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FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

DRILL OF THE MONTH

Throughout 2021 we will be running a Drill of the Month in each edition of the newsletter. The goal is help motivate folks to get to the range and actually shoot their defensive weapons, and to have some fun in the process. Each month we'll post a drill or a short course of fire. You are encouraged to go to the range, shoot the drill, and then post your thoughts and a photo of your target on the Rangemaster Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rangemaster/> .

Short Combat Accuracy Test (SCAT)

Use an RFTS-Q or IALEFI-QP silhouette, scored as follows:

Hits in the center chest ring or head ring count 10 points

Hits in the secondary chest ring count 6 points

All other hits count 2 points. Zero points below the belt line.

Hit Factor Scoring

5 yards Draw and fire 4 rounds to the chest.

5 yards From Ready, fire 1 round to the head. Do this 2 times

5 yards From Ready, fire 3 rounds using dominant hand only.

5 yards From Ready, fire 3 rounds using non-dominant hand only.

7 yards Draw and fire 4 rounds to the chest.

10 yards Draw and fire 4 rounds to the chest.

20 rounds fired in total

Record time for each stage, add together for a total time.

Add up the points on the target (200 points possible)

Divide total points by total time, for an Index.

Multiply Index by 12.5 for a final score.

Par score = 100. Goal is a score above 100.

Example- 184 points divided by 22.3 seconds = 8.25 X 12.5 = 103.1 score.

Ratings:

100-125

Competent

125.1- 140

Advanced

140.1

or higher indicates a very high skill level



“If you look like food, you will be eaten”, Clint Smith

The following is an excerpt from an article written by our good friend Greg Ellifritz some time ago. This is very sound advice.

How to Avoid Looking Like a Victim

We've talked about criminal pre-assault indicators, now it's time to discuss "victim indicators." What makes a criminal choose a particular person as a victim?

The authors of the book [Left of Bang](#) describe behavioral clusters that they have named "*submissive clusters*" and "*uncomfortable clusters*." These behaviors are universal across all cultures and nations. When several of these behaviors are seen together in the same person, it signals that a person is overly submissive or extremely uncomfortable with their surroundings. Uncomfortable and submissive people are victimized more often than calm and confident people. The following behaviors form the submissive and uncomfortable clusters:

- Bouncing feet
- Feet oriented towards a door or escape route
- Legs crossed while seated or feet wrapped around chair legs
- Torso leaning away from a potential threat
- Torso rotated towards exits or escape routes
- Arms across the chest or pulled into the chest
- Arms or hands covering the groin
- Shoulders raised
- Darting eyes
- Any body posture that makes you appear smaller

- Wrists or palms exposed
- Failing to make eye contact

(Van Horne and Riley. [*Left of Bang*](#). pp 80-88)

These clusters are difficult to detect by yourself. Give the list to a friend and have the friend evaluate you one day when you are out in public. If you or your friends notice any of these behaviors, work to stop displaying them. If you seem less like a victim, you won't be victimized as often.

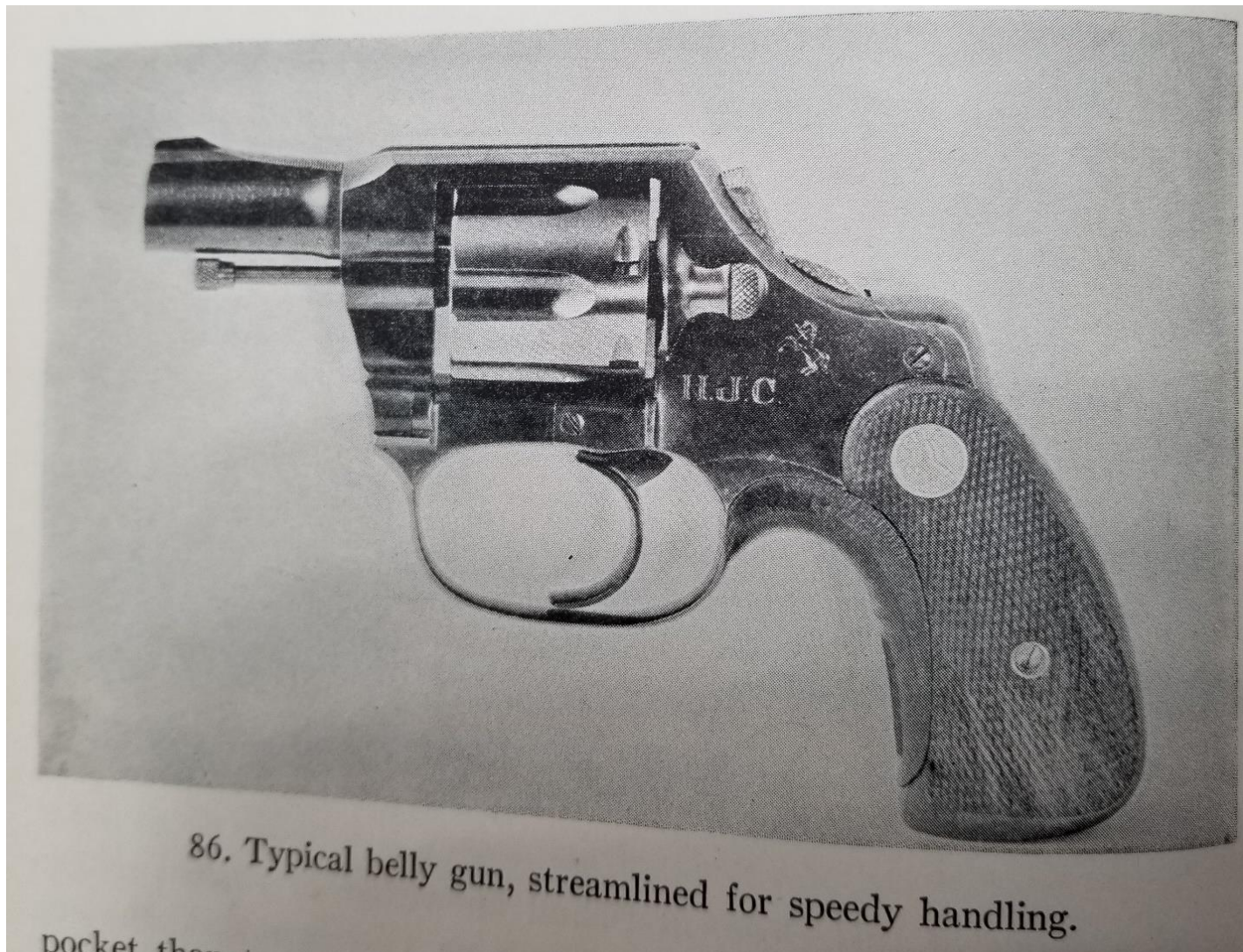
Besides the behavior clusters identified in *Left of Bang*, we can also look at some other victimology research to learn what we shouldn't be doing. A well-known study showed videos of people walking down the street to incarcerated prisoners. The prisoners were asked to subjectively rate each person as a "good" victim or not. There was wide agreement between all of the prisoners about who exactly they would attack and who they would avoid.

The prisoners looked primarily at the physical characteristics of the victim and the victim's relative awareness. Among the physical characteristics they evaluated, they looked primarily at gait patterns, body type, sex, and relative fitness levels. Fatter and less fit people were chosen more often than fitter-looking folks. Women were chosen more often than men. Anyone from either sex who had a gait abnormality (was walking funny) was chosen. All of these factors indicate relative weakness. In any predatory system, the weak get eaten. Don't display characteristics of weakness.

The prisoners assessed relative awareness by looking at whether the people were paying attention to their surroundings or not. They also assessed whether the person appeared "clueless" or seemed to understand what was happening around him. Unsurprisingly, criminals chose the least aware people as victims. In total, the crooks tended to pick those people who were weak, alone, and not aware of what was going on. Do your best to avoid fitting into any of those categories when out in public.

The more things change, the more they stay the same....

Here is a photo from Charles Askins' 1939 book on gunfighting. This is a Colt Police Positive with the barrel cut back, a ramped front sight installed, the hammer spur removed, the trigger guard enlarged slightly, the grip frame rounded off, and a grip adaptor installed. Today, 82 years later, there is nothing available that will do a snubby's job any better.



86. Typical belly gun, streamlined for speedy handling.

pocket than

Understanding Magazine Capacity

The detachable magazine is the heart of a semiautomatic weapon, whether handgun or carbine. The magazine is a feeding device which holds the ammunition supply for the weapon ready for use. Most defensive handguns were designed with a specific magazine capacity in mind.

First, let's set some terms. The magazine capacity for which the handgun was originally designed and intended to use is its "normal capacity magazine". If one designs a magazine of the same overall dimensions, but that holds less ammunition than the original design, that is a "reduced capacity" magazine. For example, the Glock 17 was designed with a 17 round magazine that fits flush with the bottom of the grip frame. During the ridiculous Clinton magazine capacity restrictions, these same size magazines were limited to 10 rounds. Thus, the 17 round magazine for a Glock 17 is not a "high-capacity magazine" it is a "normal capacity magazine" or a "standard capacity magazine". The 10 round magazine for a Glock 17 is a "reduced capacity" magazine.

It is interesting to note that organizations from the US Department of Justice to the Centers for Disease Control conducted extensive studies after the sunset of the 10 year magazine capacity restrictions. None of those studies found any evidence whatsoever that limiting ammunition capacity had any effect on crime. None. What such limitations do have an effect on is your ability to adequately defend yourself in a life-and-death situation.

The purpose of higher capacity magazines is not to let you shoot more. Their purpose is to reduce the likelihood that you will have to take your pistol out of action to reload it during a fight in which a couple of seconds can mean the difference between winning and losing. Once your pistol is empty and it must be reloaded it is out of action and cannot be fired until the reloading process has been completed. Master level competitive shooters, real champions, need somewhere between 1 and 1.5 seconds to reload a semiautomatic pistol, using competition gear. A very skillful shooter working with concealment carry gear will need more like 2

to 3 seconds to complete a reload. Persons with less skill and practice will require even more time. In simple terms that means that once your pistol is empty you are out of the fight for some period of seconds until you can get it reloaded. During that time you just might lose the fight.

The amount of time that elapses between shots is referred to as one's "split time". A pretty decent shooter typically has a split time around .25 seconds from shot to shot at close distances. A very good shooter will have splits around .20 seconds. These split times represent the ability to accurately fire four or five shots per second. This means that when firing at combat speed a five shot handgun will only be able to stay in the fight for about one second. A 10 shot pistol gives the shooter two seconds of firing before he has to stop and reload. A 15 shot pistol has three seconds of potential fighting time before it runs out. This is the true purpose of magazines that hold more rounds. Note that there may be more than one attacker; your attacker(s) may be using cover or moving, or both; and that it often takes a fair number of shots to overcome these issues. There is no penalty for having unfired rounds left in your gun at the end of the fight.

Observations on shotgun stock length and buckshot selection.

Shotgun Butt Stock Length

"Length of Pull" (LOP) refers to the straight line distance from the trigger to the center of the shotgun's butt. This measurement is critical for proper performance, and ideally, the LOP is fitted to each individual officer. Obviously, this is only practical where shotguns are issued to individual officers, or officers are allowed to use department approved, personal weapons. In agencies where shotguns are issued at each shift, the LOP needs to be standardized so that all officers can work at least acceptably well with the shotgun.

There are two primary factors to be considered when discussing LOP in a self defense or Law Enforcement (LE) capacity.

American shotguns were designed for sporting use, on live birds such as ducks or doves, and on clay bird sports such as trap and skeet. Shooting technique for these sports involves a more bladed body posture or shooting stance, and light clothing is generally worn. The standard LOP became about 14 inches.

In modern law enforcement, many current officers are of smaller stature than in the past. Add to that, body armor adds thickness to the torso, in effect shortening the arms. The shooting stance with the fighting shotgun is more squared up to the target, with hips and shoulders facing the threat. This provides commonality of training with the handgun or empty hand techniques. It also keeps the body armor oriented toward the threat. We do not want the arm openings in the body armor pointed toward an adversary.

With these things in mind, a LOP in the 12-12.5 inch range works far better. Shooters wearing body armor will be able to mount the gun properly and have a more secure grip on the gun, to prevent disarming attempts. A too long LOP hyperextends the support side arm, making it harder to reliably function a manually operated pump action shotgun, leading to malfunctions. It also makes it much easier for an assailant to take the shotgun from its user.

The standard factory butt stock on most shotguns can be easily shortened, or aftermarket stocks can be installed with nothing but a screwdriver for tools. This simple, inexpensive modification will greatly improve the officers' comfort, make them better able to use the shotgun effectively, and reduce the risk of disarming attacks. Improvement in shooting skill breeds confidence, which leads to properly deploying the shotgun in circumstances that indicate its use, such as hold-up alarm response and felony vehicle stops. There is no downside to the modification. Even the largest officers will be able to effectively use a shotgun with a 12-12.5 inch LOP, whereas a smaller male or most female officers will be at a severe disadvantage with a 14" LOP.

Buckshot Selection

For over a hundred years, the traditional military and police buckshot size has been 00 Buckshot. This pellet size offers an adequate number of pellets, and sufficient mass to ensure adequate penetration to reach vital organs situated deeply within the body, from various angles. Reducing the

diameter of a sphere reduces its weight/mass very quickly. Smaller buckshot sizes often lack adequate penetration for LE use, due to that reduced weight/mass. 00 Buckshot offers a combination of adequate patterning and adequate penetration.

For most of that same time period, the standard 12 gauge loading of 00 Buck has been 9 pellets. That number allows three layers of three pellets in a 2 ¾ inch standard 12 gauge shell.

A phenomenon that has long been noted with the standard 9 pellet load, is the “9th pellet flyer”. When fired, 8 of the pellets go into the same general area, with a 9th pellet taking off on its own at a tangent to the main pattern. This is believed to be due to the way the 9 pellet load is stacked within the shell. There is a lot of pellet to pellet contact, increasing the chances for a deformed pellet as the shot charge is blasted down the shotgun’s barrel, resulting in a flat spot somewhere on its surface. Once the pellets leave the shotgun’s barrel, air pressure is exerted differently on the curved surfaces of the round pellet and on that flat spot. That causes the pellet to fly off at an unpredictable angle.

I am personally familiar with two cases in which a 9 pellet 00 Buck load was fired at Person A, with most of the pellets striking person A. In both cases, however, a single pellet struck Person B, with fatal results. In one case, the person struck was a hostage, in the second, a law enforcement officer. Both died from the single pellet that struck them.

To counter this, most ammunition makers now offer an 8 pellet 00 Buckshot load. Eight pellets are stacked in the shotshell completely differently than are nine pellets, resulting in much less pellet to pellet contact. If an 8 pellet payload is combined with buffering (the granulated plastic filler between the pellets) and a modern wad like Federal’s Flite Control, the 9th pellet flyer issue is eliminated. This results in better patterns, more accountability for pellets fired in public, reduced danger to citizens or others in proximity to a person being engaged with buckshot, increased shooter confidence in his equipment, and overall better performance.

The accompanying photos show the MagPul stock on an 870, a well set up shotgun, and the 8 pellet payload of a Federal 00 load.



Editor's Note: Steven Harris is a very well-respected attorney who for decades has specialized in use of force issues, in cases involving federal agents, police officers and armed citizens. Please use the links in this article to read his previous work on his "May, Should, Must" paradigm. Future issues of the newsletter will continue Steven's legal input.

**FIREARMS INSTRUCTORS
TEACHING "SELF-DEFENSE" LAW???**

Steven M. Harris

Florida Bar 1979

Martindale: Preeminent® - AV(35+ years)

For decades I scoffed at the notion that a firearms instructor might include "self-defense" *law* (*justified* use of force in defense of self, others, or property, or to thwart a criminal act) in his or her training curriculum. Times have changed, so the saying goes; I scoff no more.

Let's analyze the question posed, by relating it to the deadly force paradigm elements I conceived and published on the [Modern Service Weapons](http://modernserviceweapons.com) website. Before you continue reading, please go to these selected posts for a "primer" on the paradigm elements:

CAN: <http://modernserviceweapons.com/?p=17444>

MAY: <http://modernserviceweapons.com/?p=15421>

SHOULD: <http://modernserviceweapons.com/?p=15421>
<http://modernserviceweapons.com/?p=18897>

MUST: <http://modernserviceweapons.com/?p=15918>

CAN (MINDSET, SKILL, EQUIPMENT)

"Self-defense" *law* can be somewhat complicated. (I devote about three hours daily to the study of LEO and nonsworn use of force incidents and reports, statutes, appellate caselaw, and to reading or writing about the subject). Teaching it requires discipline, precision, and recognition of and obedience to discrete rules. Seem like the attitude and skills a Rangemaster-trained firearms instructor might possess? Audio/visual equipment and commonly-owned portable devices facilitate classroom distribution of official and unofficial legal materials.

If you integrate "self-defense" *law* into your curriculum employing an overarching approach, the go to materials are the writings and formal training available from Massad Ayoob and Andrew Branca. Their formulations for justified use of deadly force ("AOJ," et al., and "5 Elements," respectively) almost certainly work, no matter the jurisdiction or situation. Some legal defense services membership organizations (ACLDN, CCW Safe, USCCA) provide first-rate material for instruction using that approach. Takeaway: Many dedicated full-time firearms instructors could capably convey use of force legal fundamentals; it seems to me that few lawyers (whether criminal defense specialist, prosecutor, legislator, or judge) know the subject well enough to explain the legal basics better than a committed nonlawyer.

MAY (LEGALITY)

Does a nonlawyer's teaching "self-defense" *law* constitute the unauthorized practice of law ("UPL")? Short answer: Almost certainly, no. Many instructors explain their state's laws on firearm storage and open/concealed carry without suffering challenge by UPL guardians.

Classroom lecturing which merely provides legal information is rarely considered the prohibited *giving of advice* about the *legal consequences* of a *specific act or pending matter*. A nonlawyer may provide explanation of the law by using homemade hypotheticals or actual scenarios. However, a nonlawyer should not provide analysis or advice in response to a specific use of force scenario posed or incurred by a student. Students should be urged to seek the counsel of a licensed attorney for specific analyses or advice.

Instructors should seek UPL avoidance guidance from a licensed attorney practicing in the state. That attorney, if qualified, might also be asked to provide substantive commentary on the instructor's legal material. (In some instances, deference to judicial interpretation of statutory language is necessary to appropriately explain the actual state of the law).

SHOULD (WHAT'S AT STAKE, YOUR DECISION)

In my many years of study, I have not seen appellate caselaw holding a firearms instructor incurs civil liability for student mistake of intentional but unjustified use of force. (I recommend [Claude Werner's "Serious Mistakes Gunowners Make"](#) monograph for a class handout). Inquire of your liability carrier on its position (if any) of a nonlawyer insured teaching "self-defense" law, and for any coverage question for student error based litigation.

Lack of civil exposure doesn't mean a firearms instructor won't find himself or herself "involved" in a student's criminal prosecution or civil suit. An instructor might be subpoenaed for deposition and/or as a trial witness, or requested to provide a police or prosecutor or defense interview, whether or not "self-defense" law is included in his or her curriculum.

MUST (YOU DECIDED, NOW WHAT)

If you use state specific law in your curriculum, your state's statutes (don't overlook definition provisions) and the "standard" or customary criminal *jury instructions* on justified use of force should be your go to material. I offer the following for your consideration:

Do explain what is deadly force and nondeadly force; the difference in the law as it applies to defense of persons (self and others), to property (burglary/theft/shoplifting/trespass), and crime intervention; the law of defensive firearm display, brandishing, gunpointing, and discharge (including "warning" shot). Do explain "Castle" and vehicle defense particulars; the duty or nonduty to "retreat" there, and elsewhere; the law pertaining to the shooting of animals, mutual combat, provocation/aggressor characterization, and citizen's arrest. Explain the common use of force predicates -- reasonable belief, imminence, and necessity.

Don't conflate the SHOULD and the MAY (read [THIS](#)); don't explain tactical or situational awareness concepts (such as disparity of force, the so-called 21-foot rule, presence of pre-attack indicators) as immutable legal principles. Avoid law enforcement vernacular; don't present inapplicable 4th Amendment "excessive force" concepts (de-escalation, force continuum, *Garner*, *Graham*). If you discuss "aftermath" considerations, don't give advice about invocation of 5th Amendment privilege or how to respond to Miranda warnings. Don't regurgitate common legal myths and misconceptions (such as there is "Stand Your Ground self-defense" distinguished from "ordinary self-defense," or that bare fear, a feeling of imminent danger, or "could have had a gun" justify the use of deadly force).

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 9-11 Pistol Instructor Development, Bandera, TX

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tx-tickets-102857140476>

Apr 21 Historical Handgun, KR Training

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/historical-handgun-tickets-113945638472>

Apr 22 Defensive Revolver, KR Training, Lincoln, TX

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/one-day-defensive-revolver-course-tx-tickets-100979534506>

Apr 23-25 Pistol Instructor Development, KR Training, TX

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tx-tickets-100979414146>

Apr 26 Defensive Shotgun, KR Training, Lincoln, TX

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/one-day-defensive-shotgun-course-kr-tickets-100980836400>

April 30-May 2 Pistol Instructor Development, Beaumont, TX

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/three-day-firearms-instructor-development-course-tx-tickets-100962300960>

NOTE: Due to the high cost and scarcity of ammunition, we are cutting round counts and substituting classroom tactical training for some of the range time. When you register for a class, you'll be notified of the ammo requirements for that particular course.



In general. Instructor courses will require 850 rounds of ammunition, while Combative Pistol or Intensive Pistol will be held to about 500-600 rounds.

Ammo Sources: <https://ammoseek.com/>

This is an on-line resource that finds inventory from a large number of suppliers, from whom you can then order ammunition.