



# SAGA SNIPPETS

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## Couples Defense, Part I

by Sheriff Jim Wilson

On numerous occasions, I've said that "You are responsible for your own safety." However, having dealt with some deadly encounters, I can tell you your chances of survival are greatly increased when you have a good partner with you. Most men are blessed with having a woman beside them who is a great partner in life. The simple truth is she should also be an equal partner in your defensive planning.

Now, for most American guys to benefit from having a defensive partner, they are going to have to get over the idea that they are in charge of all things defensive and their duty is to protect the little lady from the evils of the world. In most criminal attacks where a man and woman are the potential victims, the crooks are going to try to neutralize the man first. When dealing with street gangs, home invasions, carjackings and the like, the bad guys are going to take the man down as quick as they can. If your wife is unarmed and untrained, what exactly do you expect her to do when you are the first one to hit the ground?

The simple fact is women can be just as "tactical" as any man. They can also handle any defensive firearm a man can handle. With proper planning and training, they can become a great defensive partner—instead of being a helpless dependent. In reality,

she may be the one who ends up protecting you from the evils of the world.

### Let her choose her own handgun

One of the biggest mistakes I see is guys who select their wife's defensive handgun. They often end up buying her a gun they really wanted for themselves, without regard for whether it fits and suits her. It is far better to let your wife select the handgun she is going to rely upon, assuming it is in a proper defensive caliber. If the two of you end up carrying the same kind of handgun, that is great. If not, then as soon as she becomes proficient with her handgun, both of you should learn to operate the other's pistol. Who knows? If you go down, your gun may be the closest one she can get her hands on, and vice versa.

### Learn to work as a team

The first step is to learn to deal with criminal attacks as a team. This means that you don't just stand together and shout at the bad guys, but instead you take tactical positions, slightly apart, and are prepared to deliver a one-two punch should shooting become necessary. When one of you is initially confronted by criminals, the other might slide into a flanking position.

Work out what each of your roles should be in various situations. Who is going to call 911? Which one of you is going to address the threat

while the other takes a tactical support position? If you both try to run through the same door at the same time, like we see in the comedies, trust me, it won't be the least bit funny.

### Practice effective communication

Probably the most critical factor in team tactics is learning to communicate with each other. You should establish verbal and hand signals to tell the other person you have identified a potential danger. Some tactical couples have come up with names they don't ordinarily call each other to sound the alarm. One woman in Arizona was confronted by an armed robber at the couple's place of business. She called out to her husband in the back room, "Cowboy. Hey, cowboy." The husband, fully alerted, got his handgun and the armed robber died. Cowboy was the word that gave the alarm.

Communication is even more important once bullets start flying. Any sane person will take cover, if it is available, when guns start going off. Communication enables you to know where your partner is located and what he or she is having to deal with. Should it become



## Continued...Couples Defense, Part I

necessary for one of you to move to another location, communication will allow the other person to cover your movement.

You can also use communication to properly cover your partner while they reload. You may minimize your rate of fire until your partner is back in the fight, but you are alerted to the fact you need to stop any advance on your partner until the reload is complete. I like to holler, "Loading" when I need to cram a new magazine home, and I want to hear my partner yell, "Cover" when I do, so I know she hears me and has us covered until I get my pistol recharged. By the same token, I am going to sing out when I am reloaded so she will know I am back in the fight.

A number of things occur to us when we are in what is called the fight-or-flight mode. We tend to get tunnel vision, focusing on the threat in front of us, and we may not be aware of anything around us. Another physical characteristic of the fight-or-flight mode is our eardrums tend to tighten, making our hearing become somewhat impaired. Gunshots, even at close range, may sound like small fire-crackers exploded at a distance.

Therefore, we will probably not hear words spoken in a normal conversational tone.

For this reason, verbal communication should be performed in a loud, clear voice. This is also the reason that verbal signals ought to be delivered in as few words as possible. "LOADING!!!" is a much better signal than mumbling "I think I'm out of ammo and I probably ought to reload my gun, if that's OK with you."

### Train as a team

Now, all of this may seem pretty elementary to some of you, but being put under a bit of stress can help put the whole thing into the proper perspective. Il Ling New and I found that out during a Team Tactics For Two class at Gunsite. After some fairly basic work on the square range, Range Master Charlie McNeese got us involved in role-playing with simulated ammunition. A pair of "bad guys" enacted scenarios that caused us to have to separate and deal with two different threats. While our verbal communications were probably pretty good, there were several times we completely lost track of where the other was and had no idea of the situation they

were caught up in—tunnel vision strikes us all.

McNeese also stressed the need for a couple to have a plan for dealing with most potential threats. Suppose, for instance, the bad guy is holding the woman with one arm and has a knife or gun at her head. If the woman simply goes limp and kicks her feet out from under her, the criminal won't be able to hold her up, and her falling will expose his head—and maybe his upper chest—so that you can fire a clearer shot. This can be quite effective if you know how to signal when you are ready to shoot.

Any team-tactics plan should begin with good training. It is critical both of you attend the same training class if at all possible so you will learn to speak the same language. By doing so, you will learn the same defensive techniques, thereby creating a single foundation upon which to build your personal-defense plan.

Thursday, September 5, 2019

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2019/9/5/couples-defense-part-i/>

## Delayed August 2019 Snippets

10 September 2019

This August 2019 issue of Snippets has been delayed but is now being emailed to members.

SAGA expects the September issue to be available as usual at the end of September.

## Your Handy "Why I Missed" List of Excuses

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2019/8/30/fun-friday-your-handy-why-i-missed-list-of-excuses/>

by Wendy LaFever  
Friday, August 30, 2019

You're heading out for a fun day at the range, so it's important to make sure you have everything you need: gun, ammunition, targets, eye and ear protection, sun-block, hand sanitizer...but there's something you're missing, isn't there? If that something is "the bullseye," then you'll also want to ensure you have a handy-dandy list of excuses, ahem, reasons as to why that was. Although the joys among us may wish to insinuate that the "problem exists between chair and benchrest," we all know that could not possibly be the case. Here's how to prove it:

### 1. The wind did it.

Although it's absolutely true that the wind can and does alter the flight of a bullet, in general the phenomenon is most apparent over long ranges. However, that doesn't mean that it's impossible that the wind caused you to miss a bullseye 10 yards away with your .45-caliber 1911. There could very well have been a freak mini-tornado that occurred in a very localized manner right in between the muzzle of your gun and the target 10 yards away. Challenge your friends to prove that it didn't. They can't, can they? This is a good time to gently point out that they should be thanking you for having brought this potentially hazardous weather development to their attention so it wouldn't interfere with their accuracy.

### 2. These sights are off.

If you're noticing that the bullet impacts are to the left of where you were aiming, you'll want to move the rear sight right. If those



impacts are to the right of where you're aiming, the rear sight needs to move left. If those impacts are all over the target in relation to where you're aiming, it's obvious that what's going on here is that your rear sight has achieved sentience, cranked up the stereo, invited a bunch of friends over and is dancing the Macarena. It's nothing to worry about; sooner or later that rear sight will tire itself out and you'll be able to go back to hitting the bullseye with perfect precision. Probably when your friends aren't watching, but that's just how it goes.

### 3. Stupid handloads my buddy made for me.

There are a lot of wonderful things about handloading, also known as reloading. It saves money, it allows you to tailor your ammunition for specific tasks and guns, and it helps conserve resources. However, for the purposes of this list, the best part is that many casual shooters don't do it and therefore don't know what can and can't go wrong with handloads. So if your target looks like an unholy collaboration between Jackson Pollock and a bouncy castle, simply blame your ammunition. "My buddy handloaded these for me," you might say, shaking your head sadly. "Oh, no, he's from Canada. You wouldn't know him."

### 4. Glitch in the Matrix.

Sometimes you get those sights aligned perfectly, squeeze the trigger with just the right touch, perform a precise follow-through...only to have a bullet hole inexplicably appear somewhere other than where you meant for it to go. It's quite obvious what's happened: a glitch in the Matrix, of course. Perhaps some pesky One realized that he no longer has to obey the laws of the space-time continuum and therefore took the opportunity to move the target around in between your (perfect) shot and the (not-so-perfect) bullet strike. Or perhaps the machines that control our every sensory input just got a bit overheated. If your friends display any incredulity, simply insist on addressing them as "Copper-Top" until they drop the matter.

### 5. Aliens.

Oh, those pesky Greys! Whether it's building the Pyramids, sinking Lemuria or bending the laws of physics to make your bullet holes spell out "PHONE HOME" on the target, they're always up to some tomfoolery or other. Unfortunately, many skeptical folks among your friends might not believe that a species mastered interstellar travel for the sole purpose of making it appear as if you missed the 10-ring. That's why you shouldn't ever directly blame the aliens. Instead, every time you miss, say "weather balloon," "swamp gas," "lenticular cloud," "St. Elmo's Fire," "ball lightning" or "sleep paralysis." Just make sure you wink when you do it...and keep the non-winking eye alert for the presence of oddly featureless men dressed all in black.

What's your favorite excuse, ahem, reason for a subpar performance at the range? (Not that you need one, of course.)

## Armed Self-Defense: Reality vs. Fantasy

### Fantasy vs. Reality

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2019/8/19/armed-self-defense-reality-vs-fantasy/>

by Sheriff Jim Wilson

Monday, August 19, 2019

Since most people have never even witnessed a criminal attack or shooting, they often have unrealistic ideas about what exactly might happen. We tell students that a criminal attack is going to be what it is going to be – and probably won't fit your pre-conceived ideas.

For example, I was recently made aware of a couple who had spent quite a bit of time discussing and planning for ways to deal with a home invasion. And then, one evening, the wife pulled into her driveway after a long day at work. Two men jumped out of a car parked on the street that the wife had not really paid attention to. They pushed her up against her car and demanded her keys. It was a carjacking, not a home invasion. So surprised to be dealing with an attack that she hadn't even considered, the woman was almost overpowered. As it was, she was able to get her gun out and get a shot off, failing to hit either attacker. As they fled, the husband was in the house wondering who in the neighborhood was popping firecrackers.

The most dangerous (and perhaps most common) attacks are those that occur at very close range. The crooks can be on you before you can even get your gun out – even if you are wearing your gun and have practiced getting it out in a

hurry. This is the reason that we continually emphasize being aware of what is going on around you—living life in “condition yellow.”

Too often, even those people who develop defensive plans tend to imagine criminal attacks as a scenario where the good guy always wins and things work out in the end. It is really a good idea to give serious consideration to worst-case-scenarios, those times when everything goes wrong. Instead of thinking about home invasions where you run the bad guys off, consider dealing with a home invasion where you wake from sleep to find the invaders already in your house and on their way to your kids' bedrooms. Have you made plans for dealing with that sort of situation?

In addition, people rarely think of the aftermath of a defensive shooting. Here's a clue – unless you're a combat veteran, you will be under more physical stress than you have ever experienced in your entire life. Physical stress leads to heart attacks and strokes. You might want to give some serious consideration to getting some exercise and getting in better physical shape because that helps you overcome severe stress.

In kind, people often think that, when the police arrive, they will just tell the officers what happened and the officers will congratulate them and haul the bad guys off. In fact, the officers probably won't know who the real bad guys are right off the bat. Instead of being congratulated, you may very well be handcuffed. And you might experience something a whole lot worse if you still have

your gun in your hand when the police get there. Regardless of your stressful situation, you had better keep your mind in gear.

Instead of turning into a Motor Mouth in front of the officers, it is better not to make statements until you have an attorney present. You might tell them, “That man tried to rob me and I shot him. His gun is lying over there. I will give you a complete statement once my attorney gets with me and helps me calm down and collect my thoughts.”

But I come from a law enforcement background...which means the actual attorney who represents you may not agree with what I have just said. Please consider talking to a local defense attorney – not just any attorney, but a defense attorney – and get his or her advice. After all, this person is the one who will be representing you during your police interview and possibly in court. Don't make their job more difficult.

Having a personal defense plan is an excellent idea. But don't make the mistake of imagining scenarios where you always turn out to be the hero and the guy who doesn't get any bullet holes in him. Study news reports of actual shootings, and consider what your actions should be in worst-case scenarios. Plans are nice – realistic plans are even better.



## 8 Gun Safety Rules You May Not Have Heard Of

by NRA Staff  
September 3, 2019

**ALWAYS** keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.

**ALWAYS** keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.

**ALWAYS** keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.

You'll find these "Big Three" rules on the wall of every gun store and shooting range you visit (and if you don't, you should). You know why: Knowing these rules, following them at all times—and insisting that others do the same—will help keep you and your family safe. But gun safety goes well beyond the "Big Three." Here are eight other tips that you should know...and pass on to everyone in your family.

1. Know your target and what is beyond it. Whether you're at the range or in the woods, if you're going to shoot, you must know what lies beyond your target. In almost all cases, you must be sure that there is something that will serve as a backstop to capture bullets that miss or go through the target. Some bullets can travel a mile or more once they leave the muzzle.

Another factor to keep in mind is whether what lies beyond your target could potentially cause a ricochet. For example, the surface of a river or lake can act almost like a sheet of solid steel when it's struck by a bullet, and cause the bullet to deflect in ways you wouldn't expect. (If you think that water is too soft to cause this to happen, think of the last time you

did a cannonball off the high diving board—water can act awfully solid if you hit it fast enough!) Always remember: Think first before you shoot!

2. Know how to use the gun safely. Before handling a gun, learn how it operates. Read the owner's manual. If you don't have a manual, contact the gun's manufacturer and ask them to send you one; they'll be happy to do so. Know your gun's basic parts, how to safely open and close the action and how to remove ammunition from the gun. No matter how much you know about guns, always take the time to learn the proper way to operate any new or unfamiliar firearm. Never assume that because one gun resembles another, they operate in exactly the same way. Also, remember that a gun's safety device is a mechanical device that can fail. The best safety device in the world is the one between your ears.

3. Be sure your gun is safe to operate. Just like other tools, guns need regular maintenance to work. Regular cleaning and proper storage are a part of the gun's general upkeep. If there is any question regarding a gun's ability to function, have it examined by a knowledgeable gunsmith. Some items that should raise a "red flag" about whether a gun is safe to use include age (some guns made before the 20th century are unsafe to use with modern ammunition), visible damage or rust, or if nobody you know has fired the gun in the last few years.

4. Use only the correct ammunition for your gun. Each gun is intended for use with a specific caliber or cartridge. Only cartridges designed for that particular gun can be fired safely. Most guns have the ammunition caliber stamped on the barrel or the slide. The owner's manual will also list the cartridge or cartridges appropriate for your gun. Ammunition can be identified by information printed on the cartridge box and sometimes stamped on the cartridge head. Using the wrong ammunition in your gun can cause severe damage to the gun...or to the person holding it. Do not shoot the gun unless you know you have the proper ammunition.

5. Wear eye and ear protection. The sound of a gunshot can damage unprotected ears. Worse still, the damage is usually not obvious until much, much later, when you get older. (Have you ever noticed that some older shooters talk really loudly? That may be due to hearing loss from not wearing ear protection.) Also, gun discharges can emit debris and hot gas that can cause injury to your eyes. Take care of yourself: Wear safety glasses and earplugs whenever you shoot.

6. Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting. "Why are you even mentioning this to me?" you may be asking. "I don't drink or do drugs!" Well, even some legal drugs, like prescription medicine or over-the-counter remedies, can impair your ability to shoot safely. Read the label of

**Watch this space ...for more interesting firearm snippets**

## Continued...8 Gun Safety Rules You May Not Have Heard Of

any medication you take—and ask your doctor or pharmacist about possible side effects.

7. Store guns so they are inaccessible to unauthorized persons. What does this really mean? It means you need to take all possible steps to make sure that only you are able to get to your firearm.

8. Be aware that certain types of guns and shooting activities require additional safety precautions. There are many different types of firearms, some of which require additional safety rules or

procedures for proper operation. These should be in your owner's manual. Also, most sport-shooting activities have developed a set of rules to ensure safety during competition. The rules may be different from sport to sport, so always listen carefully to your instructor or range safety officer.

Gun safety is everyone's responsibility, no matter your age or ability level. If you see someone else violating the rules of safety—no matter who it is—you should speak up and get out of the situation immediately.

Extracted from:  
<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2019/9/3/8-gun-safety-rules-you-may-not-have-heard-of/>