



SAGA SNIPPETS

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Couples Defense, Part II

by Il Ling New

We talk often about having a plan—a personal plan—for our own security and protection. But what if you have a friend, co-worker or spouse with whom you spend a significant amount of time? What's the plan then?

Spoiler alert—If you think you're safer when with your husband, father, brother or boyfriend, think again. Chances are very good an assailant will go after the greatest perceived obstacle first and that could well be the male you're with at the time. Man or woman, not only are we responsible for our own safety, but we might also be the final line of defense for others.

Ladies, this means you're not only a vital team member, you're an equal partner and you might end up in the most critical role.

How does your plan look now?

Here are some basics to consider: Think of yourselves as equals. No matter who you are and what skills you have or lack, you have something to contribute. Think of this as developing a combined system, where each person brings something to the team. Don't think of this as "relying" on each other—you each have roles and responsibilities, and you work together to survive. Trust your teammate to execute his duties while you focus on yours.

Catalog your team's strengths

What can you contribute to your team? Are you the calm one? Are you the outspoken one? Do you look like the weak one? Any of these traits can be used to your group's advantage. Now, for every member of your team, think about what qualities and skills each person has. Don't stop there—what about personality elements? Appearance? Start assigning first steps to each member.

Have a plan for everyone

As always, having some sort of idea of what to do first is critical to your prevailing in a conflict. Now, you have to think about what each of you is going to do. Who does what will depend in part upon what each of you brings to the team. Your first step can be a baby step—as simple as looking at something, positioning your body or reaching for a phone.

The teamwork starts even before an incident, and the best may keep you out of one. Two heads and all the awareness that comes with them really are better than one, and can do much to prevent your getting into trouble in the first place.

Take advantage of your numbers

Not only will each of you have something to do, you'll have a space in which to do it. You don't want to step on each

other's toes—literally and figuratively. Two heads are better than one, but only if they don't butt up against each other. Decide who is responsible for an area or direction. Who is going to use the phone? Who moves where, and when? Decide who will speak should you encounter a stranger. And, if your partner is unable to execute, you might have to. Therefore, everyone should have his or her own weapon, or two, on his or her person. And you should be able to use your partners' guns, too.

Speak the same language

Obviously, transmitting information is critical to good teamwork. But it's amazing how difficult the simple act of communicating can be when we're under stress. The more people we have to work with, the harder it gets. So don't take this for granted. Think about information you'll need to convey, and then agree on the most natural, specific and simple terms to use.

Code words are extremely useful. Nothing too fancy, and not too many. Think of the most important information you might need to convey and code it: "This person



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needs to be watched.” “I’m not safe, but I’m being forced to say I am.” “The kids.” “Drop down so I can shoot.” These are all things better left to code words known only to your defensive team.

Practice

No matter how much you talk about it, you must do it—more than once. All practice helps reinforce what you’ve trained to do, what you plan to do and the efficiency with which you execute your training and plans.

Your practice should comprise both physical and mental execution. Like fire drills, going through motions and familiarizing your body with its first steps can be lifesavers. Physical repetition actually reduces the time your brain and body will need to respond in a real event.

Mental practice is just as valuable, if not more so. Think about places where you and a pal regularly spend time together: home, car, office and school, to name a few. Make up incidents as you move through your daily life. “What if a fire broke out right now?” “What if we get boxed in at the next intersection?” “What if someone comes to the driver’s window and demands the car?” “What if my husband is wounded?” Working these what-if scenarios forces you and your partner to problem-solve as you think through your situation.

Start by using the awareness color codes (white is clueless, yellow is aware, orange denotes a potential threat, etc.) to keep yourself and your partner alert.

Seek professional training

Never underestimate the value of outside advice. Whether you’re just starting to consider the safety of your family or have been working at this for years, going to a professional training facility can improve your plans and skills by ninja leaps.

Especially when interpersonal dynamics can complicate teamwork (family members, take note), having a third party who can observe, evaluate and advise is priceless. A trained instructor can also help identify strengths and roles for each partner—sometimes a difficult step between friends or family.

The best option, if resources allow, is to go to a class (many firearms-training schools offer teamwork classes for civilians).

This advice is not just for novices. Even frequent shooters and professionals can benefit tremendously from a structured training environment. That’s why Sheriff Jim Wilson and I attended Gunsite’s “Team Tactics for Two” class with Rangemaster Charlie McNeese. Our time there was invaluable. McNeese’s observations and suggestions, taking into consideration what we each brought to our problem and viewing the overall problem from an outside and objective perspective, were far better than the hindsight to which it would have been relegated. McNeese worked with us before, during and, of course, after each scenario to help us see where we could be stronger, or where we might have had better options.

More importantly, our class at Gunsite included simulated situations, meant to layer on real-life

conditions as we progressed. We had no idea what was coming.

We started with simple room-clearing exercises (far different when you have a team member to consider), moved to indoor incidents and more. At their apex, these simulations include living, breathing, thinking adversaries. These human role players are trained to behave as bad guys would, with the same objectives—and they react to everything and anything you do or say accordingly. On top of that, both good guys and bad guys are all armed with special equipment that fires something akin to paint-ball pellets. This adds further options and realism to your scenario, and really puts you—and your team—on your mettle.

Even if you can’t get to a school or don’t have outside help, you can still do a lot to make yours a group effort. Remember, whenever you’re with others, you have to take them into consideration—so you might as well be a team. Learning to work together strengthens the unit, and can keep everyone out of danger.

Friday, September 6, 2019

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2019/9/6/couples-defense-part-ii/>

5 Ways Your Target Can Help You Improve Your Shooting

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2019/9/10/5-ways-your-target-can-help-you-improve-your-shooting/>

by Frank Melloni
10 September 2019

Wouldn't it be great if you had a handy tool to give you real-time feedback about what you're doing wrong (or could improve) on the shooting range?

Great news: You already do, and it's called your target! When it comes to spotting shooter error there is no greater tool than your impacts. While many shooters like to blame a missed shot on factors such as the wind, a bad round of ammunition or sights, a skilled shooter knows that 90 percent of the time this is not the case. When you're training at close distances, even the most erratic ammunition should be able to stay within a 3-inch circle. Wind also has no effect at these distances should you be shooting outside. Lastly, a sight would basically have to be missing altogether in order to influence excessive error, and even then, that wouldn't explain why your shots are consistently off center. So add that all up and what are you left with?

Well, just you!

Fear not, this is actually the best-case scenario for improvement. While we have no control over the weather, factory ammo or fixed sights, we do have complete control over ourselves. The instructions are even written for us in a language that I like to call "target." Learning to speak target is easy and there are five phrases that I would like to share with you—even give away a little bit of what we "sell" at Renaissance Firearms Instruction.



1. Flinching

I swear I'm not a pompous jerk, but boy do I love jumping into the "Brand G gun always shoots low and left" conversation when it breaks out in a gun shop or on the range. I once had someone get started on that trope, to which I replied, "Low and left, correct?" He answered, "No, low and right." After hearing this I exclaimed "Ah, you're a lefty!" and as you would have guessed, I nailed it. I knew this about the shooter because flinching shows up as shots, or even groups down and to the right for left-handed shooters. Righties will see this same phenomenon on the lower left quadrant of their target.

Flinching is really easy to understand, when you consider that a gun firing is essentially an explosion next to the most delicate part of your body, your face.

I always ask my students to show me what they would do if they had a firecracker in their hand and somebody suddenly lit the fuse. If you think about it you wouldn't wind up and throw it, you would simply flick your wrist and snap it away from you, as this is the quickest form of disposal. What you are experiencing is the simple, instinctive "fight or flight" mechanism protecting yourself from a threat.

Your hands make the same exact motion when you fire your pistol. This is a natural human reaction and this means that everyone has this issue to some degree. That goes for every man, woman and child; we all flinch from time to time. This is especially true if you are not yet cognizant of it.

Don't think you do it? Pay attention to the next time a pistol doesn't go off when you are expecting it to. You should be able to see the pronounced dipping motion very easily without recoil covering it up.

So how do you overcome it? Well it's not easy. It's essentially training yourself not to blink when your eyes are dry, or not to yawn when you are tired. It starts with first accepting that you do indeed do it and that might even require having someone point it out.

While the firearms community loves gadgets and targets to diagnose shooter error, the following advice only works under the guidance of a certified instructor. After catching a plane back home I called up a buddy and said Mr. "TOP SHOT" needs some help and, after an hour of training (and years of practice), I've learned to control this most detrimental of shooting habits.

How did I do it?

For starters I figured out how hard I actually needed to grip my pistol. Each pistol will require a different amount of force based on caliber, size and grip texture. Using "X percent of your strength" is a bunch of garbage made up by instructors who don't care enough about their students to give them a well-thought-out answer.

The answer is to apply enough pressure with your shooting hand to where you can hold the gun comfortably. Next with your support hand—let this hand have

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more pressure than your shooting hand, then fire a series of shots. If your hands stayed put, relax your grip a little and fire some more. Repeat the process until one hand starts to slip. This is your minimum gripping pressure. Learn to grip slightly harder on a consistent basis and you are on your way to curing flinch. Practicing good follow through and learning to ignore when the trigger is going to break will be your next steps to thwarting this involuntary movement.

2. Head bobbing/Eye darting

Here's another fun fact of human nature: Where your eyes look, your body follows. Here's proof: Place your sights on target, then shift your eyes to the ceiling, and then back to your gun. Most likely your sights are sitting slightly higher on the target now. If you moved your head this will be even more pronounced. Many shooters exhibit this motion as the trigger breaks, which is a split second before the bullet leaves the barrel. If this happens, your target will have high hits on it.

Shooters will do this for one of two reasons. The first is a reaction, just as if someone came around the corner and yelled "BOO!" Our head, neck and shoulders snap back from whatever just jumped out at us. Just as with flinching all that is required is relaxation of the muscles involved. That means your neck, shoulders and even your face shouldn't be tense or even carry an expression, grimace or cringe.

The other reason this might happen is a shooter is trying to look up to see where they hit as the bullet impacts their target, and that's an easy solution...Just don't do it!

3. Breathing

When taking untimed bullseye-style shots, your breathing is just as important in pistol shooting as it is in rifle shooting. If you notice your target has holes that look like shirt buttons, then the problem usually lies in your breathing technique. Just as in rifle shooting you want to shoot in between breaths; we refer to this period as your natural respiratory pause. Simply take a deep breath in, exhale it all the way and after your lungs are empty start pressing the trigger until the gun fires. The key is remembering to do it, and that comes with lots of practice. A good dryfire routine will cure this problem very quickly.

4. Pushing the gun

Until we know better, most of us will press the trigger with the area between the first and second joint on our trigger finger. Unfortunately this part of our finger doesn't come straight back at all. We should be pressing the trigger with the center of the first pad, right about where the fingerprint swirls. Righties using "too much" trigger finger will show hits on the left side of the target. If they use too little then they will show hits on the right side of the target (usually). You can reverse this information for southpaws.

The fix is as simple as finding the perfect trigger finger placement and committing it to feel. Keep in mind that it will change from gun to gun. It will also change slightly if you change back straps. Shooters shooting DA/SA pistols should be cautious as it is common to use too much trigger finger during the first shot, as the trigger movement is elongated and usually requires much more pressure.

5. Relaxation of grip during firing

If you notice shots that are low on your target without the angular component described above you are likely relaxing your grip while the gun is going off. This is why we don't give the advice of "gripping as hard as you can" when teaching shooters how to first operate their pistol. The solution to this is covered above with how to solve flinching. I decided to end with this error as it is often the road that many travel down as they attempt to solve any of the above issues through "force."

The preceding is a comprehensive list of the most common forms of shooter error that I have encountered in the past eight years (or 35,000 students) and cover nearly everything that takes folks out of the X-ring. While targets like "the wheel of misfortune" certainly are alluring; they are a bit too cluttered and don't offer the feedback that another human being can offer. They also can't watch you fire the shot which is critical, as these errors are often mistaken for one another. Remember that shooting is an Olympic sport, you won't get good overnight and won't make any progress at all without knowing what's wrong or how to practice.

Stay diligent and you will get there!

Disabled in the Bullseye



<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2019/9/11/disabled-in-the-bullseye/>

by Bob Boyd

11 September 2019

In 2008, people with disabilities were victims of 40,000 rapes or sexual assaults, 116,000 robberies, 115,000 aggravated assaults and nearly 459,000 simple assaults.

In 20 percent of these cases, the perpetrator used a weapon. People with disabilities between 12 to 24 and 35 to 49 years of age were nearly twice as likely to be targeted when compared to other people in those age groups. Females with disabilities experienced higher rates of violent crime than males with disabilities. Nearly 15 percent of those victims suspected they were targeted because of their disability.

Criminals apparently know disabled people are less likely to be able to defend themselves during a violent crime, or at least perceive them to be an easy target. The 2007 numbers add emphasis to the urgency of the situation.

That year, nearly 47,000 rapes, 79,000 robberies, 114,000 aggravated assaults and 476,000 simple assaults were reported with disabled victims, who were targeted 1.5 times more often than persons without disabilities.

Official statistics may not reflect the gravity of the problem. According to a March 2000 newsletter by Dan Sorensen titled "The Invisible Victims," people with substantial disabilities are victims of crime at a four- to 10-times higher rate than non-disabled people, a number the organization Disabled Crime Victims Assistance concurs with. Sorensen estimates approximately 5 million disabled people are victims of serious crime annually in the United States and that, "in California... only 4.5 percent of these crimes are reported to authorities."

The ongoing epidemic of crime perpetrated against people with disabilities has remained largely unnoticed by the American people—disabled and non-disabled alike—and ignored by the media.

In the coming months, I'll be writing a series of articles that address self-defense for the physically disabled. Topics will include awareness, mindset, coping with physical disability as it pertains to concealed carry and defensive-handgun training, things to consider when selecting a handgun for self-defense and concealed carry and more. So if you're physically disabled, know someone who is or are concerned about an aging family member living alone, spread the word.

Having cerebral palsy since birth, I realize my disability makes me a tempting prospect for those cowardly, less productive members of our society who prey upon those they surmise are easy targets. Unlike most though, I work for Shooting Illustrated and have attended a variety of training courses. Moreover, I have firearms and I'm willing to use them if necessary.

SAGA Note:

These statistics apply to the USA.

Watch this space ...for more interesting firearm snippets

Crime Statistics September 2019



By John Welch

On the 12th September 2019 the Minister of Police announced the crime statistics for 2018/19 which sketch a rather sombre picture for those of us trying to live in peace and promoting a culture of “a better life for all” and “everyone should be and feel safe” in South Africa.

For many of us the only question is: When do I become part of these statistics? Unfortunately for many this has already happened, and while we might not have been killed, we were the victim of a robbery, house breaking, rape, sexual assault, domestic violence or various other crimes. So, what is new, and what do we benefit from these statistics? Do we isolate ourselves even further by hiding behind our higher walls and rely on our improved security systems; or do we surrender to crime?

Some people are rather cynical when talking about statistics and say that the superlative form of a lie is statistics. It is a fact that one can apply statistics to suit your point of view – like blaming the police for the high crime rate, rather than the criminals, or blaming firearms for being the cause of murder rather than blaming the people who abuse firearms.

An analysis of the lengthy crime statistics document shows that firearms are the weapons of choice in the commission of certain violent crime, such as murder, robbery with aggravating

circumstances, and business and home robberies. This does not mean that the majority of such crimes were committed with firearms. Knives and other sharpened instruments are still the weapon of choice for many.

However, even if one accepts that a large proportion of violent crimes were committed with firearms, the issue becomes insignificant the moment you ask whether the perpetrator was in the lawful or unlawful possession thereof. Obviously, hoplophobes (those who fear firearms) will argue that had it not been for civilian possession of firearms, the criminals would not have gotten hold thereof. This is a sick argument, since it diverts attention from the criminal to the tool, which is an inanimate object, incapable of doing anything by itself.

Two other things that these statistics do not tell you are, (i) how many of these murders were not really murders, but rather legitimate self-defence, including the killing of a suspect during the attempted execution of an arrest for a serious violent crime, or suicide or accidental or negligent killing; and (ii) what was the arrest, prosecution and conviction rate of those who allegedly committed these killings?

The Police Minister further told us that in about 30% (6306) of all alleged murders (21,022 cases) they established the causative factors (which means that in 70% they did not) to include arguments/misunderstandings, 1727;

armed robbery, 751; domestic violence, 1115; faction/intra or intergroup conflict, 40; farm related, 47; gang related, 1120; illegal mining, 62; mob justice/vigilantism, 789; police murders, 70; political related, 8; revenge, 256; and taxi violence 321.

The two causes, which are of great concern, since they are the ones where lawfully possessed firearms could possibly have been used, are arguments and misunderstandings and domestic violence. All the others are typical crimes in which unlawfully possessed firearms and various other weapons would have been used.

The number of firearms and ammunition stolen from, and lost by, the SAPS, the SANDF and other official institutions has increased drastically over the years. Other major contributing factors for putting such tools in the hands of criminals are firearms smuggling across our porous borders and weapons that might still be stashed from the former conflict years.

Of course firearms do get stolen from licensed firearm owners, but we doubt whether this is a significant factor. Since criminals mostly use automatic weapons (R5, R4 and AK47) in business and cash-in-transit robberies, and as no automatic firearms have been stolen from or lost by licensed firearm owners, these weapons must have been sourced as described above. In any event, licensed firearm owners are equally subject to criminality and are being robbed and their homes plundered.

Continued...Crime Statistics September 2019

The Minister revealed that firearms, knives, unidentified sharp objects, body parts (hands, feet, etc), bricks/stones/rocks, sticks, bottles/bottle heads, sjamboks, pangas/machetes, and fire/matches were used in the commission of the murders. For law-abiding citizens this revelation is significant as we need to ensure that we are properly prepared to address the threats that we may encounter.

As responsible citizens, we do not go looking for trouble, we rather try to prevent trouble and stay away from danger zones. However, if harm comes our way, we

need to be prepared to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our property. We know that we cannot rely on the police to protect us and that we are our own first responders to violent crime. We are responsible firearm owners who do not take the law into our own hands, however, we shall not tolerate criminals taking advantage of us. The message is clear: law-abiding and responsible firearm owners will defend themselves, their loved ones and their property against violent criminals. Arming oneself for lawful purposes and using any weapon of choice for personal defence remains a

personal choice. SAGA strongly believes that neither government nor our courts have the right to deny any responsible and law-abiding citizen the right to exercise that choice.

Issued in the interest of all responsible firearm owners.

19 September 2019