without pointing the pistol at them prematurely. We also need a position that enhances our ability to retain the pistol, since it will be in one hand. In our context, our flashlight technique should allow us to do several things:

# LESSONS FROM 5,000 GUNFIGHTS

John Correia does business as ASP, or Active Self Protection.

The letters also stand for

Attitude, Skills and Plan, essential elements of successful self defense. John has a very popular You Tube channel, where each and every day he posts and narrates a surveillance video of a criminal attack against a citizen. Most of these incidents involve firearms. In the course of curating these videos for several years, John has studied footage from over 5,000 self defense episodes. I know John. He was in one of our Firearms Instructor Development Courses last year and had the second best aggregate score in a large class with a lot of switched on students. I suggest you pay attention to what he has to say. Below is his explanation of some of the patterns he's noticed.

—Tom

## ACTIVE SELF PROTECTION ATTITUDE. SKILLS. PLAN.

HOME

VIDEOS

PLAYLISTS

CHANNELS

DISCUSSION

ABOUT

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This is why you don't draw on drawn gun!  
7.1M views · 1 year ago



Mugger Wants Valuables, Gets Shot Instead  
3.4M views · 8 months ago



Argument Leads to Sucker Punch | Active Self Protection  
2.2M views · 3 months ago



This is Why You Shoot Until the Threat Stops  
2.1M views · 11 months ago



This is Why You Carry With A Round in the Chamber!  
1.9M views · 7 months ago

**1** Most gunfights aren't entangled gunfights. Empty-handed skills are important, but very rare once the gun comes out. They're necessary for LE more than CCW, by a long shot. For CCW, empty-handed skills are critical for the 80% of assaults that don't rise to the level of deadly force response. So go to your martial arts training.

**2** Reloads are almost vanishingly insignificant factors in gunfights. I have seen precisely 2 reloads in a real gunfight that weren't on-duty LEO. And neither of those affected the outcome of the fight. I have seen about 7 or 8 where a higher capacity firearm or the presence of a reload might have affected the outcome. So 0.2% of what I have witnessed. Don't spend much valuable class time teaching emergency and retention reloads...at least until

your highest level classes where all the fundamentals are flawless. I like Tom Givens' focus on the PROACTIVE reload once the fight is over. That has value in my opinion.

**3** He who puts the first shot into meaty bits on the other guy, wins. Not 100%, but darn near, at least partially because of the FIBS Factor (F\*\*\*, I've Been Shot!). Therefore, training a fast and reliable draw and first shot in the meaty bits is most important, in my opinion. It is THE critical skill to winning the gunfight. The best cover is fire superiority.

**4** Follow-up shots are necessary. Seldom do gunfights END with that first shot, so keep at him until he decides he is done fighting. This is where multiple target

- ♦ Illuminate objects with a without pointing the pistol at them;
- ♦ Retain the pistol and use a flashlight to defend it; and
- ♦ See the sights, illuminated by the flashlight, if shooting becomes necessary.

The technique that I have found meets these criteria better than others is the Neck Index. As far as I can tell, this was first taught on an organized basis by Ken Goode and Brian Puckett, independently. I have been teaching it for years as a simple, easy-to-use flashlight technique.

To use Neck Index properly, the pistol should be at Position Two of your presentation stroke. The gun is in your dominant hand, trigger finger straight and in register, thumb of the gun hand touching your pectoral muscle, and the muzzle pointed at the ground a few feet in front of you. The flashlight is held in the support hand. You need a flashlight with the tail switch. The head of the flashlight should protrude from the bottom of your palm and your thumb rests on the switch. The flashlight is indexed against the angle of your jawbone, the bottom of your cheekbone, or your earlobe. This gives you a repeatable index for the flashlight.

You don't want to hold the light any higher than the bottom of your cheekbone so that you do not occlude your peripheral vision to your support side. With very little practice, it's easy to swivel at the waist and keep your flashlight, eyes, and handgun all oriented in the same direction.

When you detect something that needs to be illuminated, you simply press the tail cap to turn the light on. If shooting is required, the pistol is thrust forward into the light beam, which illuminates the sights. As soon as firing stops, the flashlight is turned off, the pistol comes back to your pectoral index, and you take a few lateral steps so you are no longer where the flashlight was. You'll find that this technique illuminates your sights very well while illuminating the target at the same time.

acquisition is important, because it simulates a moving target to hit. (unless you have a fancy moving target that can move erratically, in which case you are high speed!)

**5** People have a crazy tendency to use the gun one-handed, mostly because they have stuff in their support hand. Training people to drop what's in their hands and get two hands on the gun is a necessary skill for #3 and 4.

**6** You simply WILL NOT stand still while someone wants to kill you. Unless you're counter-ambushing, when the gun comes out you will move. So training students to

move with purpose while #3 and 4 are going on is also a critical skill. They're going to do it, so teach them to use it.

**7** Chasing deadly threats is another bad habit that I see all the time. Teach your students to shoot and scoot. Move AWAY from the threat.

**8** Concealment ain't cover, but it works identically in 99.9% of cases. People won't shoot what they can't see, so teach your students to get to concealment, and to shoot through it if their threat is behind it.

**9** People love cover so much they give it a hug. Reliably. Like all the time. Teaching distance from cover/concealment is an important skill and one that is necessary.

**10** Malfunctions happen. They just do. But unless you're carrying a crap gun, they're rare. In all my videos, I have never seen someone clear a malfunction that needed a tap to the baseplate to get the gun back working again or whose mag fell out when the gun went click...rack and reassess is necessary though. In a couple of instances, a strip, rack, reload would have helped.

Just some random thoughts...I hope we have met your jimmy rustling needs for today. ■

– John Correira

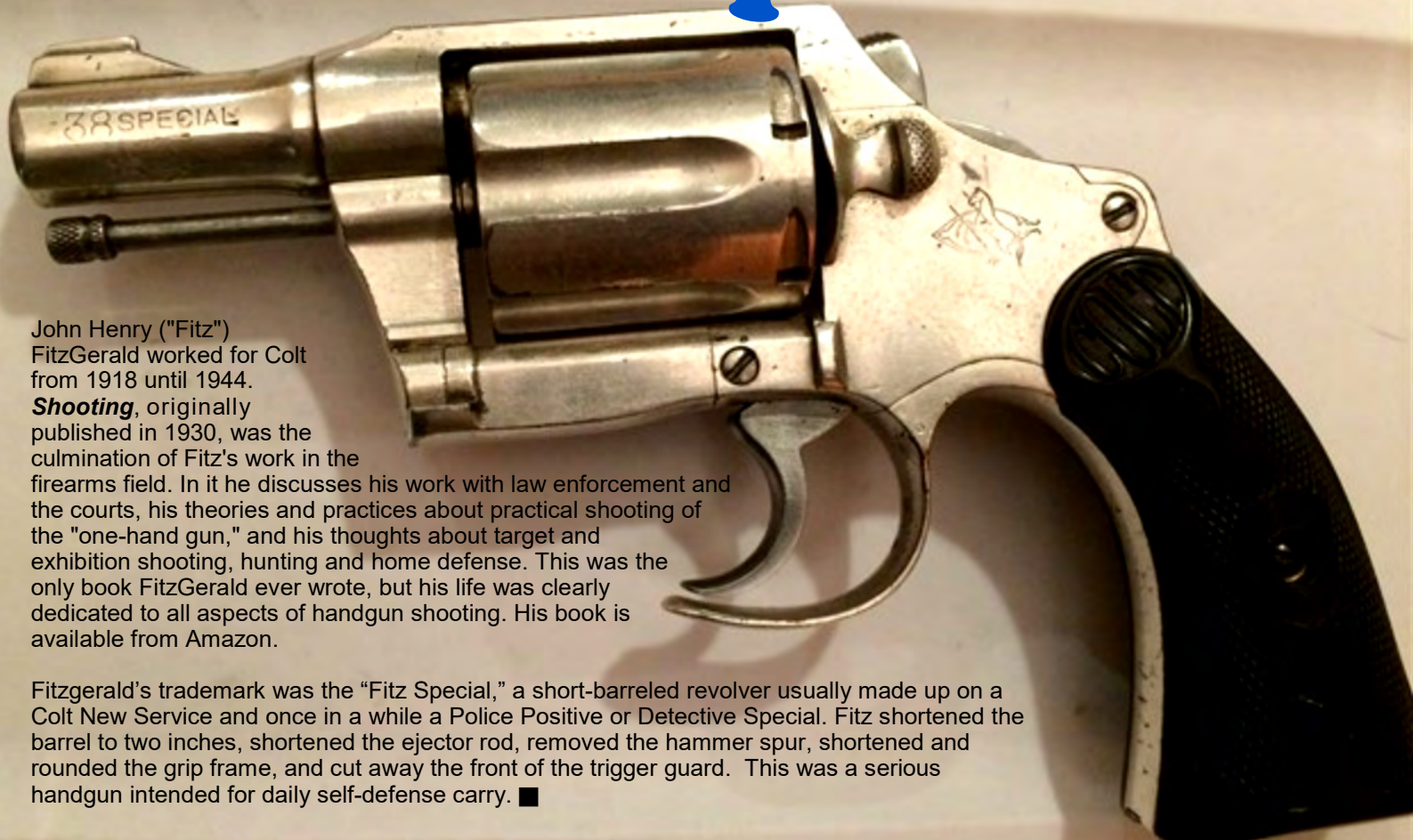


switches, work a cell phone, or whatever else you might need to do with your support hand. This is better than putting the flashlight between your legs, since if you have to move you would lose the flashlight. With the flashlight clamped under your arm you can step without dropping the flashlight. ■





# The Fitz Special



John Henry ("Fitz") Fitzgerald worked for Colt from 1918 until 1944.

**Shooting**, originally published in 1930, was the culmination of Fitz's work in the firearms field. In it he discusses his work with law enforcement and the courts, his theories and practices about practical shooting of the "one-hand gun," and his thoughts about target and exhibition shooting, hunting and home defense. This was the only book FitzGerald ever wrote, but his life was clearly dedicated to all aspects of handgun shooting. His book is available from Amazon.

Fitzgerald's trademark was the "Fitz Special," a short-barreled revolver usually made up on a Colt New Service and once in a while a Police Positive or Detective Special. Fitz shortened the barrel to two inches, shortened the ejector rod, removed the hammer spur, shortened and rounded the grip frame, and cut away the front of the trigger guard. This was a serious handgun intended for daily self-defense carry. ■



# pop QUIZ HOTSHOT

First person to post the correct answer on the Rangemaster Facebook page will be our February winner!

What was the first modern army to adopt a semi-automatic pistol as its sidearm?

- A. Switzerland
- B. Great Britain
- C. France
- D. The United States

facebook

