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DEFENSIVE TACTICS
FOR THE REAL WORLD

Firearms Training Services

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

With the exception of the true sociopath, there will normally be cues, principally body language, that will assist you in forecasting aggressive activity by an individual you are observing. Being aware of these cues is vital to your accurate threat assessment.

Of course, verbalization by the offender is a critical cue. Someone cursing, shouting epithets, and generally being aggressive verbally is a likely candidate for physical aggression. Bear in mind, however, that 80% of human communication is non-verbal, and you must be aware of and watchful for these sometimes-subtle indicators.

One of the most reliable indicators of an impending assault occurs when you are in a position of authority and the offender fails to comply with or contemptuously ignores your commands. If, for instance, you encounter an intruder in your home, and he does not immediately comply with your commands, you are in for a fight!

Other definitive indicators can include these, alone or in combination:

- 1) Hands on hips
- 2) Cocked head
- 3) Arms folded across the chest
- 4) Fists clenched, or clenched and Flexed alternately
- 5) Jaw clenched



BEHAVIORAL CUES TO IMPENDING AGGRESSION

by Tom Givens

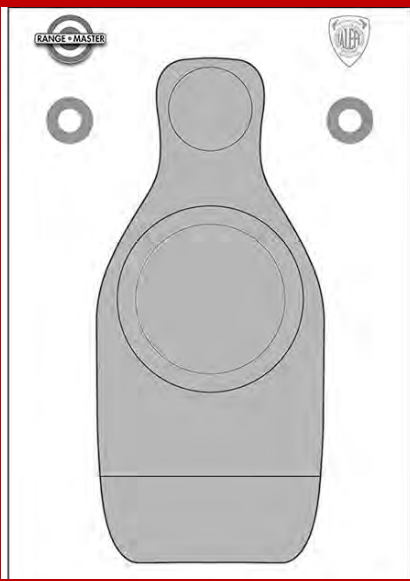
- 6) Spitting
- 7) Deliberate avoidance of eye contact
- 8) Continuously looking around
- 9) Sustained verbal rationalizations
- 10) Continuous yawning and stretching
- 11) Grooming behaviors, such as wiping the face
- 12) Shifting body weight onto one foot
- 13) Target glancing.

“Target glancing” refers to brief, repeated shifting of the offender’s eyes to your chin, your nose, or your weapon. Repeated target glances to your chin or nose means he is gauging the distance for a punch. Target glances at your weapon indicate a gun snatch may be imminent.

Always, when the pre-assault indicators are present, shift to the highest level of mental readiness and be geared up. If at all possible, extend the distance between the two of you, or

interpose a barrier, such as a parked car, a fence, or a sales counter. Have a plan and be ready to move quickly.

To learn to spot, correctly interpret, and react appropriately to these stimuli, I strongly suggest attending Managing Unknown Contacts, taught by Craig Douglas (Southnarc). Often referred to as MUC, Managing Unknown Contacts is the best way to learn this stuff short of being in dozens of street interactions with potential assailants. Craig includes a block on MUC in all his courses. See shivworks.com for more information. ■



New Rangemaster Target

For 2017 we adopted a new target design for use in our training courses. The RFTS-Q (shown to the left) is available from Action Target and Law Enforcement Targets, at a cost of 29 cents each in quantities from 100-499. Other quantities have different pricing.

This target is a neutral gray color, with an ocular window in the head, and an eight-inch circle and ten-inch circle in the upper chest. There is a belt line and two "parrots" (1.5-inch precision dots above the silhouette). The eight-inch circle is located exactly from collarbone to diaphragm and between the nipples on a normal size man. We now use this target in most of our training courses. ■

- Tom



Qualification in the Old West

In the days of the Old West, lawmen were not hired and sent off to an academy to learn their trade. They were hired based on their perceived

ability to do the job, at that moment. To test skill with the handgun, there was a pretty widely known drill that was often used to establish that a man, lawman or not, was competent with a handgun...

By
TOM
GIVENS

Playing cards on the frontier were a bit larger than those of today.

Modern poker cards measure 2.5" by 3.5", but in the Old West playing cards were much closer to the size of a modern 3" x 5" index card. To see if someone could shoot, a playing card would be tacked to a tree trunk or fence post. The shooter would back off five paces, and let fly with five shots. If all five rounds hit the card, the shooter was considered to be "a fair hand" with a pistol.

In his later years, John Wesley Hardin, one of the deadliest gunmen of his day, made his drinking money by shooting these cards, autographing them, and selling them for a few dollars. Here is a photo of one of Hardin's such cards, with "5 paces" clearly written on it. As you can see in the photo on the next page, he got his five hits.

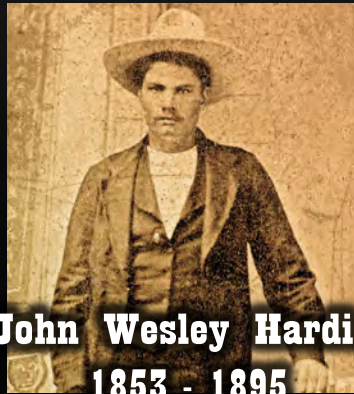
As a modern take-off on this drill, I designed a target with a 3x5" Ace of Spades card. Since we have much better modern equipment now, I added a time component. All five shots must be fired in less than five seconds. So, it's 5 shots, at 5 yards, in 5 seconds. When my students shoot this drill, I have them shoot two 5-shot runs on the same target. The first run is fired from the ready, and the second is from the holster. If all ten rounds are inside the card and both runs are under five seconds, I sign the sheet and present it to the student as a souvenir.

I recently ran this drill with a Boresight Solutions modified Glock 19. I fired two five-shot runs from the ready and two from the holster. All 20 rounds impacted well within the card, and my times are good (see photo on the following page). Of course, you can just use a 3" x 5" card. Give this drill a try and see how you stack up. ■



Qualification in the Old West

(From previous page)



John Wesley Hardin
1853 - 1895



Mastering TRIGGER CONTROL

Over the decades I have become convinced that trigger control is the single most important facet of getting good, solid hits, quickly and reliably with a handgun. There are a number of factors at play here.

With a long gun (rifle, carbine, shotgun) the shooter has more leeway than with a handgun. Partially, this is because the long gun has several contact points for musculoskeletal support and a longer sight radius. The main thing, though, is simply that the long gun weighs more than its trigger pull! If you have an eight-pound rifle with a two-pound trigger, it's not that hard to get the gun to discharge without moving the sights too much.

A handgun offers the opposite. If you have a two-pound pistol with a five-to eight-pound trigger, you have to put from 2.5 to 4 times the weight of the gun on the trigger to make the gun fire. Since the pistol is held at arm's length, it is very difficult to hold it steady while applying more

By
Tom Givens

weight on the gun than the gun weighs. Simple. What we have to do is learn to minimize lateral movement of the gun and be able to hold the pistol still enough (not perfectly still—it can't be done). In fact, there are four stages in trigger control, and if we master each we can shoot a lot better with the handgun. They are:

CONTACT: The “pad,” or fingerprint, of the shooter's index finger should contact the center of the face of the trigger. The trigger finger should not touch the frame of the gun. Ideally, the only place the

trigger finger should contact the pistol is on the face of the trigger. (That's why we call it a trigger finger!)

SLACK: Semi-auto pistols have “slack” or pre-engagement travel built into the action. This is a bit of rearward movement in the trigger, prior to the actual trigger pull. The shooter can feel a distinct difference in the amount of finger pressure needed to take up the slack as opposed to that pressure needed to fire the piece. Some designs have significantly more slack than others. As the gun is brought to bear on the target, the slack is taken up, so that the trigger finger feels the

resistance of the trigger pull. As the gun goes on target, the trigger finger contacts the trigger and removes the slack. When the gun goes on the target, the trigger finger goes on the trigger.

PRESS: Beware of semantics. The words you use form images in your subconscious, and this drives your actions. For instance, if you think “squeeze” the trigger, you will likely squeeze your entire hand while moving the trigger. We call this “milking the trigger.” This results in low misses. As the lower fingers tighten their grip, the barrel is pulled downward as the gun fires. Instead, we want to “press” the trigger, with steady rearward pressure. We hold the gun with our hand; we fire the gun with our trigger finger. The student must learn to use the trigger finger independently, while maintaining a constant, consistent, unchanging grip on the pistol with the rest of the hand. When enough pressure to the trigger is applied to disengage the sear, the gun fires.

It may help to think of the trigger as the pistol’s “gas pedal.” Using the analogy of a car, which all shooters are familiar with, the magazine is the gas tank, the front sight is the green light, and the trigger is the accelerator. When you see the green light, you apply steady, increasing pressure to the accelerator until the bullet takes off smoothly. If you stomp the gas pedal, the car takes off jerkily and under less control. Same with the bullet. It won’t matter if the sights are on the target if you smash the trigger and knock the sights off the target as the gun fires.

RE-SET: Once the gun fires, the shooter must maintain contact with the trigger. Many newbies will have the tendency to take their finger completely off the trigger the instant the gun fires, and this must be corrected. As soon as the shooter sees the front sight begin to lift, that bullet has exited the barrel and is in flight. The shooter can no longer do anything to affect that shot, so he should forget it and start concentrating on the next shot! The first step is to relax the trigger

finger’s pressure just enough to let the trigger return forward to its re-set point. That is normally a very short distance, and there is usually an audible and tactile “click” when the trigger re-sets. There is no need to let the trigger go any further forward than that. Once the trigger is re-set, the shooter can begin working on the delivery of the next shot.

There are a couple of drills I really like to assist with mastering trigger control. They require concentration and effort, but if you practice them you will become a better shot. Both are fired on a standard B-8 bullseye target.

The first doesn’t really have a name, but I use it a lot. The target is at 10 yards. Fire a total of 30 shots. The first 10 are fired using both hands. The second 10 are fired using the dominant hand only. The final 10 are fired using the non-dominant hand only. Possible score is 300 points. I have shot 299 on several occasions, but a 300 score has so far eluded me. I’ll keep trying. A somewhat briefer version has 10 shots with both hands, 5 shots right hand only and 5 shots left hand only, still at 10 yards. I have shot this one clean, 200x200 (see photo, bottom right).

The second is the Super Test, attributed variously to Ken Hackathorn or Larry Vickers. I suspect Hackathorn is this drill’s father. Again, 30 rounds are fired, as follows. All strings start with gun in hand, at the ready.

- **5 yards:** 10 rounds in 5 seconds
- **10 yards:** 10 rounds in 10 seconds
- **15 yards:** 10 rounds in 15 seconds

My personal best on this drill is 298. In addition to the trigger skills worked on in the first drill, the Super Test also requires a different cadence for each string. The closer the target, the faster the cadence, and vice versa. I would consider any score above 270 (90%) on this drill to be damned fine shooting.

Give these drills a try periodically. Active shooters, terrorists and other emerging threats may require longer range engagements and thus, more precision than we are accustomed to with handguns. These drills will help you maximize your ability with your sidearm. ■





We had a simply outstanding Firearms Instructor Development Course on October 20-22, 2017 in Dallas. We had 22 students (including two ladies) from Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma and several other states. Twenty of the 22 students successfully completed the course (including the two ladies), and the scores indicated a high degree of skill. Here are the class averages:

FBI Pistol Qualification Course:
Ave: **96.7%** (eight students shot 100%)

Rangemaster Instructor Qualification:
Ave: **96.6%** (one student shot 100%)

Rangemaster Instructor Written Exam:
Ave: **95.6%** (no perfect scores)

The last instructor development course in 2017 will be held at the Volusia County Gun Club, just a bit east of Orlando, Florida, on Dec 8-10. Please visit our Eventbrite page for more information or to register. ■



RECOMMENDED READING

Some states, such as Texas and Florida, keep meticulous records on their handgun carry permit holders. Between them, these two states have millions of permit holders, and have for years. This allows the tracking of trends among those permit holders. Howard Ross Nemerov recently analyzed this data in a scholarly research paper, showing just how law abiding and peaceable Texas permit holders are. Blood in the streets? Hardly. In fact, Nemerov concludes that permits holders are an “Asset to Texas.” The article abstract is provided to the right, and you can read the full article at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3011938>. Highly recommended! ■

- Tom

Concealed Handgun Licensing: Asset to Texas

by Howard Ross Nemerov
(August 1, 2017)

Abstract: Collating conviction data reported by Texas Department of Public Safety, crime data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and census data, it's possible to determine relative criminality of handgun carry licensees to their equivalent non-licensee population. This paper analyzes Texas carry licensees versus non-licensee Texans over age 21 to determine relative criminality, and also cites research enabling a comparison between police officer malfeasance and carry licensees.

The Browning High Power was the first service pistol with a high capacity, double-column magazine. It was adopted by the Belgian army as their official sidearm in what year?

- A) 1922
- B) 1941
- C) 1935
- D) 1950

Think you know the answer? Reply to Tom's newsletter thread on the Rangemaster Facebook page. The first person to reply with the correct answer will be this month's

WINNER!

