



## **FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER**

### **DRILL OF THE MONTH**

Throughout 2026 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/> .

### **3/2/1 at 6**

This is a simple, low round count drill that works on several skills in a very brief exercise. The target is the RFTS-Q silhouette, an IALEFI-Q, or an IDPA cardboard target. If the IDPA target is used, add a 2" circle to one shoulder. The drill is fired at 6 yards, about the length of a typical SUV.

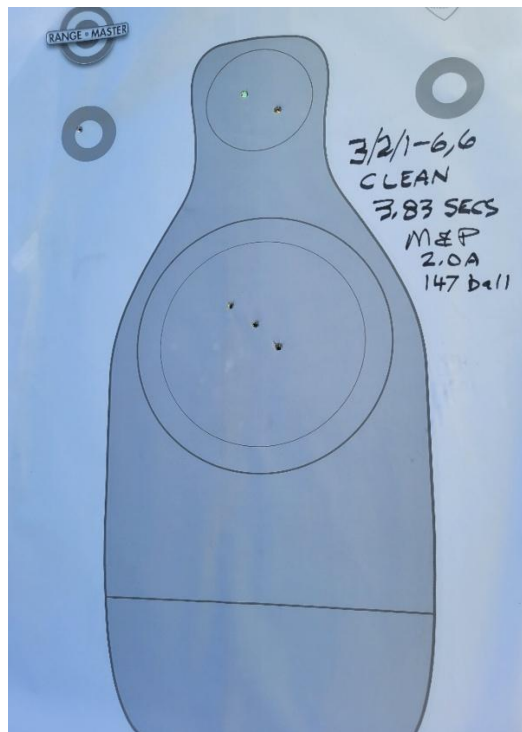
Shooter starts holstered, concealed. On signal, draw and fire 3 rounds to the 8" chest circle, 2 rounds to the head circle, and 1 round to the zero circle above the target's shoulder. Use an electronic timer or have an accomplice

time you with a stopwatch. Record the time for each run. All 6 rounds must hit the indicated area for a run to count.

Shoot the drill 3 times, for a total of 18 rounds. A single miss is a disqualification. If all 18 rounds hit the intended target zones, total the times for the 3 runs. The total time becomes your score. Your goals are as follows:

Normal earth people who carry-	35 seconds or less
Well trained shooters-	30 seconds or less
Instructors-	25 seconds or less
Pistol Wizards-	15 seconds or less

This drill tests a rapid concealed presentation, varying cadences, a vertical transition and a horizontal transition, and a strict accuracy/accountability requirement, all in very few rounds. Give it a try.



## Peace of Mind

A few weeks ago, an elderly man walking his dog was attacked by three large pit bulls who had “escaped” from their yard. Both the gentleman and his pet were killed. A couple of hours later, the same dogs attacked a woman and her two-year old child, sending both to the hospital with life threatening injuries. That same week a university professor was shot to death in his own home. Also that week, a woman was shot seven times by a total stranger in a WalMart parking lot. Surgeons said it was a miracle that she survived, and that her recovery will take at least a year. What did all of these victims have in common? Two things.

First, they were all engaged in mundane, daily routine tasks. None were doing anything risky, or criminal, or in “bad areas”.

Second, they were all unarmed. That is a choice.

The first step in taking control over your own life is to accept that violence can occur anywhere, at any time. Then, understand that being a victim is a choice. You can be chosen without your consent, but you cannot be victimized without it. Jeff Cooper put it very well in 1996:

“It is not as difficult as playing the violin, but it is a bit harder than riding a bicycle. When it is achieved, adequate pistolcraft produces in its owner a peace of mind unknown to other people—as long as he is armed, awake and aware. He may never have to use his pistol in a lethal encounter,

but the fact that he knows that he can do so better than any adversary he may meet gives him a serenity that is the envy of the rabbit people.”



Jeff Cooper at Gunsite, 1980

Photo by Jim McClary

# Wound Ballistics

Right after World War II, the US Army Medical Corps undertook to investigate and quantify why some small arms were more effective than others during the war. The resulting book, Wound Ballistics is a valuable reference resource for trainers.

The hard copies are difficult to find (I have one), but the entire thing is now available on the internet for viewing or downloading. Our colleague Doug Wylie found the digital version for us, here:

[https://achh.army.mil/history/book-wwii-woundballistics-default?fbclid=IwY2xjawPE89hleHRuA2FlbQlzMABicmlkETFLdG14d3RVY1BjaVJxQVdrc3J0YwZhchBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHsTQ2Zd6kcY00eq60Yv-HGaCW8wU0FDBVQnn986Sv4VkUlZg7eF8Mxe5RaDz\\_aem\\_bwZl0htWRjLmWdmx4CR5gQ](https://achh.army.mil/history/book-wwii-woundballistics-default?fbclid=IwY2xjawPE89hleHRuA2FlbQlzMABicmlkETFLdG14d3RVY1BjaVJxQVdrc3J0YwZhchBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHsTQ2Zd6kcY00eq60Yv-HGaCW8wU0FDBVQnn986Sv4VkUlZg7eF8Mxe5RaDz_aem_bwZl0htWRjLmWdmx4CR5gQ)

## Your Chance for a Free Class

We maintain a Patreon subscription service at [Patreon.com/tomgivens](https://Patreon.com/tomgivens) . Each month we post 10-12

informative short articles or videos, to help keep you abreast of equipment, techniques, and legal issues of which you need to be aware. A subscription is only \$10.00 per month, but you can save money by paying for a full year at just \$108.00. Everyone who pays for a one-year subscription, or a one year extension of your current membership between Feb 1 and March 1, 2026 will be eligible for a drawing to be held in March. This will be a random, everyone's name in a hat drawing. The winner will receive 100% free tuition for ONE Rangemaster class, anywhere in the US, any time in 2026. That is a value of up to \$1,250.00! Subscribe now and get the information you need plus a chance at free training.

## **Safe Neighborhoods?**

On January 3 in Raleigh, NC, a female teacher was in her own home at 6:30am when she found an intruder inside. She called 911 and was on the phone with the 911 operator when the man assaulted her, beating so badly that she died shortly after being taken to the hospital.

Police caught the intruder nearby. He and the victim were not known to each other, it was just a random burglary. The offender had been previously arrested over 20 times, including a recent burglary arrest. Our "catch and release" justice system put him right back out on the street. Of

course, nearby neighbors interviewed by the press were “shocked and terrified” that something like this could happen in their “safe” neighborhood.

### Lessons:

1. There are no safe neighborhoods. Criminals are mobile, just like the rest of American society. They make house calls.
2. The time it takes to process a 911 call and for police to drive from where they are to where you are makes it a one in a million chance that police will arrive in time to save you in a real crisis.
3. Being armed and trained is your best chance to stay healthy.
- 4.

<https://www.wral.com/news/local/woman-killed-home-man-breaks-into-home-raleigh-january-2026/>

## Update on 2024 Crime Rates

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is a federal agency that collects and publishes data on crime and related issues.

It takes a while to gather data from all over the country, so the final numbers for 2024 just came out. There are two items in their report I'd like you to think about.

First, in that one year, there were 775,000 Thefts from Motor Vehicles, plus 750,000 Motor Vehicle Thefts. Together, that is more than a Million and a Half opportunities for a thug to get possession of the gun you left in your car. This is where most crime guns come from. PLEASE do not leave guns unsecured in your car.

Next, the report refers to only four crimes as Violent Crimes. Violent Crimes consist of Murder, Aggravated Assault, Rape, and Robbery. In 2024 there were over 3.6 million of these. That works out to 9,863 per day. Be prepared.

## **The Poison of “Good Enough”: How Comfort has Replaced Capability**

**By Rangemaster certified instructor  
Chris Bean**



The pistol is unforgiving. It doesn't care about your intentions, your "claims," or how hard you worked yesterday. It only cares about the right now, the today. Not work before, nor work to come.

It appears we've developed a cultural allergy to cold, current objective feedback. We have traded the pursuit of exceptionalism for the warm, fuzzy blanket of being "good enough." This isn't a lapse in motivation; it is a psychological permissive that breeds the stagnation that is quietly eroding high performance. Within the context of defensive pistolcraft, it is a thought process that is closely tied to potentially the greatest of ramifications.

## **1. The Trap of Continual Gratification**

We have become "fallacious beings," tricked by our own mental gymnastics of ability. Modern social structures emphasize continual and immediate gratification. The instant dopamine hit of a "like" or a participation trophy. Where a singularly cherry picked example equates to the end of developmental pursuit.

In psychology, this is linked to Present Bias, where practitioners place a disproportionately high value on immediate rewards over long-term gains. When training, the "good enough" shooter stops when they're tired because the immediate comfort of "got it" outweighs the distant, invisible reward of progression. Where a singular example of ability stops the pursuit cold. Where statistical anomaly

is the permissive to end further understanding. The box has been checked, the video was captured.

We have prioritized the feeling of being a shooter over the capability of being one.

## **2. Motivation vs. Discipline: The Volatility of Feeling**

The low to intermediately skilled often wait for "motivation" to strike. However, as depicted in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) relying on extrinsic motivation or fleeting emotional states is a recipe for failure. Or at minimum, the quickest way to quitting.

- Motivation is a feeling; it is fickle and subject to your blood sugar, the weather, your whims.

- Discipline is a cognitive structure. It is the ability to override the "impulse to quit" through Executive Function.

By prioritizing how we feel over what we do, we ensure our performance never rises above the landscape of mediocrity. Exceptionalism requires the "Relentlessness Pursuit"—the repetitive, often boring refinement of a motor skill until it becomes subconscious, available at will with a sureness of ability that is unshakable, no matter the hardship or obstacle.



Sometimes it will be cold, or rainy. Train anyway!

### **3. Intellectualizing Mediocrity: The Statistical Shield**

How does one justify staying mediocre? They weaponize statistics. This is the hallmark of Base Rate Neglect. You've heard the justifications: "The average gunfight happens at three yards, lasts three seconds, and involves three rounds."

By clinging to this professed "Rule of Threes," the practitioner uses a statistical average to excuse a lack of proficiency, more so, the lack of will to be prepared in totality. Where the most rudimentary of skill attainment provides a false sense of "made it" "I'm Safe". This is a perfect example of the gambler's fallacy, it assumes your specific life-and-death crisis will be "average." Relying on these numbers is a broad form of Normalcy Bias, where

individuals underestimate the possibility of a "Black Swan" event, the outlier scenario where the distance is extended, the lighting is zero, or the threat is moving, much less the incessant proclamations of the "you'll never need a one second draw". It's a natural example of laziness in a skill acquisition journey that appears systematically whenever someone advocates for more than remedial ability.

#### **4. The Vilification of the Outlier**

Perhaps the most confounding trend is the shift in how we view the top 1%. In a "good enough" culture, the outlier is no longer a revered example of possibility; they are vilified. This is known in social psychology as Tall Poppy Syndrome—the urge to "cut down" those of merit to level the playing field. Welcome to Facebook 😊. Where othering and any other form of fallacious behaviors are forward facing. Instead of acknowledgement, recognition and discourse.

In defensive circles, this manifests as intellectually discounting high-level skill as "competition nonsense" or "unrealistic." The comical "Kilt in the Streets" argument. This is a defense mechanism to protect the ego from the reality of not measuring up. We call outliers "obsessed" because their discipline exposes our own lack of it.



Achievement is its own reward!

## 5. The Dunning-Kruger Effect and Lethal Risk

The refusal to consider advancing skill often stems from the Dunning-Kruger Effect. A shooter hits a predetermined

target at five yards and experiences a surge of confidence—the "Peak of Mount Ignorant." Where a singular example becomes the end, not the beginning.

Because they lack the cognition to realize how fine motor skills are fragile and highly susceptible to variables, unforeseen complication and lastly stress. They conclude more training is redundant. They mistake familiarity with a firearm for proficiency (Been shooting all my life). To intellectualize a lack of skill is to negotiate with a shrewd opponent, you are betting your life that your adversary will be less prepared than your own laziness.

### **The Cost of Misplaced Justification**

When we reward the "good enough" standard, we trigger a social loafing effect across entire demographics. The collective skill floor drops. You do not rise to the level of your expectations in a crisis. You sink to the level of what you have actually mastered, not your bias or imagination. You unfortunately will get exactly what you paid for. No more, no less.

Exceptional skill is not about vanity; it is about expanding your likelihood of success, reducing the margin of error. The better you are, the more "problems" you can solve. By capping your growth, you are voluntarily narrowing your window of survival.

You are presented with a choice, Acceptance or Discipline.  
Choose Wisely

## Citations

-On Present Bias and Gratification: O'Donoghue, T., & Rabin, M. (1999). Doing It Now or Later. *The American Economic Review*, 89(1), 103–124.

-On Self-Determination Theory (Motivation vs. Discipline): Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.

-On the Dunning-Kruger Effect: Kruger, J., & Dunning, D. (1999). Unskilled and unaware of it: How difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(6), 1121–1134.

-On Social Loafing and Performance Stagnation: Karau, S. J., & Williams, K. D. (1993). Social loafing: A meta-analytic review and theoretical integration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65(4), 681–706.

-On Tall Poppy Syndrome (Vilification of Outliers): Feather, N. T. (1989). Attitudes towards the high achiever: The fall of the tall poppy. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 41(3), 239–267.

-On Stress-Induced Skill Degradation: Artwohl, A., & Christensen, L. W. (1997). Deadly Force Encounters: What Cops Need To Know To Mentally And Physically Prepare For And Survive A Gunfight. (Psychological study on the breakdown of motor skills under extreme stress)

## **Instructor Development Course in Arizona, April**

From time to time we get requests for a Rangemaster Instructor Development Course out West. Here is your chance.

April 10-12, 2026, Friday through Sunday, at the Pima Pistol Club in Tucson, Arizona. This is a great time of year for training weather in Tucson and the facility is very nice. The primary instructor will be John Hearne.

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/68b0e9268ced808a22b1b32>





## **UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Feb 6-8 Instructor Course Lakeland, FL  
(Tom Givens)

<https://manager.corsizio.com/events/685eaa69f02127913e339494>

Feb 21-22 Advanced Instructor Lakeland, FL  
(Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eabb0f02127913e33c516>

March 13-15 Master Lakeland, FL (Tom Givens)

<https://manager.corsizio.com/events/685eac92f02127913e33cb50>

March 20-22, Instructor Course , Beaumont, TX  
(Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eade2f02127913e33e027>

March 20-22, Shotgun Instructor, Boondocks, MS  
(Tim Chandler & Ashton Ray)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb39df02127913e34644b>

April 9 One Day Shotgun Xenia, OH  
(Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eaec6f02127913e33f5ea>

April 10-11 Adv Instructor Xenia, OH (Tom Givens)

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/685eb089f02127913e341fb6>

April 10-12 Firearms Instructor, Tucson, Arizona

John Hearne Pima Pistol Club

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/68b0e9268ceed808a22b1b32>

