



OFF GRID

DEFEND YOUR HOME AND FAMILY



SETTING UP SURVIVAL NETWORKS

LESSONS FROM PROFESSIONAL PROTECTORS

CHOOSING THE RIGHT ARMOR AND CARRIER

COMPETITIVE LESSONS FOR DEFENSIVE SHOOTING



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY.

HELLCAT



HELLCAT OSP
(Optics Ready)
Optic Not Included

THE WORLD'S HIGHEST CAPACITY MICRO COMPACT



THE NEW 12-ROUND MICRO COMPACT

14-ROUNDS
W/ EXT. MAGAZINE

It's a jungle out there. Protect yourself with the all new 9mm HELLCAT® from Springfield Armory®. Featuring a patented magazine with best in class capacity of 11+1 and 13+1 with included extended magazine, the HELLCAT is designed specifically for every day carry with Adaptive Grip Texture™ and high visibility sights. Available in standard and optics ready OSP™ configurations, the HELLCAT from Springfield Armory gives you The Capacity to Defend™.

SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM





DEPARTMENTS

- 06** › **On the Cover**
All the Great Gear on the Cover
- 08** › **Editor's Letter**
Strength in Numbers
- 10** › **Gear Up**
The Latest and Greatest Products
- 14** › **Pocket Preps**
Covert Escape Tools
- 18** › **What If?**
Your Neighborhood is Attacked by an Angry Mob?
- 86** › **Health**
Make Fitness Happen
- 90** › **Hands On**
Viktos Operatus XP Jeans
- 94** › **Bag Drop**
Gray Man EDC Bag
- 96** › **The Final Weapon**
A Competitive Advantage
- 98** › **The Last Page**
Review of *The Killer Across the Table*

Product Disclaimer

Prices and details for products and services featured in RECOIL OFFGRID are set by the manufacturers, retailers, and agencies, and are subject to change without notice.

Recoil OFFGRID (ISSN 2475-1952), April/May 2021; Number 42, is published bimonthly by CMG West, LLC 5600 W. Grande Market Drive, Suite 100 Appleton, WI 54913. Copyright © 2021 by CMG West, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Periodicals postage is paid at Appleton, WI, and additional mailing offices. Subscriptions U.S. and U.S. Possessions: \$49.97 per year (6 issues); Canadian, \$55.97; Foreign, \$61.97 (including surface mail postage). Payment in advance. U.S. Funds only. POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. (See DMM 707.4.12.5): NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: send address changes to Recoil OFFGRID, P.O. Box 460429, Escondido, CA 92046-0429.

FEATURES

- 26** › **Do You Have a Duty to Intervene?**
A Look at Good Samaritan Laws and Third-Party Defense
- 34** › **The Viral Truth**
Five Experts Help Sort Fact from Fiction During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- 42** › **Protect What Matters Most**
Protector Symposium 2.0 Brought Together a Prestigious Lineup of Instructors to Teach Real-World Survival Skills
- 50** › **Criminal Profiling, Part 2**
Serial Killers and How They Evolve
- 58** › **Classroom Disaster**
Increasing a Teenager's Level of Disaster Awareness
- 66** › **The Minnesota Porch Vikings**
Spontaneous Emergency Networks in the Minneapolis Riots
- 72** › **Stronger Than a Speeding Bullet**
Plates and Carriers for Self-Defense in a Time of Crisis
- 80** › **Waisted Space**
A Detailed Analysis of Everyday Carry, Range, and War Belt Setups



Throughout this issue you will see certain images are labeled as being 100% Actual Size. This designation is for the print edition of this issue. Because of the various screen sizes on different tablets and computers, we cannot always provide actual life size images in digital versions. We apologize if this causes any confusion and thank you for your understanding.



26



42



34



50



58



66



72



80



RELIABILITY. RELOAD. REPEAT.

Our magazines and magazine wells bring Magpul quality and reliability to your most dependable handgun. Every single time.



www.magpul.com

ON THE COVER



Cover Photos: RECOIL OFFGRID Staff

1. Jacket
 Make: Viktos
 Model: Gunfighter Flannel Jacket
 Price: \$135
 URL: www.viktos.com

2. Boots
 Make: Viktos
 Model: Strife Mid Waterproof Boots
 Price: \$140
 URL: www.viktos.com

3. Backpack
 Make: Viktos
 Model: Upscale Slingbag
 Price: \$50
 URL: www.viktos.com

4. Pants
 Make: 5.11 Tactical
 Model: Defender Flex Slim Jean
 Price: \$70
 URL: www.511tactical.com

5. Socks (not pictured)
 Make: 5.11 Tactical
 Model: Year Round OTC Sock
 Price: \$15
 URL: www.511tactical.com



3



2



1

4



1. Jacket
Make: 5.11 Tactical
Model: Emma Full-Zip Jacket
Price: \$39
URL: www.511tactical.com

2. Undershirt (not pictured)
Make: 5.11 Tactical
Model: Riley Tank
Price: \$14
URL: www.511tactical.com

3. Shirt (not pictured)
Make: 5.11 Tactical
Model: Athena Shirt
Price: \$14
URL: www.511tactical.com

4. Beanie (not pictured)
Make: 5.11 Tactical
Model: Chambers Beanie
Price: \$22
URL: www.511tactical.com

5. Pants
Make: Viktos
Model: Women's Khaktical Pants
Price: \$35
URL: www.viktos.com

6. Socks (not pictured)
Make: LOWA
Model: ATS Socks
Price: \$22
URL: www.lowaboosts.com

7. Shoes
Make: LOWA
Model: Innox Pro GTX Lo WS
Price: \$195
URL: www.lowaboosts.com

8. Shoes (little girl)
Make: LOWA
Model: Ledro GTX Mid Kids
Price: \$140
URL: www.lowaboosts.com

9. Shotgun
Make: Fabarm USA
Model: STF 12
(see CONCEALMENT Issue 20)
Price: \$1,345 (prior to customization)
URL: fabarmusa.com

10. Rifle
Make: Radical Firearms
Model: RF22LR
Price: \$600
URL: radicalfirearms.com

11. Reflex Sight
Make: Holosun
Model: 509T
Price: \$506
URL: holosun.com



8

7



9



11

10



Strength in Numbers

By Tom Marshall

Tonce heard a very interesting, if not somewhat grim, outlook on interpersonal conflict from a soldier I served with. Roughly remembered, it goes something like this: “All things being equal, tactical advantage goes to he who cares the least about what he cares about the most.”

I imagine this has to be the mindset of some social predators. The idea that not having loved ones in your life, or being so self-absorbed that you're willing to cast them aside on a whim to serve your own desires and impulses, could be perceived as a type of “advantage” or “freedom” to act against others.

I'd like to think that most of you reading this can see past the shallow logic of such a mindset and have hit paydirt by understanding the long-term survival benefits of embracing a family/tribe lifestyle. Every person you fold into your survival family (whether they be blood relatives or not) is a potential opportunity to complement your own knowledge, skillsets, strengths, and abilities. As RECOIL OFFGRID alumni Ed Calderon says, “Take the time to invest in people.”

While many of us see ourselves as protectors of our immediate family unit, I'd also posit the idea that the best way to fulfill that role is by teaching every capable member of your group to protect themselves. I recently had a discussion with my significant other that led to this nugget of truth: One of the greatest acts of love we can show our family is to enable them to be more self-sufficient and ... frankly ... more dangerous to those who might see them as marks.

I say all that to say this: Do not fall into the trap of seeing your family, household, or circle-of-loved-ones as a liability, or as a weakness to be exploited by someone who lacks those relationships in their own life. See them for their full potential, not just as good people who enrich your existence, but as allies, assets, or teammates to rely on in these uncertain times. To that end, we dedicated this issue to promoting skills and knowledge specifically relevant to the protection of family and household. From Forrest Cooper's real-time article on the “Porch Vikings” of post-George Floyd Minneapolis and Patrick McCarthy's recap of this year's virtual Protector's Symposium, to Jason Squires' overview of “Good Samaritan” laws and the next part in Neal Olshan's series on Criminal Profiling, we wanted to provide a coffee table book for everyone in your network that touches on some valuable lessons for group-based survival. We also included articles on covert escape tools, armor carriers, and gun belts to help you and your tribe make informed decisions on how to outfit yourselves to squeeze every advantage from your gear.

Regardless of whether your survival network is your family, coworkers, or bowling league buddies, make sure you stock up on the gear and, more importantly, the knowledge to be ready for whatever the future may hold. If you invest in your people, they'll likely prove to be your biggest strength, making the tough times a little softer and a little safer. 🍄

Editorial.

Editor-in-Chief/ Iain Harrison
Editor, RECOIL OFFGRID/ Tom Marshall
Managing Editor/ Laura Peltakian
Features Editor/ Dave Merrill
Contributing Editor/ Steven Kuo
Contributing Editor/ Patrick McCarthy
Network Manager/ John Schwartze
Web Editor/ Forrest Cooper

Contributors/ Robert Bruner, Niccole Elizabeth, Mark Linderman,
Chad McBroom, Cody Martin, Dave Miller, Neal Olshan,
Jason Squires, Patrick Vuong, Georgeonna Ward, Mel Ward
Special Thanks/ Kris and Barbara Southards,
Cameron and Brittany Carden

Art Direction & Design.

Senior Art Director/ Gene Coo
Art Director/ Katia Sverdlova

Submissions.

OFFGRID@RECOILweb.com

Subscriber Customer Services.

Domestic/Canadian: 888.681.7064
Foreign: 760.270.9470
OFFGRID@RECOILweb.com

Advertising.

General Manager/ Glen Castle 813.675.3495
Senior Account Executive/ Ryan Farner 760.809.8729
Account Executive/ Lori McDaniel 715.498.3768
Account Executive/ Alex Ostrowski 920.341.6203

To advertise on this magazine's website, or any of
CMG West, LLC's other enthusiast sites, please contact
us at offgrid_advertising@RECOILweb.com.

CMG West, LLC.

VP, Group Publisher/ Mark Han
Director of Finance/ Jennifer Sexstone
Circulation/ NPS Media Group
mtolen@npsmediagroup.com

This magazine is purchased by the buyer with the understanding that the information presented is from various sources from which there can be no warranty or responsibility by CMG West, LLC., or the publisher as to legality, completeness and accuracy. Any submissions or contributions from readers shall be subject to and governed by CMG West, LLC's User Content Submission Terms and Conditions.

BACK ISSUES To order back issues, visit Offgridweb.com.

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Editorial contributions are welcomed, but editors recommend that contributors query first. Contribution must be accompanied by return postage and we assume no responsibility for loss or damage thereto. Manuscripts must be typewritten on white paper, and all photographs must be accompanied by captions. Photo model releases required on all persons in photos. Recoil Offgrid reserves the right to use material at its discretion, and we reserve the right to edit material to meet our requirements. Upon publication, payment will be made at our current rate, and that said payment will cover author's and contributor's rights of the contribution. Contributor's act of mailing contribution shall constitute an express warranty that the material is original and no infringement on the rights of others. Mail contributions to: Recoil Offgrid Magazine, 5600 West Grande Market Drive, Suite 100, Appleton, WI 54913.

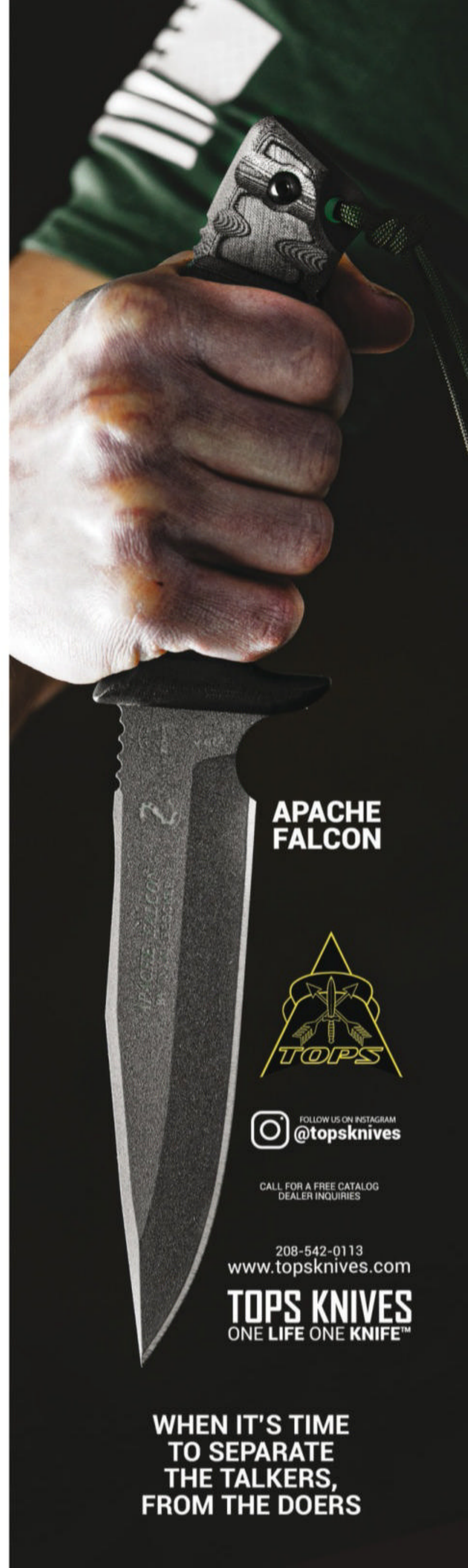
istockphoto.com/ Cover (background): hikesterson; p26: Joel Carillet; p27: anyaberkut; p28: GregorBister; p30: Whiteway, PinkBadger; p32: Marcos Calvo; p42: Umkehrer; p44: Irina Belova; p45: D-Keine; p47: Nastasic, YakobchukOlana; p51: CribbVisuals; p54: wellesenterprises; p57: Vladimir Vladimirov; p58: Michael Warren; p60: DI Productions, dlewis33; p61: SPmemory; p62: olStock, MemoryLanesPhotography; p64: sshepard; p86: Hailshadow; p87: Aamulya; p88: michaeljung, FatCamera

Printed in the USA

Copyright © 2021 by
CMG West, LLC.
All Rights Reserved.



CMG WEST



APACHE
FALCON



FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM
 @topsknives

CALL FOR A FREE CATALOG
DEALER INQUIRIES

208-542-0113
www.topsknives.com

TOPS KNIVES
ONE LIFE ONE KNIFE™

WHEN IT'S TIME
TO SEPARATE
THE TALKERS,
FROM THE DOERS

RECOILTV

RELEVANT. HONEST. UNFILTERED.

Online streaming hosts can get rid of any content they don't like with a click of a mouse—and the major players absolutely don't like guns. So, we made our own. RECOILtv is a streaming platform created to bring you only the best from testing the latest guns and gear, in-depth reviews and expert tutorials, partner-generated content, and loads more. RECOILtv is the premier authority for the content you want and deserve. RECOIL. Relevant. Honest. Unfiltered.



Brought to you by:

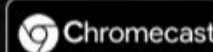


Presented by:

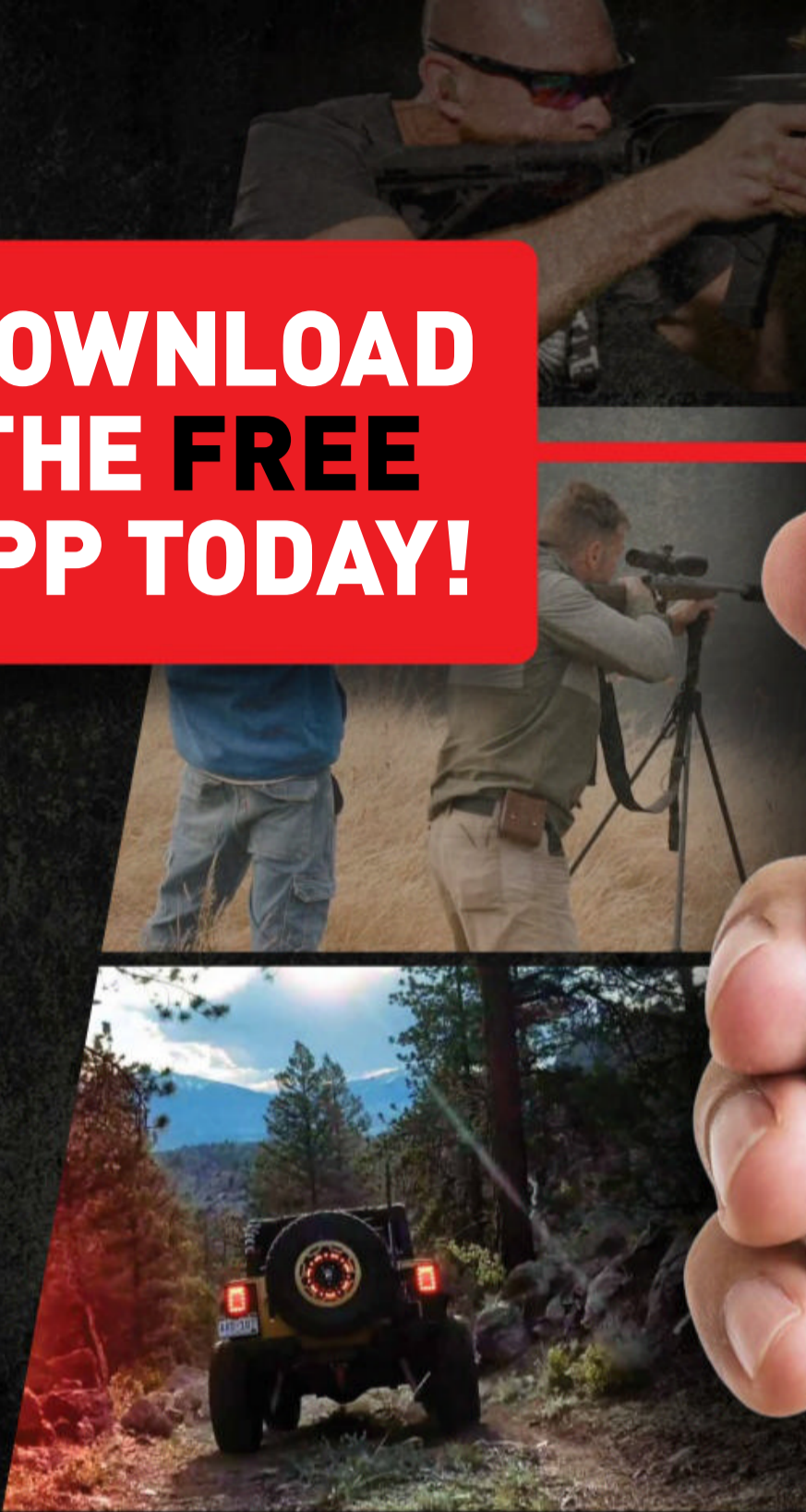


AVAILABLE ON:

RECOILWEB.COM



**DOWNLOAD
THE FREE
APP TODAY!**



 **WWW.RECOIL.TV**

1 MAKE & MODEL Optical Dynamics Exude OD40 Gen II

WEIGHT
14 ounces

MSRP
\$199

URL
www.exudelight.com

NOTES
This Optical Dynamics tool is an “illuminator” not a flashlight, because its optical lenses gather light from a powerful CREE XL2 LED into a narrow beam that doesn’t spill. That makes the Exude OD40 Gen II an ideal tool for targeting four-legged predators in the dark at long range, since most won’t be spooked by the clean, natural-light wavelength. But, just in case, it also comes with red and green lenses. It can be attached to the OD40 Mount (sold separately for \$43) so that you can pair it with a rifle and scope – giving you positive ID at up to 235 yards. It has three brightness settings, is USB rechargeable, and comes with a Cordura storage case.

2 MAKE & MODEL Half Breed Blades TBP-01 Tactical Pen

COLORS
Black, Dark Earth, Ranger Green

MSRP
\$85

URL
www.halfbreedblades.com.au

NOTES
There are tactical pens, and then there’s the TBP-01 from Half Breed Blades. If you’re familiar with this Australian manufacturer, you know that it makes overbuilt knives and hand tools for professionals and hardcore adventurers. The TBP-01 is made from 6000-series anodized aluminum with a stainless steel pocket clip, and has a recessed crown for positive thumb control when used for striking. It comes with a separate tungsten carbide glass-breaker that you can screw into the recessed crown to use for emergency applications. But the pen’s prevailing feature is its proprietary fidget-inducing bolt actuator, which smoothly shifts the Fisher Space Pen nib out and quickly retracts it when not needed. At 5.98 inches long and almost 2 ounces, the TBP-01 is a badass writing implement and improvised self-defense tool.

3 MAKE & MODEL Grey Man Tactical Tough Hook Kit

COLORS
Black, Grey, Tan

MSRP
\$70

URL
www.greymantactical.com

NOTES
You might look at the corresponding image and think, “What’s up with the pile of plastic?” But this is actually the Tough Hook Kit, an ingenious and convenient way of securing your plate carrier to the back of your vehicle seat, or anywhere you set this up. The set comes with a Tough Hook (which has a 150-pound-capacity rating) and the hardware needed to attach it to a 15.25x25-inch Rigid MOLLE Panel (RMP) grid – which is then secured to your seat or your desired location. Word to the wise: If you plan to keep the kit mounted permanently in your vehicle, make sure you have dark-tinted windows to avoid unwanted attention and to keep thieves away. Made in the USA.

4 MAKE & MODEL Mustang Survival Greenwater 65L Submersible Deck Bag

DIMENSIONS
33 by 16 by 8 inches

MSRP
\$290

URL
www.mustangsurvival.com

NOTES
You know how horrible wet socks feel, right? Now imagine all of your clothes and supplies soaking wet, too? The Greenwater 65L Submersible Deck Bag can prevent that because it’s a beast of a waterproof pack. It’s made of 420-denier Hypalon fabric and features a YKK Aquaseal zipper and fully welded construction. Basically, it’s a duffel bag with dry suit technology – making it fully submersible. And thanks to its flat bottom and rectangular shape, it’s easy to pack and access items. The reinforced rubberized handles are crazy durable while the shoulder strap is comfy and removable. Moreover, it features tie-downs so you can stow it securely on your bug-out boat or truck.



5 MAKE & MODEL
Minelab
Vanquish 340

WEIGHT
2 pounds, 9.6 ounces

MSRP
\$200

URL
www.minelab.com

NOTES
When someone mentions the words “metal detector,” you probably picture one or two things: 1) the arch-like security device you walk through at the airport, or 2) a lonely sap combing the beach for buried treasure. Jokes and memes aside, a metal detector can have several legit uses – from finding your misplaced caches to locating useful objects after a flooding. The Vanquish 340 can help in this regard, thanks to its four levels of sensitivity, three volume levels, waterproof V10 coil, and Minelab’s Mutli-IQ technology (which gives you the power of multiple detectors in one). It features a compact and lightweight construction, an easy-to-use LCD display, and an affordable price tag, making it an ideal entry-level model.

6 MAKE & MODEL
MGear
Gadget Wallet 2.0

WEIGHT
3.46 by 2.59 by 0.55 inches

MSRP
Starting at \$50

URL
mgear.io

NOTES
The Gadget Wallet 2.0 isn’t quite as minimalist as we’d like, but it’s meant to be a more functional money carrier than your granddaddy’s bifold leather wallet. The body is made of two Kydex plates screwed together and features an ID window, a 5-to-10 card capacity, and ejector plates to make it easier to remove the cards. To live up to its name, the Gadget Wallet has a modular design, allowing for various upgrades – including a removable money clip, an 18-in-1 multi-tool, a flashlight with leather sidecar, and a paracord lanyard with carabiners. Plus, the plates can be customized or upgraded with different designs or materials.

7 MAKE & MODEL
Meopta
MeoStar B1 Plus

WEIGHT
2 pounds

MSRP
Starting at \$1,080

URL
www.meoptasportsoptics.com

NOTES
While all five senses are important, sight ranks as probably the most vital one for self-preservation. After all, it’s pretty hard to survive any ordeal if you don’t see where the danger is coming from. But vision isn’t always about defense. For example, a pair of binoculars could help you spot big game or a lost member of your party during a search-and-rescue mission. The MeoStar B1 Plus lineup of binos from Meopta offers premium long-distance vision thanks to MeoBright Coatings for optimal light gathering, a locking diopter adjustment, and fluoride high-definition lens elements in 10x42, 12x50, and 15x56. An ergonomic, rubber armor covers the aluminum alloy body to provide both durability and better traction.

8 MAKE & MODEL
Pelican
14QT Personal Cooler

DIMENSIONS
18 by 11.5 by 13 inches

MSRP
\$100

URL
www.pelican.com

NOTES
Pelican is known the world over as the leader in protective cases. Whether you’re transporting guns, cameras, or fragile electronics, this company makes a model that can securely hold your gear no matter where it’s going – be it a short trip to the range or through the brutal journey of an airport’s baggage handling system. So, the 14QT Personal Cooler piqued our interest. Designed to hold and keep a person’s food and drinks cool and dry for a weekend, it features 1.5-inch polyurethane walls and a 14-quart capacity to hold two 1-pound Pelican Ice blocks. Plus, it has substantial latches, a sturdy carry handle, an integrated bottle opener with magnet, and an inner tray for nonperishables.



9 MAKE & MODEL Bertucci A-2CT Cera-Ti

COLORS
Desert Sand, Graphite Black, OD Green

MSRP
Starting at \$220

URL
www.bertucciwatches.com

+ **NOTES**
Whether it's acting as a compass or doubling as a signal mirror, an analog wristwatch is a reliable improvised survival tool – and the A-2CT Cera-Ti is as reliable a timepiece as they come. It features Bertucci's patented titanium uni-body case with a Mil-spec ceramic coating, Swiss-made quartz movement, low-battery indicator, and luminous hands and markers. Water resistant up to 100 meters, the watch has a screw-down crown at the 4 o'clock position to prevent wrist impingement. It comes with a nylon webbing band, but for another \$10 you can upgrade to a Tridura Ultra-Duty Band (shown here), which fuses a webbing core with a polymer layer to eliminate fraying and cracking. This Bertucci is a strong mix of vintage good looks, high-tech manufacturing, and practical functionality.

10 MAKE & MODEL CRKT Razelcliffe Compact

OAL
5.25 inches

MSRP
\$40

URL
www.crkt.com

+ **NOTES**
If a fixed blade like the Morakniv on this page isn't your thing and you're looking for a more compact knife for an urban environment that won't break the bank, the Razelcliffe Compact might be your jam. The blade is a funky hybrid of a Wharncliffe and a modern tanto, giving you a 2.09-inch-long cutting edge with a stubby-but-sharp point for piercing. It opens quickly thanks to a flipper tab and the IKBS ball-bearing pivot, and it stays in place due to a frame-lock in its stainless steel body. Slim, small, and affordable, the Razelcliffe Compact gives you a reliable folding knife that'll fit almost anywhere, won't attract prying eyes, and is easy on the wallet.

11 MAKE & MODEL Pocket Shot Pocket Shot Survival Kit

CONSISTS OF
16 items, including razor, fishing hooks, and cotton tinder

MSRP
\$35

URL
www.thepocketshot.com

+ **NOTES**
At first glance, the Pocket Shot looks like those old-school rubber ice packs. But it's actually a revolutionary slingshot. And now this latest iteration has been packaged as a 16-piece survival kit that comes with a zippered carrying case. Inside, a metal can holds a compass, whistle, razor, wire saw, flint with striker, 30 steel BBs, fishing line and hooks, and more. While the individual items won't blow you away, together they give you viable options in a pinch. Because of its compact size (about the size of two stacked hockey pucks), the kit can be tossed in your hiking pack or attached to the outside of your bug-out bag using the included carabiner.

12 MAKE & MODEL Morakniv Companion Spark

DIMENSIONS
9.4 inches

MSRP
\$35

URL
www.industrialrev.com

+ **NOTES**
Anyone who's spent any real amount of time outdoors with a knife knows the name Morakniv. This legendary Swedish knife company has been producing some of the world's best survival blades since 1891 and offering them at reasonable prices to boot. The Companion Spark is no exception. The 4.1-inch-long stainless steel blade features an extremely sharp Scandinavian grind and a flat spine with 90-degree corners – ideal for use with the included fire-starter, because it produces better sparks to ignite tinder (hence the name). Speaking of which, the 3,000-strike ferro rod can be stored inside the TPE rubber handle, which itself is ergonomic and comfortable. Available in black or yellow, the Companion Spark comes with a polymer sheath.



EPC

SMALL CALIBER
HUGE IMPACT



EPC-9MM
AEROPRECISIONUSA.COM

COVERT ESCAPE TOOLS

Human traffickers, process predators, narco-terrorists, hostage-takers – these are just a few groups within the criminal element that employ unlawful custody. These types of criminals are generally very experienced at their craft, and understand that eliminating all means of escape from their victims is a top priority.

During any form of abduction, there's always an initial contact phase where the bad actors must subdue and restrain their victims as quickly as possible so they can relocate to a more secure and secluded location. During this initial phase, they'll typically conduct a quick pat-down search, which must suffice until a thorough, full body-strip search can be performed.

Covert escape tools are designed to be discreet enough that they have a good chance of going undetected during this initial contact phase. This means that they can be used to escape quickly during the relocation phase, or

By **Chad McBroom**

migrated to a more concealable location prior to a full body search. When carried and used properly, these tools can mean the difference between life and death.

In this installment of *Pocket Preps*, we'll look at some of the most innovative and versatile covert escape tools on the market. Hopefully, you'll discover some tools that fit your lifestyle and can find their way into your EDC repertoire. 🛠️

1



2

1 Sparrows Lock Picks CHAOS Card

DIMENSIONS:
3 3/8 by 2 inches

WEIGHT
0.7 ounce

MSRP
\$16

URL
www.sparrowslockpicks.com

2 Citizen E Industries Ed's Manifesto Scapular

DIMENSIONS:
2 by 2.5 inches

WEIGHT
0.2 ounce

MSRP
\$45

URL
www.whoiscitizene.com

DISCLAIMER:

The contents of this article are for informational purposes only. Readers of this article are advised to check local laws concerning possession of lockpicks prior to carrying lockpicks.



3 Jolly Roger 3
Knife Coin Multi-Tool

DIMENSIONS:
1 by 1 by 0.25 inches

WEIGHT
0.3 ounce

MSRP
\$125

URL
[instagram.com/jollyrogerthree](https://www.instagram.com/jollyrogerthree)

4 Southern Specialties
OSS Lock Picks

DIMENSIONS:
2.25 by 0.5 by 0.25 inches

WEIGHT
0.4 ounce

MSRP
\$20

URL
www.lockpicktools.com

5 Southern Specialties
Titanium OSS

DIMENSIONS:
1 by 2 by 1/16 inches

WEIGHT
0.6 ounce

MSRP
\$35

URL
www.lockpicktools.com

6 Sparrows Lock Picks
Handcuff Shims

DIMENSIONS:
1.25 by 0.5 inches

WEIGHT
Less than 0.1 ounce

MSRP
\$5

URL
www.sparrowslockpicks.com

POCKET PREPS



Sparrows Lock Picks
CHAOS Card

The CHAOS card is a fully loaded punch-out escape kit that fits into a wallet like a credit card. This master card of escape tools contains a short hook pick, triple peak rake pick, tension tool, auto lock rocker/jiggler, four- and five-prong comb pick, short wafer pick, handcuff key, and a “stabby thing.” The hook and rake picks and tension tool can be used to attack most pin tumbler locks and wafer locks. The comb picks are effective at bypassing lower security locks by pushing the pin stack above the shear line. The wafer pick works on many filing cabinet and desk wafer locks. The “stabby thing,” as described by the manufacturer, is a Tanto-shaped, pointed object that forms the handle of the auto lock jiggler. It can be used in the hand or affixed to a makeshift handle to form a prison-style shank. The half-barrel handcuff key can bypass the restricted keyway of most regulation handcuffs to disengage the locking mechanism easily.

Pros:

- › Several versatile escape tools in a single, compact package, easy to stow and conceal inside a wallet or pocket

Cons:

- › Difficult to access when placed under physical restraints
- › Extremely thin tools can be difficult to use under stress.
- › Wallets are often the first thing removed when placed under unlawful custody.



Citizen E Industries
Ed's Manifesto Scapular

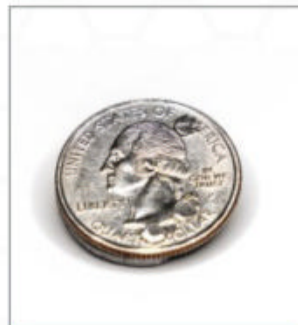
The Ed's Manifesto Scapular by Citizen E Industries mimics the design of the religious pendants popular in Latin America. The 550D Cordura pendant contains a hidden pouch for stashing small escape tools behind the religious icon. The necklace, which doubles as a friction saw for escaping flexible restraints, consists of 400-pound Kevlar cord with a copper-encased magnetic clasp. There are two elastic loops on the side of the pendant that hold a micro chemlight to aid with fine tasks under darkness. The apparent religious significance makes this escape tool less of a target for scrutiny, reducing the likelihood of confiscation during the initial encounter.

Pros:

- › Unassuming religious nature makes the scapular less obtrusive
- › Magnetic clasps make it easier to remove the scapular when movement is restricted under restraints.
- › Kevlar cord is very strong and heat resistant, making it an excellent choice as a friction saw.
- › The necklace and magnetic clasp can be used to retrieve dropped metal escape tools when movement is limited.

Cons:

- › Since this tool is worn around the neck, it can be easy to see.
- › Escape tools can fall out of the hidden pocket if not properly secured.



Jolly Roger 3
Knife Coin Multi-Tool

The Jolly Roger 3 Knife Coin Multi-Tool is made from a real coin and includes a knife blade and a standard handcuff key. The knife blade is made from tungsten-molybdenum M2 high speed steel, providing a balance between toughness, wear-resistance, and hardness properties. The handcuff key barrel has been ground to a 45-degree angle to make it easier to insert into the keyway when the user's hands are bound. The knife blade and handcuff key fold behind the coin, making them completely unobtrusive when viewed from the front.

Pros:

- › Large gripping surface created by the coin makes this key easier to manipulate than most covert handcuff keys
- › Convenient to carry and relatively easy to conceal in plain sight
- › Key works on all standard handcuff keyways.
- › Can be used to open single- and double-locked handcuffs
- › Blade can be used to cut through duct tape, flexible restraints, and rope.

Cons:

- › Can be difficult to access when handcuffed behind the back, assuming it's in the front pant pocket where loose change is normally carried.
- › Carries a hefty price tag
- › Might accidentally end up in the tip jar at the local coffee shop



Southern Specialties
OSS Lock Picks

When deep concealment is a prime motivator for tool selection, the Southern Specialties OSS Lock Picks offer a solution. This stainless steel multi-tool is packaged in a soft vinyl boot and includes a tension tool along with a Short Hook Pick, Saw Tooth Rake, Euro Modified Curved Rake, and a Razor Saw. These tools offer a wide range of escape options. The three lockpick tools allow the user to attack most standard pin tumbler locks and a variety of low-security locks. The saw can cut through duct tape and most flexible restraints. For the well-versed escape artist, the short hook or tension bar can even be used to pick most standard handcuffs.

Pros:

- › Compact micro-tool can be easily stashed away for unconventional or deep concealment carry.
- › Multi-tool approach offers many escape options for a large number of unlawful custody scenarios.
- › Hinged design keeps all tools together, ensuring they're available when needed.
- › Well-suited for body cavity capsule transport

Cons:

- › The short tools are more difficult to operate than their full-size counterparts.



Sparrows Lock Picks
Handcuff Shims

Handcuff shims are used to open handcuffs by separating the pawl (ratcheting mechanism) from the teeth on the swinging locking arm. The shim is wedged between the pawl and the teeth to disengage the locking mechanism. Some handcuff models have a split pawl with a gate in the centerline to prevent shimming. These split pawl models require a split shim to disengage the pawls on each side prior to disengaging the center gate. The Sparrows Handcuff Shims comes with two standard shims and two split shims. Their unique citadel head provides the user with such an aggressive gripping surface that the shims can be used with just one finger.

Pros:

- › Inexpensive, versatile
- › The citadel head's aggressive texture prevents the user's hands from slipping off the shim when wet.
- › Faster and easier to use than handcuff keys or picking tools
- › Standard and split designs can be used on most popular handcuffs.

Cons:

- › Small tool shape can be difficult to use by people with large hands.
- › Shimming requires the handcuffs to be tightened during insertion, which can be dangerous if the handcuffs are already tight.
- › Won't work on double-locked handcuffs



Southern Specialties
Titanium OSS

The Southern Specialties Titanium OSS tool is an extremely compact lockpick kit that includes two standard picks and a tension tool. There are two styles available. Style 1 (shown here) includes a Euro Bogota Quad Rake and a Euro Slim Line Short Hook. Style 2 has a Snake 3/7 Rake and a Camel Back Rake. The double-ended tension tool has a traditional flat head on one side for bottom of the keyway manipulation, and a short, stepped-down head on the other side for top of the keyway tension. The kit comes with a small vinyl sleeve to carry the tools. The sleeve fits perfectly inside the Ed's Manifesto Scapular by Citizen E Industries, making this non-ferrous kit a most versatile escape tool.

Pros:

- › Can be easily concealed inside wearables like the Ed's Manifesto Scapular
- › Ability to be worn on or taped to the body makes this kit a wise choice for deep concealment.
- › Titanium is a non-ferrous material, making the magnetic signature of these tools minimal.

Cons:

- › The small tools can be challenging to use under stress.

“DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT...”

TNVC.COM

 /TNVCINC

 /TNVC_INC

 /TNVCINC

© COPYRIGHT 2021, TNVC, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

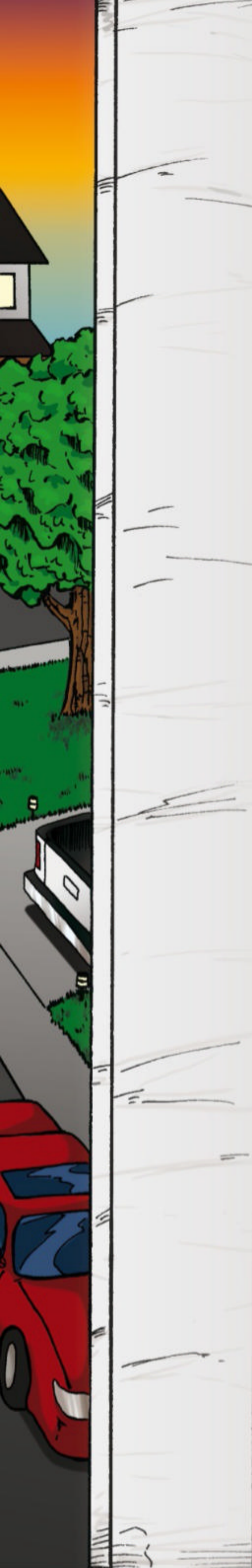
TNVC 
TACTICAL NIGHT VISION COMPANY



WHAT IF?

Your Neighborhood is Attacked by an Angry Mob?

By RECOIL OFFGRID Staff, Illustrations by Robert Bruner



Unfortunately, we live in an era where some groups who claim to be warriors for tolerance and justice show their true colors by being intolerant toward anyone who isn't completely accepting of their rhetoric and actions. You might just be enjoying a dinner out with friends and, without provocation, you're confronted by a crowd of angry activists demanding you immediately show your allegiance to their cause. If you refuse, you may be verbally accosted or attacked. It seems that the notion of agreeing to disagree is lost on many, and their insistence on forced ideological compliance through violence reveals what lengths they'll go to in order to push their agenda.

We often see this on the news and quickly go back to eating our dinner, while thinking to ourselves *I'm glad that's not happening where I am*. But what if it was right at your front door? It's nearly impossible to reason with an angry mob that's intent on acting as your judge, jury, and – in the worst-case scenario – executioner. If a group of protestors hell-bent on making their point at the expense of the safety and property of others came to your neighborhood, are you prepared to deal with it?

Mark and Patricia McCloskey in St. Louis clearly felt the intruders who broke into their gated community were hostile and put their lives in jeopardy. Their decision to demonstrate they were armed to discourage any threats to their home and safety has now culminated in a cascade of legal troubles that are far from over. Given the reality that brandishing firearms could result in felony charges even when you feel threatened, we asked law enforcement officer Chad McBroom and attorney Jason Squires to weigh in with their expertise on what they would do if confronted with a similar situation.

The Scenario:



SITUATION TYPE
Angry mob in your neighborhood



YOUR CREW
You, your pregnant wife, and 10-year-old daughter



LOCATION
Everett, Washington



SEASON
Winter



WEATHER
50 degrees F, low of 41 degrees F

The Setup: Protests by activist groups and random provocateurs are being seen all over the country in response to an increasingly contentious political climate. While many have remained peaceful, some have escalated into full-on riots, looting, and assaults on average passersby who were in the wrong place at the wrong time or just trying to protect their businesses or homes. You live in a safe, upper middle-class neighborhood on a cul-de-sac in a Seattle suburb. Your two-story house has a decent-sized front yard, a two-car garage, and gated side-yard entrance.

Your home isn't dangerously close to any of the recent civil unrest concentrated primarily in the metro area. However, the recent trend has been for many of these protests to fan further and further out toward neighborhoods on the outskirts of downtown, both open and gated, to accost residents. When you return home from work on a Friday evening to your 10-year-old daughter and pregnant wife, you again hear on the radio that protestors are moving through the streets, but this time they're reported to be within a few blocks of your home.

The Complication: Within half an hour of your arrival at home, you begin hearing commotion outside. A crowd has formed and begins hurling bottles, rocks, and other debris at the homes. Since you're in a cul-de-sac, it's hard to determine if they'll remain there or keep moving after they feel they've made their point. Most of the crowd is masked; some are wielding blunt-force weapons such as baseball bats, and you think at least a few might be carrying firearms as well. Since it's getting dark, it's too difficult to determine what other weapons they have.

Your neighbor across the street, a retired police officer, comes out of his house while leaving the door open and his wife in the doorway. He begins shouting at the crowd to disperse and leave the area. You can tell he isn't armed. As he approaches the protestors at the edge of his yard, he takes a sudden punch to the jaw and falls to the ground limp. Some of the other protestors charge the house and push his wife inside. Many in the crowd cheer, but you feel your heart sink into your stomach.

Could this escalate to other home invasions, including yours, and require lethal force? You frantically call 9-1-1 and explain the situation, but due to civil unrest in other parts of the city going on simultaneously, the dispatcher cannot give you any assurances on how quickly law enforcement may arrive. For now, you're on your own. What do you do?

Combatives Expert Chad McBroom's Approach

Preparation

When people who are driven by a social or political agenda become violent, they'll typically focus their rage against those they believe to be supporters of the injustices they're rallied against. Keeping my home sterile of any political campaign signs that might make my home a target for those with dissenting views would be my first point of preparation. Likewise, the vehicles associated with my home need to be as sterile as possible. Many of us are proud of our family and our beliefs and like to display that pride to the world around us, but that can make us vulnerable. A stick figure family says how many people and pets live in the house. An NRA sticker says you likely have firearms in your home. An honor sticker says where your kids go to school. A parking permit in the window says where you work. These are things that not

only give away personal information, but may even make us targets.

Disinformation can be an effective tool as well. If I knew a crowd was heading my direction, I'd consider displaying messages that'd be considered supportive of the cause in hopes the mob might decide to avoid harassing someone they think is a sympathizer. I've seen this tactic successfully used to an extent by local businesses trying keep their storefronts from being destroyed by rioters.

To the extent possible, I'd keep all vehicles inside the garage to not only limit the potential for property damage, but also to shield them from protestors and make them accessible to me and my family should we need to evacuate. With the random protests that have been taking place, I'd keep all vehicles topped off with fuel and park them facing outward to make a quick exit more feasible.

Since protests and riots have been random and without a logical pattern, I'd find it necessary to keep extra nonperishable goods stocked in the pantry should scarcity set in due to restricted movement or property damage. This would also ensure that we have plenty of food should we need to shelter in place for an extended period.

I'd have a bug-out bag readily accessible should we need to hit the road. The items I'd include in the bag would be three MREs, several bottles of water, an SBR or rifle-caliber pistol, extra magazines with ammunition, trauma kit, a lighter, solar power pack and cell phone charger, two flashlights, chemlights, four space blankets, a few energy bars, lock-pick kit, 550 cord, and duct tape.

Knowing that anarchist types like playing with fire, I'd have two fully charged fire extinguishers inside the home, one upstairs and



one downstairs. I'd also remove any fabric window dressing that could easily catch fire should pyrotechnics be thrown through my windows.

From a legal standpoint, I'd make sure I was up to speed on the state and local laws governing the use of deadly force, especially as it relates to home intruders and the protection of property. I'd also make a call to my home insurance provider to make sure my coverage was up to date to cover any newly acquired assets since my last policy review.

On Site

With an angry crowd already formed and displaying violent behavior outside my home, I wouldn't attempt to flee via vehicle. Being situated in a cul-de-sac places us in a situation where the crowd has nowhere to advance but toward us. Attempting to leave in a vehicle would only place my family out in the open where we'd likely be trapped in the middle of the mob with nowhere to run.

My first course of action would be to turn off all the lights inside the house and get everyone away from the windows and positioned toward the interior of the house. Having the inside dark may convince the protestors that no one is home to harass. It also makes it difficult for outsiders to see inside, while the exterior lights and streetlights make it easier for me to see what's going on outside.

Next, call 9-1-1 to notify the authorities and keep them on the phone to produce a detailed audio record of the events. Hearing the genuine fear in the voice of the caller and chaos of the situation might be just what a jury needs to rule in your favor should your actions be tried in court.

I'd then arm my wife with a shotgun and a sidearm and grab my own pistol, AR-15 rifle, and plate carrier I keep in the bedroom closet. With my wife protecting the kids, I'd take up a defensive position at one of the upstairs windows where I could observe the crowd as well as my neighbor's house.

I'd also set up a camera to record as much as possible to protect myself legally and maybe help send some of these bastards

that just assaulted my neighbor to prison. The security camera I have located at the front of my house will record action from the ground level.

As the situation progresses and the possibility of facing a home invasion increases, I'd have my wife and kids fortify the front door by placing our large kitchen table behind it. While it won't stop a crowd this size from gaining entry, it'll slow them down and give us time to respond.

In addition to the possibility of a home invasion, the other major threats are fire and gunfire from outside. With the doors and windows creating choke points that make an invading mob easier to deal with, these two threats might pose the greatest dangers. Keeping the family away from exterior walls and windows will enhance their safety. I'd also instruct them to stay low to the ground and place hard furniture like wooden desks between them and the walls to add a layer of ballistic protection.

While we continue to enhance our defenses, I'll have my wife get on the phone and try to contact some friends or family who are relatively close-by to begin forming an evacuation plan should we decide to flee the crowd on foot. Monitoring local news broadcasts may give us an aerial view of the situation that can help us determine the best escape route. Barring any known obstructions, our most likely escape route will initially be over the back wall through to the next street.

Crisis

As I observe the crowd, I'm looking for non-verbal cues that'll indicate an imminent attack. I'm looking for instigators to display gestures indicating direction. Pointing toward individuals can communicate specific instructions being given. Pointing or gesturing toward my house or a neighbor's house can communicate the objective of actions being directed.

The Washington Criminal Code says homicide is justifiable when committed either: (1) "In the lawful defense of the slayer, or his or her husband, wife, parent, child, brother, or sister, or of any other person in his or her

presence or company, when there is reasonable ground to apprehend a design on the part of the person slain to commit a felony or to do some great personal injury to the slayer or to any such person, and there is imminent danger of such design being accomplished;" or "(2) In the actual resistance of an attempt to commit a felony upon the slayer, in his or her presence, or upon or in a dwelling, or other place of abode, in which he or she is." Furthermore, the law states, "there is no duty to retreat when a person is assaulted in a place where he or she has a right to be."

Dealing with a large and potentially violent group of protesters can be a touchy subject when it comes to the legal ramifications. While the sheer numbers can be intimidating, setting foot on your property only constitutes a misdemeanor trespassing violation. There must be reasonable grounds to believe there's an imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death before deadly force can be legally justified.

Given the fact that I just witnessed members of the crowd physically assault my neighbor and force their way into their home with his wife, I have an articulable reason to believe that the members of the crowd approaching my own home have the same intentions. I haven't seen the neighbor's wife run out of the house since the crowd forced their way inside, which suggests she may have been brutally assaulted or is being held captive by the intruders.

My plan at this point is simple. With our ability to retreat being non-existent, our safest course of action is to hole up inside the house and address whatever threat presents itself. We're now under the threat of serious bodily harm or death, so I tell my wife to let loose some 00 buckshot on anyone who forces their way through the front door.

While continuing to occupy my high ground position from the upstairs window, I'm looking to address any imminent threat against my family. If I see a gun or pyro device directed toward my home, I will use deadly force. Hopefully, the mob will decide to move their party elsewhere, but hope isn't a strategy.

Attorney Jason Squires' Approach

Preparation

Every household should have basic supplies for any disruption in service. What is service? This can be a disruption in power, water, or essential governmental services like police and/or fire department. In my home, I keep three weeks of food and water as a basic level of preparation. Stop and think how much water a family of four requires for three weeks of survival. The answer: a lot. Water is approximately eight pounds per gallon and a family of four can easily use five gallons every other day. That's a 55-gallon drum of water, and very few people have such a cache in their home.

Second, I always have three weeks of food. I find that food is easier because Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) are a fantastic source of emergency calories. Remember, each person will use, at a minimum, one bag a day. That's a case every three days (12 meals per case with a family of four). That amounts to seven cases of MREs, which are more sensitive than people commonly understand. The average military MRE has a shelf life of three years. That shelf life can be extended to five or more if the MREs are kept in a temperature-sensitive environment.

I'll add that in a hostile political environment, items like fire suppression are also key to protecting you and yours. I place fire suppression as an essential part of preparation. If an angry mob appears, fire is a very significant danger. As such, I have a multitude of fire-suppression tools like extinguishers (one for every room), fire blankets, and masks for smoke. At this stage your supply cache is getting quite immense – 55 gallons of water, seven cases of MREs, fire extinguishers, and other resources have nearly filled one room of an average house. This is a must for any "shelter-in-place" crisis. In addition, each family member requires clothing to deal with temperature and precipitation. I'd add that sturdy footwear is critical. I wouldn't want my daughter running in her flip-flops.

As far as firearms, I have the usual assortment of AR-15s, tactical shotguns, and pistols. I have completed enough formal train-

ing to declare myself competent in their use and operation. Notice I didn't say that I show up at a range once a year and shoot a paper target 25 meters away and call it "good." I've spent the time and money to learn under some of the best instructors in the industry. A person doesn't need to chase a Tier One operator around to obtain such proficiency, but a structured tactical class with a competent and a highly regarded instructor is a must. Remember the three "T's" of survival: training, training, and training.

When discussing preparation for home defense, I take things to another level. I have security cameras around the property and flood lighting. These items are a must even without a calamity.

Next step, I equip my home with security gates at every entrance. These are iron gates secured with a deadbolt lock that provide an added layer of protection. In times of domestic turbulence, a strong door is a must. I'd also add that political signage can be a target for people who disagree with you. Normally, this can result in a neighbor upset at your political point of view. However, in a mob situation, a party or candidate sign can make you a target. I have security screens on each window. I have a sturdy vehicle, always a four-wheel-drive, to provide a quick exit if the situation necessitates a speedy departure.

Lastly, for preparation, I have a \$5 million personal liability umbrella (PLUP). A PLUP is a very inexpensive insurance policy that instantly adds \$5 million to home and auto policies. At around \$200 per year, a PLUP can significantly protect from civil lawsuits. Check the policy for any exclusions for Intentional Acts. Do not purchase a policy that doesn't protect you from a use-of-force situation.

Crisis

Before anything else, remember the old idiom: "Discretion is the better part of valor." It's one of a million such quotable notables that Americans are fed on a daily basis, but this one is key. Simply put, thinking logically

and avoiding trouble is the most effective weapon in any crisis. Use your brain. If something looks bad, move. Leave. Get to a safe location before trouble starts.

It's Friday night in Seattle, and you come home to your lovely, pregnant wife and 10-year-old daughter. This isn't exactly a crack "fire-team." Soon after you arrive, trouble starts.

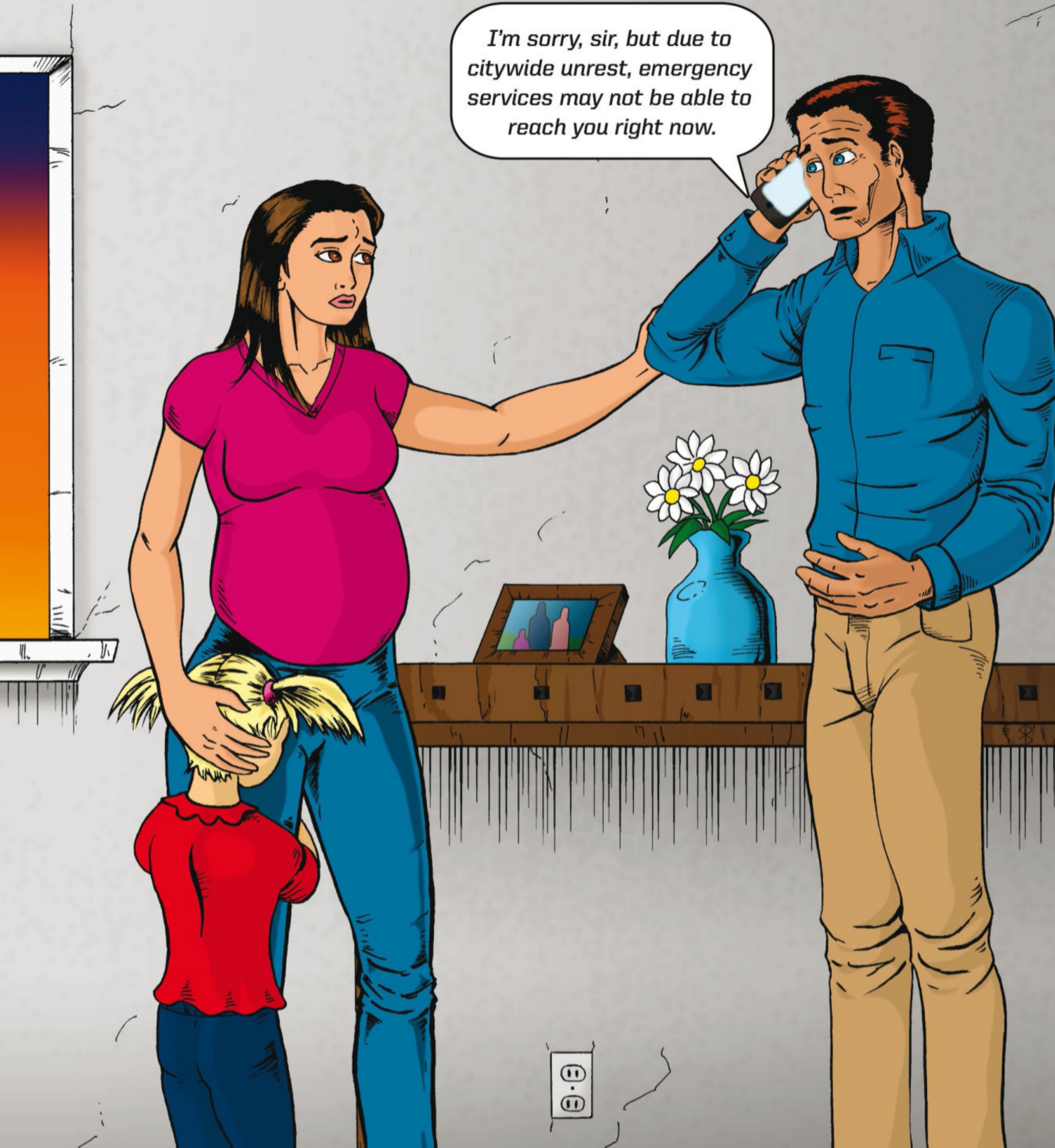
You hear loud noises and something like a megaphone. There are chants and screaming, and it's getting louder. This problem is coming to you. You must act. What can I do to protect myself and my family? There's nothing more important than protecting you and yours. Your neighbors are secondary considerations, let's be honest. Do what you can to assist, but you and yours must come first.

Your retired law enforcement neighbor decides to confront the protestors. Why? In all of known history, does the mob disperse at one man's presence? No, of course not. The mob attacks the single man, hitting him about the head. Can you assist? No, not legally. Some jurisdictions allow you to defend someone else (third-party defense) under certain circumstances. But, the prudent thing is to call 9-1-1 and secure your home rather than stumbling into the fray alone.

If there's a lull, you can break cover and run to assist your retired neighbor. But, absolutely do not run to confront the mob with a firearm – this poses a risk of serious legal exposure. Aggravated assault is generally defined as "the intentional or reckless placing of another person in a reasonable apprehension of an imminent deadly attack upon their person." Does pointing a weapon at a rioter constitute an aggravated assault? Yes. And, in some jurisdictions you may be charged with a prison mandatory offense. People hate to hear that legal protections are so fragile. But this is the reality in our current legislative environment.

There are currently no known protections for mob actions. Each individual in the mob is given their own legal protections. You might hear: "I was only filming this for

I'm sorry, sir, but due to citywide unrest, emergency services may not be able to reach you right now.



social media when he pointed a gun at me!” We as defenders see the mob as its own entity. Each rioter is a tentacle of the same monster. However, the law does not share our view. Each person must be using or threatening deadly force at you to even potentially justify an armed response. So, keep all of this in mind before leaving your home with a weapon. As a defense attorney for 21 years, I fear a politically motivated prosecution more than any mob.

Your Home

This is where the analysis takes a different turn. No matter what, you should protect yourself and your family from any harm. An angry mob throwing incendiary bombs at your house is a completely different analysis than your neighbor suffering a beating. When, and if, a mob is attempting to enter a home, residents within are almost commanded to protect themselves and their family. Remember, the closer the assault to where you lay your head on a pillow, generally, the more legal protections you’ll have in a self-defense situation. Please know that confronting an angry mob with an exposed firearm in front of your house will likely result in you being charged with a crime. However, repelling a deadly attack inside your home is a completely different situation that wouldn’t likely result in prosecution.

I’d have fire suppression gear staged everywhere and repel an attack with my fortifications like iron gates, deadbolt locks, or sandbags against walls. Currently, Amazon sells 1,000 sandbags for \$299. To avoid criminal prosecution, one must call for help. Call 9-1-1 multiple times if necessary. There’ll be an electronic record even if help doesn’t arrive. Express fear knowing the 9-1-1 calls are recorded. It’s not the time to appear stoic. Ingress into your yard and incursion into your home are different things. Protecting your tool shed isn’t the same as protecting your pregnant wife or 10-year-old daughter. Rely upon your defenses when protecting property. Rely upon heavy, sturdy gates and locks. Your security cameras will record the

calamity on the property, and your insurance can replace it afterward.

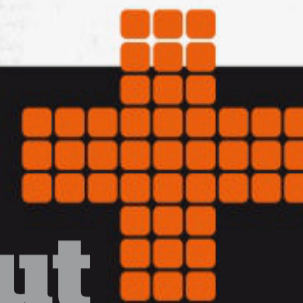
Most jurisdictions don’t allow the defense of property the same as the defense of the interior of the home. When it comes to the family, protect them, but be smart. Use the minimal force necessary to protect yourself. I handle cases where people use the “threat display” – *Go away! I have a gun and I’m in my front yard!* Why would someone do this? Avoid the mob as best you can, and hope the police show up. This sounds cowardly to many, but there aren’t currently many legal justifications/protections outside the home that insulate people from criminal prosecution. We need better legal protections for citizens who defend themselves against mobs, but those protections don’t exist yet.

Conclusion

Circle back to the idiom, “Discretion is the better part of valor.” If there’s trouble in your area, go stay with Uncle Fred until things calm down. Riots are becoming commonplace, regrettably. When possible, protect your family by putting distance between yourselves and any threat. In instances when this is impossible, shelter in place and protect your family with the minimal force necessary to repel any attack inside your residence. Fortify your defenses, stay indoors, don’t confront the mob, and you’ll improve your odds of avoiding costly criminal prosecution. Some might call you a coward for avoiding conflict, but it’s better than facing decades in prison at the hands of an activist judge and unsympathetic jury.

Getting trapped at home by an unruly and potentially violent group of politically motivated protestors is one of the most difficult scenarios one might face in today’s era of civil unrest. The volume of people and chaotic nature poses many logistical and use-of-force challenges.

Minimize your target signature and prepare for both immediate evacuation and long-term hold-out. Do everything in your power to avoid a violent confrontation, but if it becomes unavoidable, be ready to fight back efficiently with lethal force. ❖



About the Authors



Chad McBroom is a 24-year veteran law enforcement officer with most of his time spent in the tactical

unit. He’s spent over 30 years studying various combative systems and focuses on the science of close combat. Chad is the owner of Comprehensive Fighting Systems, and offers training in empty-hand tactics, edged weapons, impact weapons, and firearms tactics. He’s also a regular contributor to RECOIL. Check out more at comprehensivefightingsystems.com.



Jason Squires has been an attorney in Arizona for over 21 years. He has an emphasis on self-

defense and firearms cases. During his off-time, he’s an avid three-gun competitor across the country. He’s also a collector of military firearms and vehicles. You can check out his practice at squireslawaz.com.

MORE CHOICES FOR YOU.
**NO CHOICE
FOR VARMINT.**



A17
TARGET THUMBHOLE



MARK II
MINIMALIST BROWN



B17 FV-SR
OVERWATCH



A22
PRO VARMINT



A22
PRECISION



RASCAL
MINIMALIST TEAL/GREY



RASCAL
MINIMALIST PINK/PURPLE



OUT FRONT IN RIMFIRE. OUTDONE BY NONE.

When it comes to rimfire, our pace of innovation is unmatched. And with more than 150 rifles in our rimfire lineup, we have an answer for every varmint problem. No matter what kind of pests you're looking to take care of, you're covered with a Savage rimfire.

SAVAGE[®]
BETTER COMES STANDARD.

SAVAGEARMS.COM



DO YOU HAVE A DUTY TO INTERVENE?

A Look at Good Samaritan Laws and Third-Party Defense

By Jason Squires



ikes ... I'm late for my 10 a.m. appointment!

Yellow light, red light, stop. I'm the first car at the intersection facing south. I'm just getting ready to proceed over the bridge to my office in the hip, university office

buildings in a major metropolitan city. I check my watch and reflect on the morning's court proceedings. Last night's news coverage was about riots at the university. Apparently, things got out of hand, and the police used tear gas on protestors. I barely remembered the morning news coverage as I caffeinated myself awake.

I check my watch. *Damn! I hate being late.* My gaze wanders to the vehicles just coming to a stop in the northbound lanes on the opposite side of the intersection. As I watch, one of those vehicles makes an aggressive move and turns violently 90 degrees to block lanes one, two, and part of three in the northbound travel. Three young men burst from the interior of the car. The driver pops the trunk and the young men retrieve improvised weapons from within. *What is this?*

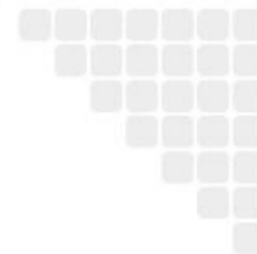
Background

As I sit in my car, I have my Glock 43 on an ankle holster. I'm driving a four-wheel-drive SUV. My state allows

me to have an AR-15 locked via a security cable in the trunk. I have 200 rounds of .223 ammunition and two spare mags for the 43 in my pocket. I'm in a suit and tie.

The trunk pops open and the young men grab large rocks and bricks and begin throwing them at the fellow northbound traffic. The light is red, and the vehicles are coming to a stop only to be met with the onslaught of flying objects denting panels and smashing glass. People panic. A woman in her car freezes and shields her face even though she has a windshield to protect her. Her windshield instantly spiderwebs. She's frozen in terror and now the vehicle behind her cannot maneuver around her. The men are yelling something unintelligible as they pummel the surrounding cars and trucks.

One woman, third car in the lineup, tries to move around the vehicle in front of her. This enrages the men who focus their wrath upon her vehicle. One of the young men, the driver of the attacker's car jumps out with a ... small black thing in his hand. It has a pointy end so I know it can't be a cell phone. *Is it ... is that a gun?* I hit the button on my headset, "Siri, dial 9-1-1!" "Calling 9-1-1," Siri says. "9-1-1, what is your emergency?" "There are four men throwing large rocks and bricks at the surrounding cars," I say. The dispatcher responds, "What is your location?"





The men chase the third motorist and destroy the side panel of her vehicle. She narrowly avoids three collisions and runs the red light to escape. The driver of the attacker's car tracks her with the object that must be a gun. No shots are fired, and his hand lowers as she escapes. The foursome turn their attention back to the remaining traffic. I can hear thuds and safety glass windshields absorbing the impact from the projectiles. People are attempting to back up, but the oncoming traffic is making that impossible. The motorists in the northbound lanes are sitting ducks. So far, just the one vehicle has escaped their vicious attacks. The young men grab at the door handle of vehicle number two. Luckily, the door appears locked, but a brick is thrown at point-blank range at her driver-side window. Safety glass again saves the day, and the window isn't breached, but the men seem determined to gain entry.

In this politically charged climate where riots and random acts of violence seem to be getting more and more common, let's take a moment to consider how you might respond to these circumstances in a legally justifiable manner.

A General Review of Third-Party Defense

Here's an excerpt of my home state's law governing defense of a third party:

A person is justified in threatening or using physical force or deadly physical force against another to protect a third person if, under the circumstances as a reasonable person would believe them to be, such person would be permitted to protect themselves in threatening or using physical force or deadly physical force to protect himself against the unlawful physical force or deadly physical force a reasonable person would believe is threatening the third person he seeks to protect. (Arizona Revised Statutes §13-406.)

Got that? Are you ready to risk your life or liberty on that ridiculously worded statute, or do you agree with me that its definition is utterly confusing?

My Options

At this point, what are my options? Can I run up and "inject" myself into the melee to assist the panicked woman in her car? Do I dare confront these young men knowing one of them appears to be armed? The police are on their way, I'm told. No estimation of time for their arrival. I'm a Good Samaritan and want to help. But can I provide any meaningful help other than to direct their energy toward myself?

Unfortunately, this is the reality urban citizens can face in these unprecedented times. What level of force can I apply to help protect these motorists? All appear to be women, but I cannot see beyond a few vehicles.

BATTLBOX

SURVIVAL + OUTDOORS

Adventure. Delivered.

GEAR DELIVERED MONTHLY




SOUTHERN SURVIVAL

GET 10% OFF YOUR FIRST BATTLBOX WITH
COUPON CODE: OGTENOFF
Visit www.BattlBox.com/OffGrid to get started



SOUTHERN SURVIVAL
STREAMING NOW ON NETFLIX

The easiest option is to sit and be a good witness for law enforcement. I'm not in any danger, as the attack is on the opposite lanes of travel approximately 75 feet away from me. I'm personally not being threatened, directly. This is an important legal distinction. I can defend myself from a violent attack on my person, but, as I stated, the attack is 75 feet away on the opposite side of a large intersection.

Could I run the red light and place my vehicle in their path, blocking them in and wait for law enforcement? Yes, but that comes at great risk to me. Can I then defend myself? Well, wait. I just did something legally complicating. I "injected" myself into the trouble. Is it legal to "inject" myself into trouble and then claim self-defense when their wrath turns my way? Answer: No! Normally, you cannot inject yourself into a self-defense encounter. But, this is admittedly a gray area. If I have the legal prowess to say my intent was to distract and protect the motorists, most of whom appear to be defenseless women, then find the need to protect myself *after* a gun is pointed at me, it becomes less gray, but still not clearly justified, legally.

Here's a teachable moment. I state again for clarity: You cannot inject yourself into a self-defense encounter and claim self-defense. In this case specifically, I was operating a motor vehicle and could accelerate to safety. I had the means at that key moment to flee to safety. Injecting myself into the melee is a law enforcement function. I cannot deputize myself and intervene, even to help. I can, foolish as it sounds, turn their attention to me and my vehicle without using any type of deadly force.



Violence Escalates

Let's take the argument to the next level. Assume, the motorist in vehicle two who was shielding her face when the bricks pummeled her windshield did *not* have her doors locked. Assume she's yanked from the car, and only one man has a firearm.

The men yank the distraught woman from her car. She's being slapped and hit about the head and neck. She's crying and bleeding from the blows; her glasses are broken. One man has a firearm, but it's not pointed at her. This attack is a random event and appears to target society on this roadway in general. This isn't a domestic violence situation. The attackers are hurling rocks and bricks at everyone within arm's reach.

I must analyze the harm against the dangers of intervening at this point. I've called the police. I've made mental notes of the physical descriptions of the attackers. I've noted the car's license plate. At this point I've done all that I am unquestionably legally allowed to do. Forget all the citizen's arrest statutes. In 21 years of handling these cases, rarely has that defense worked. So, that's out. I know law enforcement is moments away because I've taken note of my proximity to the police station and estimated arrival time to be approximately four to five minutes. I know that these perpetrators are cowards and will attempt to leave very soon to avoid the inevitable law enforcement reaction. So, legally, I must stay put and be a good witness. I take careful notice of every detail of the encounter. But, what about the helpless women in their custody?

Shots Fired

What if the encounter turns deadly serious whereupon the perpetrators fire aimlessly in the direction of the cars? Now, I'm dealing with a potential mass-shooting event. Is it



AMERICAN MUSCLE. REDEFINED.



FN 509 LS EDGE™

FIND YOUR EDGE



9MM LONG SLIDE | OPTICS-READY | FLAT-FACED TRIGGER | MAG WELL

Introducing the performance-driven, factory-tuned FN 509 LS Edge. The superior engineering of the FN 509 LS Edge, influenced by professional users and world-champion shooters, promises the performance of a fully-customized firearm, right out of the box. From the frontlines to the range, you'll know the advantage is always yours. **The FN 509 LS EDGE. Find a dealer—and your EDGE—today.**



CARRY THE FUTURE™



legally permissible to inject myself into this attack knowing people might be dead or badly wounded? This is again a gray area. If I were to respond, how would law enforcement know friend from foe? Might I risk being shot by Officer Friendly of the University Police? Yes! Officers arriving on scene of a shots fired, mass-shooting event are going to be amped up and looking for shooters.

An anonymous prosecutor friend jokingly suggested perhaps shooting into the air to scare them away. This is even legally problematic. You have committed the crime of discharge of a firearm within the city limits, a felony in some jurisdictions. Did shooting into the air cause the perpetrators to flee moments before law enforcement could bring the attackers to justice? The answer is likely: Yes! I would then be forced to defend myself from a felony charge for discharging a firearm within the city limits. Could I cite a Third Party Protection Defense as the justification for me shooting into the air? Maybe, but this comes down to the judgment of the prosecuting agency, who generally view citizens taking the law into their own hands as a bad idea. I could face charges.

A prosecutor might say this was only for law enforcement to handle and charge me with a felony. The police might be frustrated with me because their suspects fled at the sound of gunfire, albeit in the air. I state emphatically that they were shooting at cars, and I didn't know if someone was dead or about to be killed. The police might respond that the suspects' crimes are serious, and they could face decades in prison for their crimes

and my response scared them away when a post-review of the situation shows no person was harmed. Now, it's just me and the police to sort things out. I'd better call my lawyer.

Conclusion

Be a good witness; take careful mental notes of the suspects to give to police. Stay on the phone with law enforcement, giving them all the details on the recorded line. Always protect yourself from an imminent deadly threat. But remember, as citizens, we're obligated to run from trouble – only the police are allowed to run toward trouble.

Post-script: The above-listed story really occurred as I described. There was no shooting, and the woman wasn't pulled out of her vehicle, but the rest all happened on an average Tuesday. ☘



About the Author



Jason Squires is a criminal defense attorney in the Phoenix Metropolitan area. He has been practicing for over 21 years and has handled a multitude of self-defense scenarios. In his off-time, Squires is a three-gun competitor and avid firearms collector. Additional information about Squires can be found on his website: www.squireslawaz.com.

RECOILTV

RELEVANT.
HONEST.
UNFILTERED.

RECOILTV IS THE PREMIER
AUTHORITY FOR THE FIREARMS
NEWS AND MEDIA YOU WANT
AND DESERVE.

DOWNLOAD
THE FREE
APP TODAY!

RECOILTV

Navigate between a
variety of channels

By signing up you agree to our [terms of service](#) & [privacy policy](#)



RECOILTV is a 2A friendly streaming platform created to entertain and inform you on the latest guns and gear associated with the firearms lifestyle.

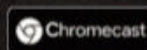
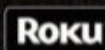
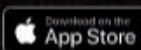
Brought to you by:



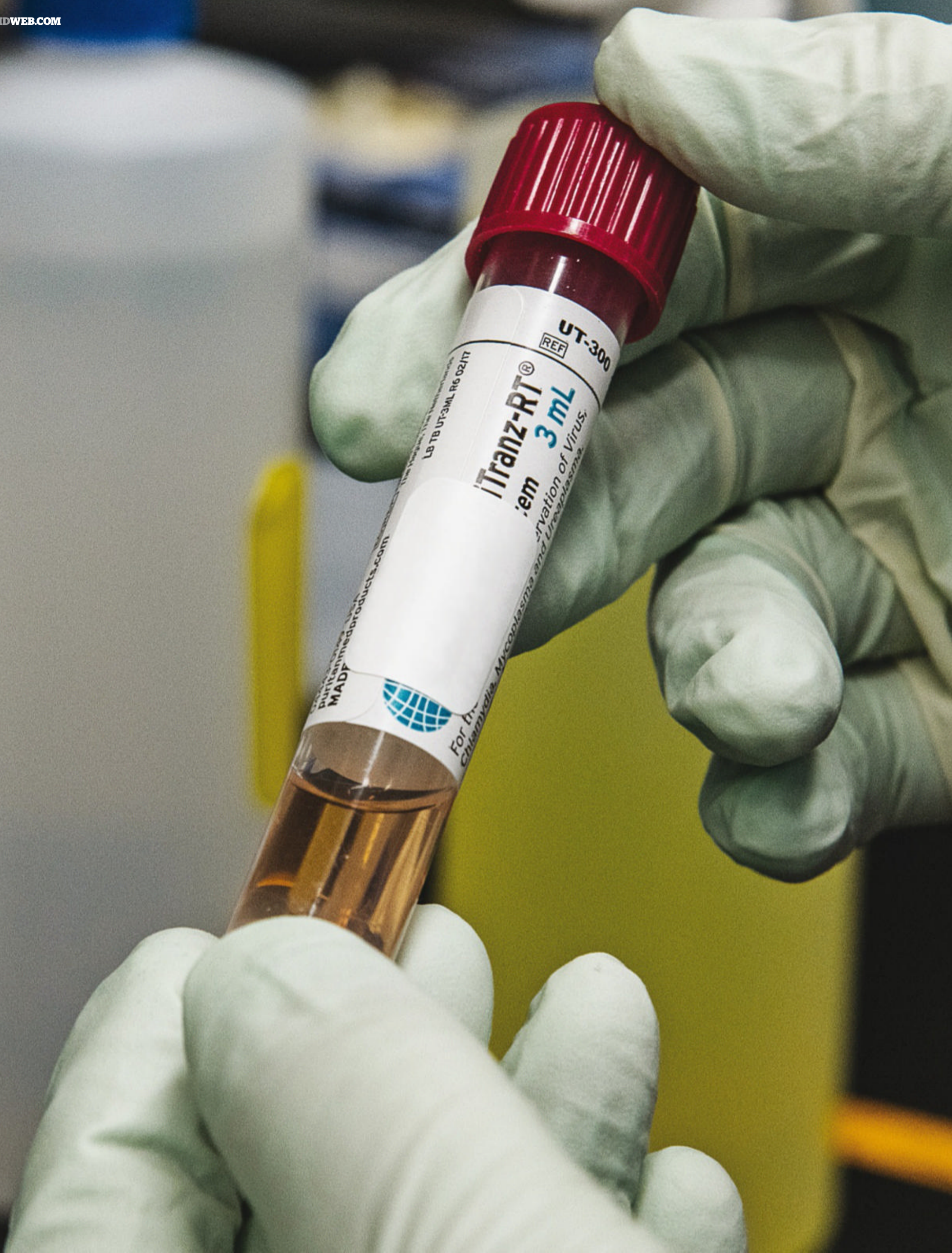
Presented by:



RECOILTV is available on:



 WWW.RECOIL.TV



THE VIRAL TRUTH

Five Experts Help Sort Fact from Fiction
During the COVID-19 Pandemic By **Mark Linderman**

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The original draft of this article was more than 5,000 words long. Due to page space constraints, we had to edit this piece down substantially. We did our best to preserve as much of the information as possible and not inadvertently slant the messages one way or the other. For the sake of transparency, and out of respect for the work put in by the author and his panel, the unabridged version of this article is available on our website, www.offgridweb.com - TM]

This picture depicted a test tube with a viral transport media that contained a patient's sample to be tested for the presence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Photo provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The United States has seen its share of tragedy in the 21st century and since then, the nation that we call "home" has changed dramatically. Public health officials have been cautioning Americans since 2001 that a horrific pandemic has been lurking at our doorsteps to infect every world citizen. In fact, public health agencies around the world gave dire warnings about the horrors of H1N1, Ebola, SARS, and MERS, all of which were deadly in their own right, but failed to cause the level of death purported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The fact of the matter is world citizens lucked out with those disease outbreaks. But that was then ...

Once again, the landscape of our world has witnessed historical changes unseen since the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, which was responsible for anywhere between 50 and 100 million deaths. Ironically, even though the COVID-19 pandemic is different than the Spanish Influenza, one does not have to dig deep to understand that many of the societal struggles we face with today's pandemic are very similar to those witnessed during the 1918 outbreak. Modern society is larger, faster, and more prone to accepting conflicting information today than it

ever has in the history of mankind. Since the inception of social and mainstream media, most world-residents remain in a constant state of confusion as to what constitutes fact over fiction.

To help alleviate some of that confusion, RECOIL OFFGRID magazine has brought together a few experts to examine the lines between fact and fiction surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Amesh Adalja is an expert in infectious diseases and emergency medicine from the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. He's joined by Dr. Eric Dietz, director

of the Purdue University Military Research Institute, and Jeff Schlegelmilch, director of the National Center for Domestic Preparedness at Columbia University. Finally, Dr. Tim Frazier, faculty director of the Emergency Disaster Management program at Georgetown University, will combine his extensive field expertise to aid in the article's

search for answers with Dr. Robert Quigley, senior vice president and regional medical director of International SOS. All panelists will share their in-depth knowledge to help answer the question we're all asking: Is the truth about COVID-19 still out there?

RECOIL OFFGRID: What statistics are used to gauge the severity of a disease outbreak?

Amesh Adalja: There are a lot of

statistics out there, and it depends on what your purpose is when looking at statistics and finding what is useful to you. When examining the spread of disease, the number of cases is one aspect to look at, but that has to be adjusted for how much testing is going on. There are places that are increasing and decreasing their levels of testing, so you have to look is the percent of positivity. In other words, how hard is it to find a new case, which is an important number to look at because it's an indicator of what the community spread is. It's important to keep

COVID-19

- > Fever
- > Cough
- > Shortness of breath
- > Symptoms appear 2-14 days after exposure

Influenza

- > Fever
- > Cough
- > Sore throat
- > Headaches
- > Fatigue
- > Muscle or body aches
- > Runny or stuffy nose

Allergies

- > Sneezing
- > Itching, running, or blocked nose
- > Itching, red, or watery eyes
- > Wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, cough

“It's always a good thing to re-evaluate where we're going, and we should demand that of our elected officials and health professionals who are charged to keep us safe.”

— Eric Dietz

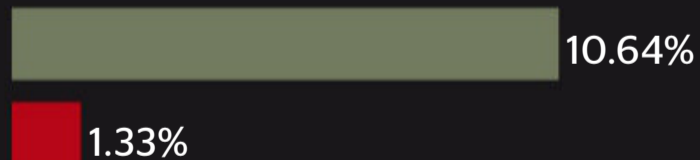
COVID-19 VS. Seasonal Influenza

The key two differences between COVID-19 and influenza are the transmissibility of COVID-19, as well as its fatality rate. We've seen other coronaviruses such as MERS, which has a high fatality rate but isn't very transmissible. Flu is highly transmissible but does not have the fatality rate that COVID-19 exhibits. The ability to spread easily and kill a higher proportion of people are what separates COVID-19 from other common viruses and make it a deadly pandemic today.

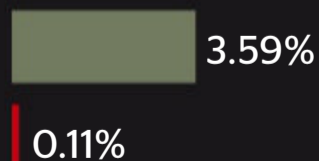
Median hospital stay



Hospitalization rate*



Fatality rate*



*Show hospitalizations and deaths as a percentage of total cases. COVID-19 rate calculated using laboratory confirmed cases as of April 10 and seasonal flu rate calculated using 2019-20 CDC flu burden estimates.

Sources: CDC; New England Journal of Medicine; Covid Tracking Project

in mind that patient deaths are a lagging indicator, so you'll likely not see an immediate rise in deaths if you see an outbreak spiraling out of control. That's also another marker to look at for the severity of the virus.

Eric Dietz: One thing to keep in mind is that all statistics are very different. The spread rate might be very high, but we may not care as much if the disease is not lethal. If the lethality is high, however, we're going to have a significant concern. There are a variety of factors involved in determining statistics such as how fast it spreads, its lethality, and severity of the symptoms. Each one has its own quirks, especially as they relate to COVID-19 and new data emerges.

Tim Frazier: What's critical at this point are looking at infection rates, the number of new cases from a day-to-day perspective to track the spread, and to track mitigation measures.

Robert Quigley: Metrics, such as number of deaths, number of cases, rate of new cases, all can certainly be valuable in gauging the severity of COVID-19 in any one jurisdiction. However, they are far from complete, and methodologies in interpretation can vary from region to region. The denominator (i.e. the total number of cases) can only be determined by testing. That said, the combination of limited testing resources and asymptomatic vectors (unknown to public health statisticians) makes calculation of the denominator next to impossible, so at any one time we only see a fraction of the actual cases, which would not permit accurate reporting on the rate of new cases.

What source numbers are used to compile patient data for COVID-19?

AA: Most data is being collected by local and state health departments, and they are providing essential situational awareness. The data is vital to hospitals when they decide upon whether various elective procedures can fit within their capabilities, all of which are stressed due to the pandemic. It's also important to note that all data is not iron-clad. There will be fluctuations in the data that are contingent upon several factors, which is normal in this field. Collected data, however, still gives an overall view of the viral activity within our communities.

ED: I also look at peer-reviewed journals where other scientists have examined many issues surrounding COVID-19, develop their own analytical data, and then share that data with the community.

RQ: The public health authorities, such as the CDC and Johns Hopkins, responsible for collecting/interpreting/sharing data have COVID-19 dashboards, situation reports, and daily data tables accessible on their websites. Their data sources include all of these as well as regional

Are Masks Worth the Work?

The reality of the pandemic is that a lot is not fully known about the exact benefit of potential safety measures. Ventilation, air filtration, masks, and social distancing all have a positive effect in limiting the spread of the virus. There's a lot of modeling, retrospectively, to understand the value of each of these measures. When you're dealing with an infectious disease, you're dealing with a variety of factors such as transmission through shedding, through vapor droplets, and so on. It's important to understand that wearing a mask isn't to protect me from you, but it's worn to protect you from me. The precise value of masks isn't known, but they're an important tool in the toolbox to lessening the spread of the virus.

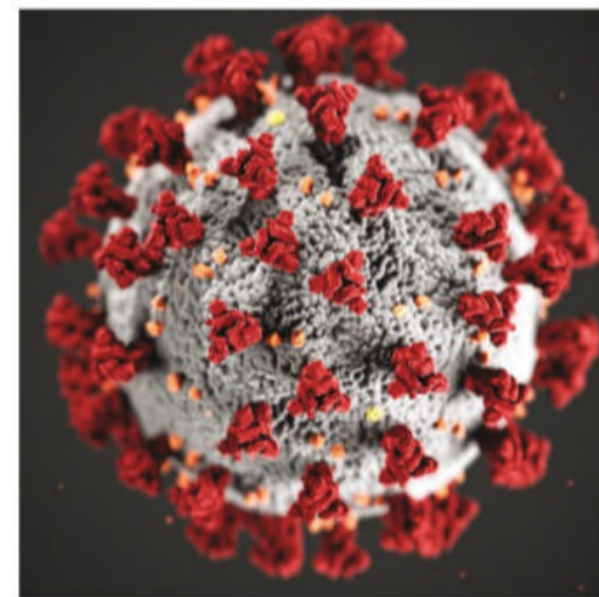
ICU admissions, recovered patient numbers, local/national lab results, as well as data developed from morgues and funeral homes.

TF: The number of new cases is reported by medical facilities to local health departments, so health departments have the cases needed to compile a list of statistics to report to State Health Departments. For example, if someone has it and they don't go to the hospital, then it won't get reported. In all likelihood, the cases of COVID-19 in the Nation are under-reported and surpass the data we actually have on record.

What, if any, mechanisms are in place to prevent false or inaccurate reporting?

AA: Health departments should try to remove duplicates if someone had more than one test, or different types of tests, that came back positive. That should only be counted as one positive case and not two. We see this in cases where someone will be tested for the virus to be discharged from a nursing home, and then tested again to see if they are cleared to move back into the same institution. When you look at deaths, there is an adjudication process in which health departments will see if a death was caused by COVID-19 or was it incidental to COVID.

ED: The duplication of reporting is something that many of us are frustrated with right now. There does not seem to be a quality control part of the program that really understands how many in the nation are really sick.



“There are a lot of slanted pieces of information out there, as well as ‘arm-chair epidemiologists’ who are attempting to redefine data and reconceive notions.”
— Amesh Adalja

All that we know now is the number of positive cases that are in a geographic location, but we also know that same positive individual may have been tested several

times. Each positive person might be contributing an amount of positive tests back into the pool of data which allows some to claim that there is much more disease than there might be. We need to get a handle on quality control before we progress with this pandemic or prepare for the next one that might put us in a more difficult position.

RQ: Laboratories, by no fault of their own, can only report results as they are generated. The false positive/nega-

tive rates are simply a reflection of the efficacy of their tools. Unfortunately, the testing tools are not standardized, so different labs will be expected to have different accuracy rates in reporting. Whether testing for antigen (SARS-Cov-2) or antibody (IgG), no test is 100 percent accurate. Tests need to be performed on a large number of samples and validated multiple times in order to get

an estimate on specificity/sensitivity. Finally, because this virus is novel, more research is still required in order to define quantitative thresholds for accuracy in the short and long term.

TF: I would say that there is a level of inaccuracy on reporting and under-reporting. There is probably a range of error that we don't know very well. There are deaths that are getting reported as COVID-related that aren't COVID-related. I think that the challenge is to understand what the error margin is and being OK with a certain percentage of error margin in the reporting and under-reporting of cases.

How does timing come into play when we study data? How soon is too soon for data to be considered valid?

AA: You must remember that when you see a daily case count from a county health department, that those are not the cases that occurred the day before. There are often going to be lag times in reporting, so you're never seeing a snapshot of cases that occurred during that particular day. Usually those numbers reflect positive-test cases from a week prior. It's not a highly precise number,

Pandemic Battle: COVID-19 versus 1918 Spanish Flu

There are echoes to the politics of 1918, such as the opposition to wearing masks. There are also stories of communities coming together to figure out how to beat both diseases. There's also a longer shelf life to the political science than there is to the health science when exploring the social aspects of both pandemics. However, during the 1918 outbreak, there weren't nearly as many advances in the health industry, and it was based on old-school epidemiology that hasn't changed much today.

It's also worth mentioning that even in absence of game-changing therapeutics, there have been improvements in how we treat people with COVID-19. The transfer of information is tremendously quicker than it was in 1918, which makes data and peer-review dispersal among healthcare organizations that much quicker. The research and response measures are moving faster than they feel. Pandemics, much like the 1918 Spanish Flu, just take a long time to get through.

The Long-term Effects of COVID-19 Mandates

Right now, we have a generation with key developmental milestones. Even if there is a vaccine, it's not going to be effective enough to quickly undo the precautions set in place right now. There is also some long-term trauma that Americans have faced, be that a loss of a job, isolation, emotional and physical grief that exacerbates mental health issues, and delays in developmental milestones for children that could follow them their entire lives. These are all things that we don't fully understand the long-term impacts yet.

Even with the COVID-19 stimulus bills, we're racking up an enormous amount of national debt while climate change still occurs, and natural disasters are increasing. Wherever the pandemic goes, the trajectory of natural disasters is only going to increase, and the resources that we need to mitigate disaster in vulnerable areas is being depleted right now. All of these put a lot of pressure on the future.

There's also a silver lining here if we look for it. We're better at remote work than we ever have been before because everyone is getting better at technology. We have to be. In that way, this pandemic is really accelerating aspects of our civil society and economy. This trajectory has been established, and I don't think that we are going to go back to the way it was before innovation is always hard to predict but is prevalent during times of necessity when solutions are needed. COVID-19 is no exception to that.

and that's not an attempt to fault anyone. It only reflects the nature of the data reporting process, especially during a novel virus outbreak. The data is collected not for data's sake, but to gain a sense of the issue so we can institute the public health actions needed on an individual and community-wide basis.

ED: The issue we have surrounds the type of data we want and how do we want it characterized? We must figure out how we're going to analyze data before we ever collect it. This is one of those cases in which the data methodology needs to be carefully thought through. It's an ongoing problem that plagues every disaster that we're faced in America, and we're going to have to ask ourselves how we'll distribute an eventual vaccine based on the data we're receiving during this pandemic.

TF: Within a matter of days, the data finds where it needs to go and probably anything more than a week old is out-of-date at this point.

RQ: Timing is critical when interpreting scientific data. For example, testing infected individuals too early can produce false negative results. Reviewing epidemiologic and demographic data when the denominator is too low could produce an exaggerated "R naught" (viral reproduction rate) as well as an exaggerated mortality rate. The question isn't "how soon is too soon," but rather "when do we have a statistically significant sample size from which to draw a conclusion?"

What are some ways that the average person can distinguish accurate facts from misleading facts that are slanted one way or another?

AA: For the average person, it's very hard to determine what is valid and not valid. People should stick to websites that have been validated to receive their information, such as the CDC or state health department, with the caveat knowing that those numbers will fluctuate depending on the type of data collected and when that data was collected. Regardless, it will be very hard for the general public or someone who does not have a background in this field to distinguish the accuracy of the information out there. There are a lot of slanted pieces of information out there, as well as "armchair epidemiologists" who are attempting to redefine data and reconceive notions.

ED: It's a frustration that all of us have right now with the mainstream media who practice an overly politicized system of reporting in our nation. I think that any institution that's relaying contradictory information to the public has a duty to let the public know, with a little more clarity, as to why we're taking some of these measures during the pandemic. Since there are numerous information sources available to the public, it's

JEFF SCHLEGELMILCH

Jeff Schlegelmilch is a research scholar and the director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University's Earth Institute. His areas of expertise include public health preparedness, community resilience and the integration of private and public sector capabilities, and has recently published his book, *Rethinking Readiness: A Brief Guide to Twenty-First-Century Megadisasters*.



important for us to find those sources that are cited and verified so we can gather information that is trustworthy and consistent with our values. We also need to reevaluate our actions and that we're doing things that are effective, and not because someone is trying to socially or politically pressure us into doing something that doesn't make sense.

RQ: Scientific reporting and politics are incongruent. The reporting of clinical or scientific data should always

Is it Time to Ease Up?

More than half of Americans carry chronic conditions, and we have an aging population who carry more than one chronic condition. Anytime those are present, you're at a higher risk for exacerbating those conditions with illness. Even if that was a smaller part of the population, we're still seeing huge numbers of deaths that don't need to happen. As a civil society, we have a responsibility to protect each other. If you go out to overly crowded locations, you're potentially bringing the virus home to someone and introducing it to another environment. One of the reasons that the playbook from the SARS outbreak in 2003 isn't working is because the virus is spreading before people are symptomatic or don't show symptoms at all. We may not be sick but are shedding the virus, and the elderly person behind us in the grocery store could die from it. There are a lot of people out there who say that this pandemic isn't so bad, but all you have to do is look to the refrigerated trucks to store dead bodies in when the morgues in New York City were overwhelmed with bodies.

About Our Panelists

AHMESH ADALJA

Dr. Ahmesh Adalja is a Senior Scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security. His work is focused on emerging infectious disease, pandemic preparedness, and biosecurity. Dr. Adalja has served on U.S. government panels tasked with developing guidelines for the treatment of plague, botulism, and anthrax in mass casualty settings and for the system of care for infectious disease emergencies.



ERIC DIETZ

Dr. Eric Dietz's research interests include optimization of emergency response, homeland security and defense, energy security, and engaging veterans in higher education. As a director of the Purdue Military Research Institute, Dr. Dietz organizes faculty to involve current and former military in Purdue research with focus on defense and security projects to increase Purdue's involvement in national defense.



TIM FRAZIER

Dr. Tim Frazier is a full professor and the faculty director of the Emergency and Disaster Management program at Georgetown University. Dr. Frazier's research focuses on developing science that serves to impact decision-making in local communities through stakeholder engagement.



ROBERT QUIGLEY

Robert L. Quigley, M.D., D.Phil., Professor of Surgery, Senior Vice President and Global Medical Director, Corporate Health Solutions, International SOS Assistance & MedAire, Americas Region, is responsible for leading the delivery of high-quality medical assistance, healthcare management and medical transportation services. He's the executive chairman of the International Corporate Health Leadership Council as well as the chairman of the Council for U.S. and Canadian Quality Healthcare Abroad.



be done in an apolitical forum to avoid any misrepresentation of the facts. Unfortunately, many search engines used today are not apolitical. The closest source of untarnished data may be the actual peer-reviewed literature.

TF: I would hate to say that this has been over-sensationalized, but I may steer clear from publications such as blogs and newspapers. The most accurate sources of information will be available from the CDC, which is very good at what they do, and they are going to give you the most reliable information that you will need. Local health departments will also give information that is specific to that particular county, so someone looking to track the spread of COVID-19 would do better to follow the information from those sources.

Are patients who have died for reasons other than COVID-19 still tested for COVID-19, and if so, why?

AA: There is some misinformation of what happens when you fill out a death certificate. A COVID-19 death, for example, can be complicated by things like diabetes or hypertension, so all three will appear as a cause of death on the death certificate. Medical practitioners are just trying to give as much a comprehensive picture of the cause of death as possible, so we list all co-morbidities on death certificates to gain a realistic idea of how someone died. It's a frustrating conversation that we've been having with others because it detracts from the real work that should be done. Valuable time and resources are being spent to focus on conspiracy theories that are completely false. I would argue that when someone makes these types of claims, they should examine the excess deaths in cities that have been hit hard and compare it to one year ago. After comparing that data, it becomes very hard to argue that COVID-19 is not a deadly disease.

ED: We've gotten a lot better in understanding how this disease works, but there are still instances in which COVID-19 is attributed to deaths that shouldn't be. I would understand testing for deaths in a nursing home to better understand how COVID-19 entered the facility. Nursing homes are a very dangerous place to allow the virus to enter, which are also prone to influenza-related deaths. As we go into flu season, I can see a greater need for testing to distinguish COVID-related deaths from flu-related deaths, but there still needs to be some checks and balances to ensure that deaths unrelated to COVID-19 are not attributed to the pandemic.

RQ: This could happen for multiple reasons. There are times when pre-morbid testing results revealed a false negative. Also, antibody data can provide more demographic data for the public health authorities used for activities such as contact tracing. There have also been instances when the death occurred at home, and the

deceased have not been tested in any healthcare facility

TF: There could be some who are tested for fear of that patient's relation to a population mass for the sake of contract tracing, but I feel that those cases may be on a more limited scale than those who were suspected to die from COVID-19.

Where do we go from here?

AA: We have normally lived in a world where we didn't have to think about infectious diseases, but now we're going to have to start looking at life a bit differently when we walk out of the door. Every activity that we do is going to have some sense of risk, whether that be contracting the virus or spreading it to someone else. It doesn't mean that we stay at home forever, but rather be mindful of our activities and taking simple measures of protection. It will take some adjustment, but we have the tools to live safely and now it's time to exercise those tools.

RQ: Getting beyond the pandemic will require herd immunity either from an effective vaccine or infection of the global community resulting in an R-naught value less than 1. In the meantime, mitigation efforts will require compliance by all, which include social distancing, mask wearing, and universal precautions such as proper hand-washing.

TF: What we see in our field today is that everyone is their own emergency manager. They take pieces of information from a variety of sources, and they assemble that information to make their own decision. This makes it challenging because we are not always getting the most accurate information, and we don't weigh the information from those sources. There is a lack of understanding of how this disease works, and simple things like washing your hands, not touching your face, staying away from crowds, and wearing a mask would really mitigate the spread of this disease.

ED: This is great time to remind everyone to thoroughly wash their hands and stay home if they're sick. There is so much that we can do on a common daily basis that would turn out better if we just simply did those things. Our nation is designed by intention to be safe and free, but our freedom is part of our safety. We're free to get away from things that we don't feel safe with, and we don't want the government to tell us to certain things. At the same time, we must be able to make some of these decisions for ourselves. It's always a good thing to reevaluate where we're going, and we should demand that of our elected officials and health professionals who are charged to keep us safe. Our safety should not be something that we sacrifice for our freedom. Those two must go hand-in-hand.

Fearing the Unknown

There is a Chinese proverb that states "nothing is to be feared, only understood." Modern medicine has advanced rapidly in the past 100 years and is on the brink of medical breakthroughs that teeter on the edge of miraculous. Diseases, however, continue to strike fear into our hearts as we struggle to understand them. History has proven that societal and political landscapes have been altered by disease outbreaks, and we're reminded of our humanity by the historical scars they leave behind, granting us lessons that we struggle to remember.

The COVID-19 pandemic will go down in history not only for its impact on our health and well-being, but maybe more so for its revelation of the deficiencies in our societal arenas. No individual's health should be fodder for political gain, nor mixed within the spectrum of confusion sowed by those seeking gain from disaster. The health of the nation doesn't play well as a social chess piece, but should be held in the highest of esteem as we navigate through the both the physical and civil treacheries of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fog of war created by the pandemic underscores that fear of the disease should be balanced by a healthy understanding of the threads that hold our great nation together ... our humanity. ☘

"What we see in our field today is that everyone is their own emergency manager. They take pieces of information from a variety of sources, and they assemble that information to make their own decision."

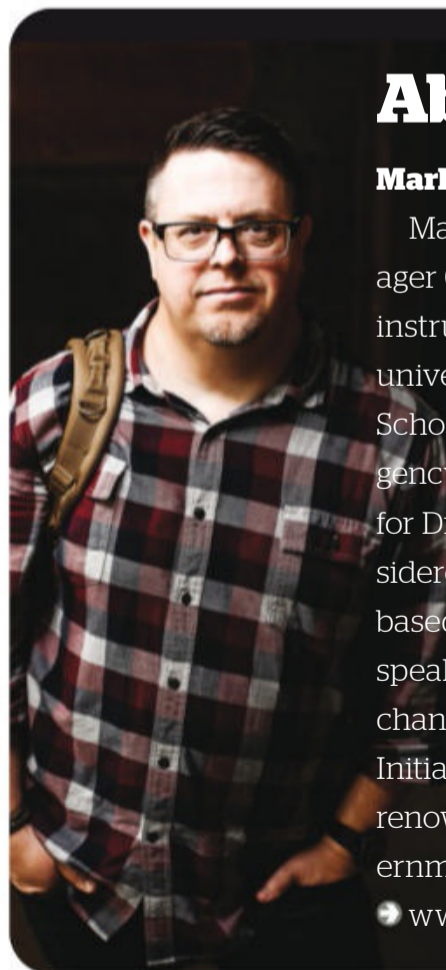
— Tim Frazier

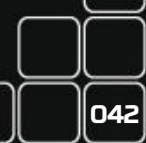
About the Author

Mark Linderman - MSM, CEM, CEDP, CCPH

Mark Linderman is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and 20-year veteran of public health. He instructs disaster preparedness courses for seven universities, including Indiana University's Fairbanks School of Public Health and teaches Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication courses for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Linderman is considered a subject-matter expert in the field of disaster-based communication and is a widely received public speaker and advocate for disaster preparedness. He channels his passion through his own blogsite, Disaster Initiatives, where he regularly interviews world-renowned survivalists, authors, academics, and government officials.

• www.disasterinitiatives.com





PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST

Protector Symposium 2.0 Brought Together a Prestigious Lineup of Instructors to Teach Real-World Survival Skills

By Patrick McCarthy

How would you define yourself in a single word? Perhaps it's a family title — mom, dad, husband, or wife. Or maybe it's a professional title that represents your life's work, such as soldier, officer, firefighter, or doctor. There's one term that encompasses each of these titles, and likely applies to every one of our readers to some degree: *protector*. Whether you're protecting yourself, your spouse and children, or total strangers in a first responder role, being a protector involves making a conscious decision to improve your knowledge and skills for the purpose of preventing harm. As with any other skill set, becoming a better protector involves training.

Byron Rodgers, who you may recognize from our *Survivalist Spotlight* interview last issue, has put a lot of thought into what it means to be a protector and how to spread this ethos to other like-minded people. This is what led him to form Protector Nation, an organization "dedicated to making the world a better place by making good people dangerous." This also led to the formation of a conference where a selection of experienced protectors could share their knowledge, dubbed the Protector Symposium. You can read our recap of the inaugural 2019 Protector Symposium in Issue 37.

Given the COVID pandemic and the difficulty of hosting a large gathering in 2020, Rodgers decided to make the Protector Symposium 2.0 an "online global summit" that

could be viewed on-demand from anywhere in the world. The list of presenters and topics caught our attention, so we plopped down on the couch with a laptop, headphones, coffee, and a notepad at the ready. Read on for our recap of each presentation, and the lessons we learned from them.

Jared Reston - Always Stay in the Fight

Background: Reston is a detective in the Department of Homeland Security/Gang Investigations unit at the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, as well as the assistant team leader and lead shooting instructor for the department's SWAT team.

URL: restongrouptraining.com

Lessons Learned: As the first guest speaker at the Protector Symposium 2.0, Reston set the tone for the event by recounting a horrific incident that changed his life forever.

In 2008, while working off-duty as a security guard at a local mall, he responded to a call about a shoplifter. As he arrived on scene, the suspect took off running, and Reston chased him out of the mall on foot. After the suspect refused to stop, he deployed a Taser, but the weapon failed to fire. Reston quickly holstered the Taser and grabbed the suspect from behind, but he spun and broke free. During the struggle, he felt a sudden impact to his face. It wasn't a punch — the man was shooting him with a Glock 21. Reston was struck by seven .45 ACP bullets in his lower jaw, chest, flank, arm, buttock, and thigh as he tumbled to the ground.



What's the difference between a Phillips screwdriver and an icepick? Calderon says both can be effective as weapons, but the screwdriver is considered a harmless tool.

Even without hearing the conversation, Badou said it's not hard to see what's going on in this photo. A pointed finger can indicate aggression or interest; the woman's uncomfortable smile and leaned-back posture clearly show that the interest is one-sided.

Rather than allowing himself to be overwhelmed by this massive trauma, Reston rolled to his knees and drew his gun. He proceeded to shoot the suspect seven times – four to the body as he lunged upward at him, and three with the muzzle of his pistol pressed into the man's head. Reston's partner caught up moments later, ensured the suspect was no longer a threat, and called for rescue.

Reston's overarching message was clear: Stay in the fight, no matter what. Simply staying alive isn't enough – "Going home safe isn't the goal. The goal is to win." Reston didn't deny that the aftermath was agonizing, but he said that in the moment, pain barely even registered. "Speaking from experience, getting shot doesn't hurt. The human body is very unimpressed with bullets, especially pistol bullets ... Your body does amazing things to keep you in the fight." He says his desire to win and his ability to revert to his training were instrumental to his survival.

This presentation reinforced the power of a determined mindset, as well as realistic self-defense training. As Reston put it, "There's a lot of luck in gunfights, but luck favors the prepared. Put the work in on the front end and make yourself hard to kill."

Ed Calderon - Embrace the Unconventional

Background: Ed Calderon spent 12 years working in counter-narcotics, organized crime investigation, and public safety in the northern border region of Mexico. He now uses that experience to teach students realistic self-defense and survival skills.

URL: edsmanifesto.com

Lessons Learned: We've trained under Calderon several times now, and we never fail to learn something new and valuable each time. He introduced his presentation with a quote from legendary Japanese swordsman Miyamoto Musashi: "Know your enemy, know his sword."

This may sound trite, but it holds a meaning that's deeper than you might think – to truly know your enemy, you must experience his weapons and techniques firsthand. Do you understand the effectiveness of a rusty screwdriver as a killing implement, and have you considered how it might be wielded? As Calderon puts it, "The unconventional is only unknown to the conventional."

This acceptance of the unconventional applies directly to weapons – see "Sharp Edges & Dirty Tricks" from Issue 36 for more details – but also goes far beyond that realm. Calderon explained how travelers can break from tourist norms to become safer while visiting foreign countries. The first step is research. For example, before visiting Mexico, you should look up photos and videos of cartel abductions and assaults, and learn to recognize how these criminals differ from established law enforcement. (If a cop in Mexico is carrying an AK-47, he's probably not a cop.) Case the area you'll be visiting remotely through Google Street View or other virtual means, and establish a baseline of typical people, vehicles, and businesses. The destination's "normal" will certainly differ from your hometown's "normal," so this will let you know what is acceptable and what isn't. Establish entry and exit plans for everywhere you go, and don't forget to keep an eye on the locals nearby – sudden changes in their behavior can provide an early warning for danger.

Gear selection should also be approached unconventionally. Instead of brightly colored tourist apparel or tactical clothing marketed to the gray man demographic, Calderon says "hobo tactical" is often a better choice – well-worn jeans, a plain T-shirt, an old jacket or hoodie, and a cloth satchel or cheap backpack. He says that even in the United States, \$40 can get you everything you need for a 72-hour survival pack. Honey, granola, peanut butter, and instant coffee powder make a calorie-dense survival food; gauze, duct tape, and ratchet straps form an improvised trauma kit.





Don't dehumanize or underestimate your enemy's skills, and remember that he won't always think or act like you do. Calderon says, "The only thing that separates you from them is intention. Our intention is to be protectors; theirs is to be predators." Study dangerous areas and individuals carefully, and be ready to adapt quickly.

Yousef Badou - Hunt for Anomalies

Background: Badou grew up in Kuwait, and has childhood memories of Iraqi tanks rolling through the streets. At age 19, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and went on to teach behavioral analysis at the Marine Combat Hunter program.

URL: emergencedisrupt.com

Lessons Learned: Threat identification is Badou's specialty, and it's a skill he firmly believes every man, woman, and child needs to understand in order to save lives. The foundation of his threat identification system is the hunter mindset. No matter how much we distance ourselves from nature, humans are a thinking apex predator. We don't just wait for prey to randomly stumble upon us – we proactively search for it or attract it using our resources and tools. Our intelligence and front-focused, pattern-oriented vision attest to this. Just as we hunt for prey, we can hunt for predators.

Badou uses a simple formula to identify potential threats: baseline plus anomaly equal decision. A baseline is the current norm, and it varies dramatically from place to place or person to person. To establish a baseline at a location, sit for 30 minutes and take notes on anything you observe; for an individual, pay close attention to verbal and written communication, as well as kinesics (expressions, gestures, movement, posture, clothing, and so on). An anomaly is anything that breaks from this baseline, and it should lead immediately to a decision. It's important to note that your decision may change as multiple anomalies stack up. There are many reasons someone might be sweating, but if they're also glancing around the room repeatedly and exhibiting pacifying behavior, such as rubbing their neck or arms, it's probably a cause for concern. Badou says three behavioral indicators should be enough to make a decision – "Three is good enough for me."

Reston's story is a stark reminder that a fight isn't necessarily won by the first person to pull the trigger. Even if you're shot multiple times, never stop fighting and striving to win.

Don't let denial impede your rapid decision-making process. "Denial is the biggest killer," says Badou. When we make a non-standard observation, our first instinct is to explain it as something normal we've experienced previously – the popping noises you just heard might be interpreted as fireworks, even if they're actually gunshots. Fight this urge, and make a decision as quickly as possible. Staring in disbelief or waiting for others to reach the same conclusion burns priceless seconds during an unfolding disaster.

Even though anomalies may not be an indicator of a direct threat, you should always be hunting for them during your daily routine. We're surrounded by human behavior all day every day, so get out there and put your observational and analytical skills into practice.



Craig Douglas - Learn the Reality of CQC

Background: Douglas retired from law enforcement after 21 years, most of which were spent working in SWAT and Narcotics (including two years of undercover work). He has been teaching close-combat and entangled shooting skills since 2003.

URL: shivworks.com

Lessons Learned: How many times have you stood at the range and fired rounds into motionless cardboard? Conversely, how many times have you struggled to break free from the grip of an opponent who's trying to stab or choke you, or felt the helplessness of having a (simulated) gun torn from your hands before you can use it? The former scenario is

Douglas demonstrates the underhook technique. By closing the gap and hooking his arms under the opponent's, he quickly gains control of the opponent's limbs, preventing him from accessing a weapon on his waistline.

comfortable; the latter is humbling, and it's much closer to what you might experience in a street fight. Douglas experienced many close-range confrontations during his time in law enforcement; he was robbed nine times while working undercover, often sitting in a car next to an armed criminal. This led him to the realization that conventional tactical training doesn't adequately cover close-quarters combat (CQC) – that is, fights that happen from "5 feet and in."

Douglas condensed his Extreme Close-Quarters Concepts (ECQC) course into this abbreviated video class, which was filmed at a shooting range with an assistant instructor to demonstrate techniques. Although this class incorporates firearms, all of its skills are founded on an "operating system" of empty-hand skills rooted in ancient Greco-Roman wrestling. Much like a computer's OS, if these empty hand skills fail, the rest of the system also crashes. The operating



This image of spectators reacting to an airborne baseball bat served as a perfect demonstration of Blauer's Universal Flinch Theory. While we can't control our innate impulse to flinch, we can control what happens immediately afterward.

system's three principles — pressure, posture, and position — allow you to use your weapon effectively while blocking your opponent from doing the same.

Whether there's a weapon in play or not, there are two constants during a "clinch" (i.e. an entangled physical altercation). First, always control the opponent's limbs, because "everything is always a drag race to get to a weapon." Second, always take the inside position, since this allows you to break the enemy's posture and stop their arms from reaching for a weapon. There's a fine line between lingering in the clinch too long and backpedaling too early — both are potentially dangerous. When the time comes to break contact, always try to exit behind the opponent. Close-range shooting techniques, such as thumb pectoral index and partial extension, were covered as well. Check our *Final Weapon* column in Issue 39 for more details on the Shivworks Close Contact Handgun curriculum.

Douglas made it clear that knowing how to grapple and control an opponent up close is a critical element of any self-defense system, since most real-world confrontations happen at conversational distance.

Mike Pannone - Practice Broad-Spectrum Preparedness

Background: Pannone is a retired member of U.S. Marine Force Reconnaissance, Army Special Forces (Green Beret), and 1st SFOD-D (Delta Force). He's also a USPSA Master ranked pistol shooter in three divisions.

URL: ctt-solutions.com

Lessons Learned: "I'm not a theory guy. On the ground in a combat environment, theory gets you hurt. I built my business on practical knowledge and experience," says Pannone. His presentation took a pragmatic approach to general emergency preparedness, covering a wide variety of topics that apply to our everyday lives. The first topic addressed was first aid, a skill all of us will inevitably need. This includes having the equipment to stabilize minor and major wounds until help arrives, as well as the training to employ

those tools confidently. All members of the family should take an emergency medical course, and should practice these perishable skills frequently.

Next, Pannone spoke about firearms for personal defense. He made it clear that equipment is always secondary to the shooter's skill level — "I'm not nearly as concerned with the firearm someone has than with the level of training they've sought. The firearm is just a delivery system for that practice." If you carry daily, Pannone says you should be doing some form of live-fire training every two weeks at a minimum, and dry-fire training more frequently than that.

Mindset is another critical tenet of well-rounded preparedness. Each of us must ask ourselves, "*Can I use this [weapon] for what it's intended for? In extremis, that's the extinguishing of human life. Am I emotionally capable of doing that?*" Take this question very seriously, and don't allow your answer to be clouded by macho overconfidence. Pannone says, "The reality of violence, if you're not emotionally prepared for it, will stun you." Once you've crossed that mental threshold, move on and focus on the mechanical aspects of training.

The remainder of the presentation dealt with personal and family security strategy in various contexts — inside the home, outside the home, in or around a vehicle, and during domestic or overseas travel. The common thread is to formulate simple plans for each scenario — they should be specific to your needs, not prefabricated by someone else — and make sure all members of your family know the details. If an incident occurs, you won't have much thinking to do. Just execute the plan.

Pannone closed with a memorable statement on the value of preparedness: "It's not paranoia. Paranoia is fear-based. It's professional vigilance. That's proactive awareness. There is no downside to being prepared. None!"

Tony Blauer - Understand the Physiology of Sudden Violence

Background: Blauer has four decades of experience working in the martial arts, self-defense, and combatives industries. He bases his training on a foundation of natural human physiology and biomechanics.

URL: blauerspear.com

Lessons Learned: When sudden, unanticipated violence occurs, humans react with a startle response — we flinch. Muscles contract, hands and arms move to protect the head, and we recoil away from the perceived threat. Blauer calls this our "organic airbag," since it's hardwired to protect us, and he says that even Tier 1 operators and world-renowned fighters are equally affected by it. For an example of this, he showed a video clip of interviewer Freddie Starr playing a prank on Muhammad Ali (youtu.be/712f_313tm8?t=192). Even



Ali, whose fighting qualifications are undeniable, experienced the startle response. Although we can't stop the flinch, Blauer says we can and should change what we do immediately after — "Weaponize the startle response."

Blauer explained that three types of stimuli can cause flinches: visual, tactile, and auditory. Research shows the latter leads to the fastest response, so this is a good reminder to take out those earbuds and keep your hearing unobstructed in potentially dangerous settings. There are also three types of flinch response, which were demonstrated using a famous photo of a baseball bat flying into the bleachers. Some people turn their heads away (oblique flinch), some extend only one arm (cross-extensor reflex), and some take the threat head-on, leaning back with both arms extended. Blauer says the latter is preferable — when hands come up to protect the head, they can be immediately extended into a push or punch. You should then "get off the X" and distance yourself from the danger as soon as possible.

In the second half of his presentation, Blauer touched on a topic that often comes into play immediately after the startle response: fear. He uses the acronym False Expectations Appearing Real. In the heat of the moment, humans tend to visualize the worst-case failure scenario, not the best-case successful outcome. Blauer says you must learn to escape the fear loop and get back in the fight by remembering what it would cost if you *didn't* fight — death, dismemberment, paralysis, coma, or your loved ones dying in your arms. "Fear can immobilize you or it can supercharge you."

Byron Rodgers - Live as a Protector

Background: Rodgers is a U.S. Marine infantryman (retired) who has spent the last decade working in the private security industry, and has run teams of agents in more than 60 countries. He's the founder of Protector Nation and CEO of Bravo Research Group.

URL: byronrodgers.com

Lessons Learned: As the last speaker of Protector Symposium 2.0, Rodgers opened his segment with a simple mission statement: "We need to teach good people to be more



If you're traveling domestically or abroad, it's critical to establish emergency plans and discuss them with your family. Pannone says these plans should include a means of identifying and locating each person, as well as a safe rally point for anyone who gets separated from the group.

Rodgers says a protector should be trained and capable of inflicting harm, but discerning enough to do so only when it's necessary. Work to develop a well-rounded set of soft and hard skills.

willing, capable, and prepared to deal with evil." He says that self-protection is an inalienable right, and a skill that matters to absolutely everyone — you are a first responder, and there are people counting on you whether you like it or not. Despite society's prevailing opinion that violence is to be avoided at all costs, experience tells us that sometimes violence can only be stopped by greater violence. For evidence of this fact, watch any confrontation where a victim cowers and submits, and compare it to one where they fight back explosively. Knowing this, good people who wish to stop violence must become dangerous.

To be dangerous is to be *capable* of inflicting harm. As psychologist Jordan Peterson says, "A harmless man is not a good man. A good man is a very dangerous man who has that under voluntary control." Much like a cornered animal, anyone can be dangerous under the right circumstances, but this power is amplified for the select few who are willing and prepared to use it for good. We should each understand the parts of ourselves that might make us terrible, and learn to spot those same characteristics in others. While discussing politicians' inability to recognize unthinkable war crimes committed in the Bosnian War, Dr. Peterson said, "If you don't have sufficient imagination for evil, then anyone who does wins ... Unless you can think the way an evil person thinks, they'll defeat you. They'll go places you can't even imagine."

In addition to understanding the enemy, Rodgers says we must remember that failure to plan is planning to fail. We must be prepared. This means training in hard skills, such as first aid, combatives (with and without weapons), and what he calls "renaissance skills" — abilities that make us well-rounded, such as lockpicking, evasive driving, and land navigation. Soft skills, such as social engineering, profiling, and situational awareness, are equally important and more frequently used in daily life.

Being a protector isn't easy, but it's necessary in the imperfect world we live in. Rodgers likens protectors to antibodies — the world's immune system for counteracting evil and maintaining a state of balance. History proves that violence is a fact of life, so we can either deny it and stake our hope on "it'll never happen to me," or accept it and be ready to meet it headfirst.

Although the Protector Symposium 2.0 live event is over, you can still access the full-length videos from each presenter. For more info, go to protectorsymposium.com.





THERMAL IMAGING MONOCULAR

ASP-MICRO

**ENORMOUS POTENTIAL
AT UNBEATABLE PRICE**

160x120 RESOLUTION
ON-BOARD RECORDING
WI-FI HOTSPOT

TO SEE OUR COMPLETE LINE OF THERMAL IMAGING
AND NIGHT VISION EQUIPMENT GO TO

www.agmglobalvision.com

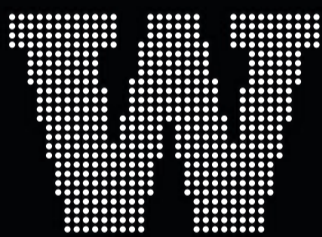


\$399
MAP

CRIMINAL PROFILING, PART 2

Serial Killers and How They Evolve

By Dr. Neal H. Olshan



When you often hear the expression “serial killer” in reference to a succession of crimes committed by depraved, shadowy figures. Their murders are often grotesque in nature, but

the patterns exhibited in these crimes reveal characteristics of those behind the act. In this continuation of our profiling series, we aim to create a deeper understanding of what serial killers are, provide insight into the nature of their crimes, and discuss why they’re ultimately driven into seemingly insatiable violence.

A serial killer is defined as a person who murders three or more people, usually with over a month of cooling down between murders. The murders must be separate events that are primarily driven by a psychological thrill or pleasure. Serial killers most often lack empathy and guilt, and are egocentric individuals. They often employ a “mask of sanity” to hide their sociopathic pathology and may appear normal or even charming.

The most notable example of a sociopathic charmer is Ted Bundy who would fake an injury to make potential victims lower their guard and see him as harmless or in distress. He’s classified as an organized serial killer (which we’ll define later on) who methodically planned out his murders and would stalk his victims for several weeks before committing the actual crime. He committed an

estimated 30 murders from 1974 to 1978. A serial killer may kill over an extended period, and typically a victim pattern is developed. John Wayne Gacy is another infamous serial killer who murdered at least 33 young men over a period of six years.

In the book, *Serial Killers: The Method and Madness of Monsters*, Peter Vronsky documents the psychological, investigative, and cultural aspects of serial murder, beginning with its first recorded instance in Ancient Rome, through 15th century France, and up to such notorious contemporary cases as cannibal/necrophile Ed Kemper, Henry Lee Lucas, Ted Bundy, and the emergence of what he classifies as “the serial rampage killer.”

The term “serial killer” itself is thought to have been originated by the late FBI agent and profiler Robert Roessler who was lecturing at the British Police Academy at Graham Shields, England, in 1974, where he heard the description of some crimes as occurring in series, including burglaries, robberies, and murders. Roessler said that the description reminded him of the movie industry term “serial adventures,” which referred to short episodic films such as those with *Batman* and *The Lone Ranger* that were shown in theaters on Saturday afternoons during the 1930s and 1940s. Each week, audiences were lured back for the next installment in the series with a cliffhanger ending.



Characteristics of Serial Killers

“In my research, I don’t believe that someone is born a serial killer,” says John Douglas, a retired FBI criminal profiler. When a serial killer plans, tortures, and kills, there’s a flood of neurochemicals that washes over the brain tissue, creating a euphoria or feeling of power and omnipotence that becomes addicting. They become addicted to the murder, but more than that, they begin to anticipate the process, and the longer they keep the victim alive, the more pleasure it gives them. They have total power over another human being, over life and death.

Profilers look for specific characteristics or behaviors that have been consistently present in a high percentage of serial killers.

Arson: Many serial killers have a long history of progressively escalating incidents of arson. They’re drawn to arson since it involves power and control of other’s lives. It’s one of the precursors to torture and then killing as the ultimate act of control.

David Berkowitz, known as the “Son of Sam” or “.44 caliber killer,” was ob-

essed with pyromania as a child and other kids nicknamed him “Pyro.” After being arrested, he took responsibility for dozens of New York fires. Some sources indicated that he may have been responsible for up to 1,400 fires.

Torturing Small Animals: When a child tortures small animals, this can be one of the most significant warning signs of major mental health issues. When children torture or kill small animals like rabbits, birds, cats, and dogs without showing remorse, there’s an increased probability that they may evolve into sociopaths. A common motivation found in serial killers is that they kill as the ultimate control over others’ lives, and as children, small animals are the

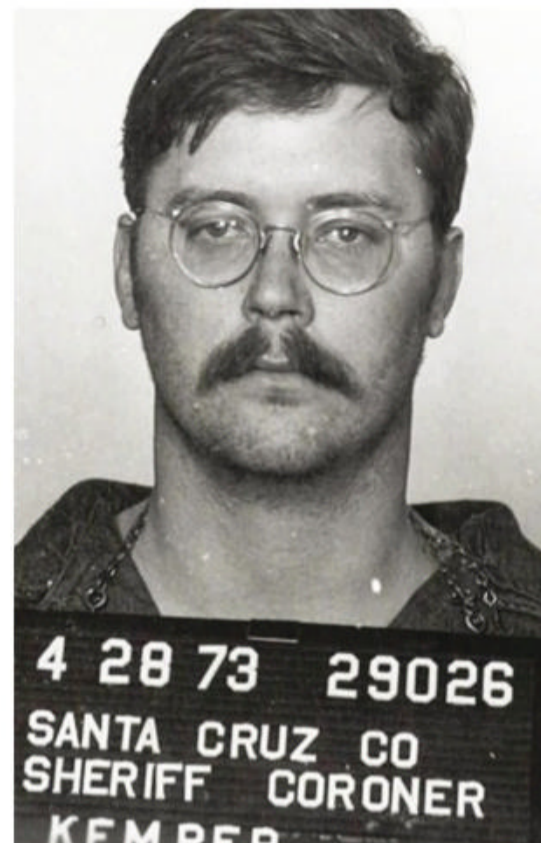
only lives that they have the power to control, so they practice.

As a child, cannibalistic serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer rode his bike around in the woods collecting dead animals to dissect. He killed and dismembered his own puppy, proudly mounting its head on a stake when he was done.

Highly Dysfunctional Family Life: Many serial killers come from highly dysfunctional families, sometimes with generations of criminal, psychiatric, drug or alcohol abuse histories. These killers often have struggled through physical, sexual, and mental abuse during childhood

“You feel the last bit of breath leaving their body. You’re looking into their eyes. **A person in that situation is god!**”
— Ted Bundy

Jeffrey Dahmer.
Photo courtesy
Sheriff’s Depart-
ment Milwaukee
County



Edmund Kemper.
Photo cour-
tesy Santa Cruz
County Sheriff’s
Office

and adolescence, typically by a relative or family friend. The abuse leaves the victim with feelings of shame, humiliation, helplessness, and anger. Many times, serial killers use these abusers as their initial victims.

“You condition a vulnerable boy at puberty to become aroused by brutality. It’s the violence, not the nudity. Frankly, I wouldn’t mind if every teenage boy had a subscription to *Playboy*. They’d be looking at attractive naked female bodies while they masturbated, not eviscerating female bodies,” says Park Dietz, MD, a forensic psychiatrist who has interviewed multiple serial killers.

Ed Kemper, “The Co-Ed Killer,” was abused from an early age by his mother. His killing started at age 15 when he killed his grandparents and was subsequently institutionalized. After being released from custody at age 21, he killed six female college students. The police finally caught Kemper when he surrendered to police after he brutally murdered his alcoholic mother and mutilated her corpse, cutting out her vocal cords and throwing them down the garbage disposal so he would never have to listen to her again (as he related). In his final act of defiance, he decapitated her, using her head as a dartboard. Kemper stated, “... If I killed them, you know, they couldn’t reject me as a man.”

Aileen Wuornos, one of the few known female serial killers, used prostitution as bait. She was known as the “Damsel of Death” and was portrayed by Charlize Theron in the movie *Monster*. She was abandoned by her mother at age 4 and never met her father, who was in prison for raping a 7-year-old girl. Wuornos’ grandfather took custody of her when her mother left, and physically and sexually abused her until she ran away at age 15.

Substance Abuse: Serial killers may struggle with drug and alcohol abuse beginning in adolescence. Dahmer

Ed Gein

Ed Gein was a serial killer and grave robber who sadistically murdered women over a three-year period in Plainfield, Wisconsin, in the 1950s. He has been the inspiration for movie characters such as Buffalo Bill in *The Silence of the Lambs*, Norman Bates in *Psycho*, and Leatherface in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Gein was discovered to be making items such as clothing, furniture covers, and dish-ware out of body parts he exhumed from nearby cemeteries or removed from his victims. He died while institutionalized in 1984.



Bates Motel set from the movie *Psycho* at Universal Studios, Hollywood, California. Photo courtesy Ipsingh.



began drinking in his teens and was an alcoholic by his high school graduation. His alcoholism resulted in both his expulsion from college and his discharge from the military. Ted Bundy claimed that as an adolescent, he would drink until drunk at night and wander around his community, looking for peeping tom opportunities to watch women undressing.

Voyeurism: Research indicates that many serial killers exhibit excessive tendencies toward voyeurism, sadomasochism, pornography, and fetishism. Charles Ng and

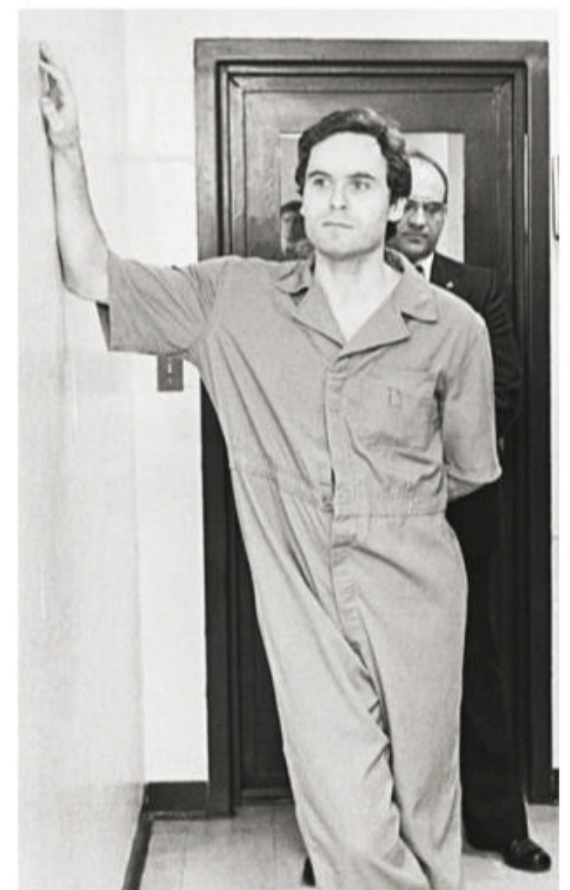


Aileen Wuornos. Photo courtesy Florida Department of Corrections

Leonard Lake both fit this profile. They killed an estimated 11 to 25 victims and also recorded many of their victims being murdered or tortured to death. David Parker Ray, also known as the "Toybox Killer," exhibited similar behavior.

Poor Employment Record: Despite some serial killers with higher-than-normal intelligence, many have trouble keeping jobs and cycle toward unskilled labor. Bundy is one of the glaring exceptions. At one time, Bundy was working in Olympia, Washington, as the Assistant Director of the Seattle Crime Prevention Advisory Commission where he wrote a pamphlet for women on rape prevention. Later, he worked at the Department of Emergency Services (DES), a state government agency involved in the search for missing women. David Berkowitz, who reportedly is of above-average intelligence, had several jobs after leaving the military before he was captured, including his last one working for the United States Postal Service.

Ted Bundy. Photo courtesy State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory..



Basic Types of Serial Killers

The FBI has defined three types of serial killers based on their pattern or method(s) used to commit the murders. Understanding the category of a serial killer can lead directly to better results investigating crimes and how to bring them to justice. Unfortunately, these categories are continually in flux depending on the affiliation of the researchers or the organization providing the funding.

The Organized Killer: Considered by profilers to be the most difficult to identify, capture, and convict. They typically are at the higher end of the IQ scale and are obsessively organized. Their crime is planned, with the killer analyzing each step to make sure that there's no incriminating evidence. The selection process of their next victim may take days or weeks. Typically, part of the planning involves disposal of the body. They may consider themselves as an artist and will describe their killings with great pride. They pay close attention to news stories about their work and may view themselves in competition with law enforcement.

"The Medical Killer" is thought to be a subcategory of the Organized Killer and may be significantly underreported as a result of the complexity of the murders. Here are two examples:

Harold Shipman was a British physician who murdered at least 215 of his patients. In 2000, he was convicted on 15 counts of murder and one count of forgery and sentenced to life in prison. Shipman committed suicide while in prison, hanging himself in his cell. The headline in the *London Times* of February 1, 2000, read, "Britain's Worst Serial

Killer." The heading of the story was, "Shipman Relished Power of Life and Death."

Kristen Gilbert, a nurse, was convicted of four murders and two attempted murders of patients treated at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Northampton, Massachusetts. She induced cardiac arrest in patients and would then respond to the coded emergency, sometimes resuscitating the patients herself. She was convicted of first-degree murder in 2001 and sentenced to four consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole, plus 20 years.

Although this type of killer is very rare, there been some people who became involved in the medical industry to satisfy the vile urges that drove their thoughts and motivations. This type of killer feels that he has the perfect cover, because it's not uncommon for people in hospitals to die. These killers are usually intelligent and know how to carefully and cleverly conceal their murders. If it appears that a victim has died a natural death, there may be no reason for anyone to suspect foul play and look into the matter further.

The Disorganized Killer: Rarely plans his or her killings. Victims are typically in the wrong place at the wrong time. This type of serial killer appears to strike at random whenever an opportunity arises and when their urges become overwhelming. They take no steps to cover up any signs of their crime, intending to move to different towns or states regularly to avoid capture. Disorganized killers typically have lower IQs and are extremely antisocial. They rarely have close friends or family and do not like to live in one place for too long.

Richard Ramirez.
Photo courtesy
San Quentin State
Prison, California
Department of
Corrections and
Rehabilitation.



SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON
RAMIREZ, R.
E-37101
CONDEMNED 06/15/07





Remains of Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. Photo courtesy Staff Sergeant Preston Chasteen.

The Mixed Killer: Mixed killers exhibit traits of both Organized and Disorganized killers. Although there may be evidence of planning, it's usually impulsive and cover-up methods tend to involve little if any premeditation. Richard Ramirez, also known as "The Night Stalker," is an example of a mixed killer. Forensic evidence at the scenes ultimately led to his capture by bystanders who recognized him from photos in the press.

Traits of the Worst

Tokenism: Tokenism is typically a trait of serial killers and not mass murderers. Between killings, some serial killers need something to remind themselves of how powerful they are. Many keep some personal items of the victim as a trophy of the kill, which investigators call "tokenism." This can be a wallet, necklace, driver's license, or some other object. The killer handles it when alone to relive the killing and reassert mastery over the victim. Masturbation usually accompanies tokenism because it brings the power and satisfaction of the kill back to the murderer.

Some serial killers take body parts as trophies. Jerry Brudos, a serial killer who operated around Salem, Oregon, cut off one victim's foot, mounted it on a base, and placed it on a shelf as a reminder of his power. Edmund Kemper and Bundy also took heads of victims to use as masturbation aids.

Cannibalism: The consumption of human flesh has the same meaning for serial killers as it has had for centuries

to cannibals in the jungles of South America, New Guinea, and other remote parts of the world. Archeologists have universally stated that cannibalism is a way to capture or incorporate the victim's knowledge, strength, and essence into the killer's own body through eating the heart and brain of their enemy.

Are Serial Killers Sociopaths?

Unlike murders of passion, anger, revenge, or part of another crime, serial killers are typically sociopaths. Sociopaths are missing essential parts of what makes a person human: the ability to empathize with the pain and suffering of others. The sociopath has the capacity to hide in plain sight as a productive and trustworthy member of society.

To friends and coworkers, Dennis Rader, also known as the BTK (bind-torture-kill) Killer, appeared to be a hard-working family man who regularly attended church and was a Cub Scout leader. No one would've imagined that he was brutally murdering adults and children over a 20-year period. The confession of this killer demonstrates the mind of a sociopath. While he stood in front of the judge describing unimaginable acts of violence and sadism, it was clear he had no empathy for his victims.

Mass Murderers

Many people confuse mass murder and serial murder, but they're very different crimes, typically committed by individuals with vastly different end games. Mass murders can also be called killing sprees, hate crimes, or workplace violence. In a mass murder, the goal or objective is to kill as many people as possible in one event. Mass murders typically involve the use of firearms, although there are exceptions such as Timothy McVeigh, who on April 19, 1995, in the Oklahoma City bombing killed 168 people and injured over 680 people.

The mass murderer has a paramount objective and that is to kill or wound as many people as possible in one horrific act. The mass murderer is driven by factors of anger, political or religious ideology, revenge, and even setting a place mark in history. The Columbine, Parkland, and Orlando shootings are other examples of mass murders.

"The killing was a means to an end. That was the least satisfactory part. I didn't enjoy doing that. That's why I tried to create living zombies with uric acid and the drill [to the head], but it never worked. No, killing was not the objective. **I just wanted to have the person under my complete control, not having to consider their wishes, being able to keep them there as long as I wanted.**"

— Jeffrey Dahmer

Factoids

- › The FBI estimates that there are between 25 and 50 serial killers operating throughout the U.S. at any given time.
- › UNSUB is a term used by law enforcement to mean UNknown SUBject.

Can Serial Killers be “Cured” or Rehabilitated?

“Killers may be disturbed, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they can’t tell right from wrong or are compelled to maim or murder,” says Dietz. Most therapists, law enforcement officers, and behavioral researchers don’t think that serial killers can be rehabilitated or cured. A review of the available literature didn’t indicate any cases in which the convicted serial

killer was rehabilitated and went on to live a life within societal norms.

Some serial killers were placed in mental institutions after committing their crimes, received treatment (therapy and medication), and were released as “cured,” but all of them went on to kill again. Peter Woodcock spent 35 years in a criminal psychiatric hospital in Ontario, Canada, after murdering three children. While out on a day pass, he and his security guard escort, who was also a previously imprisoned killer, killed another patient.

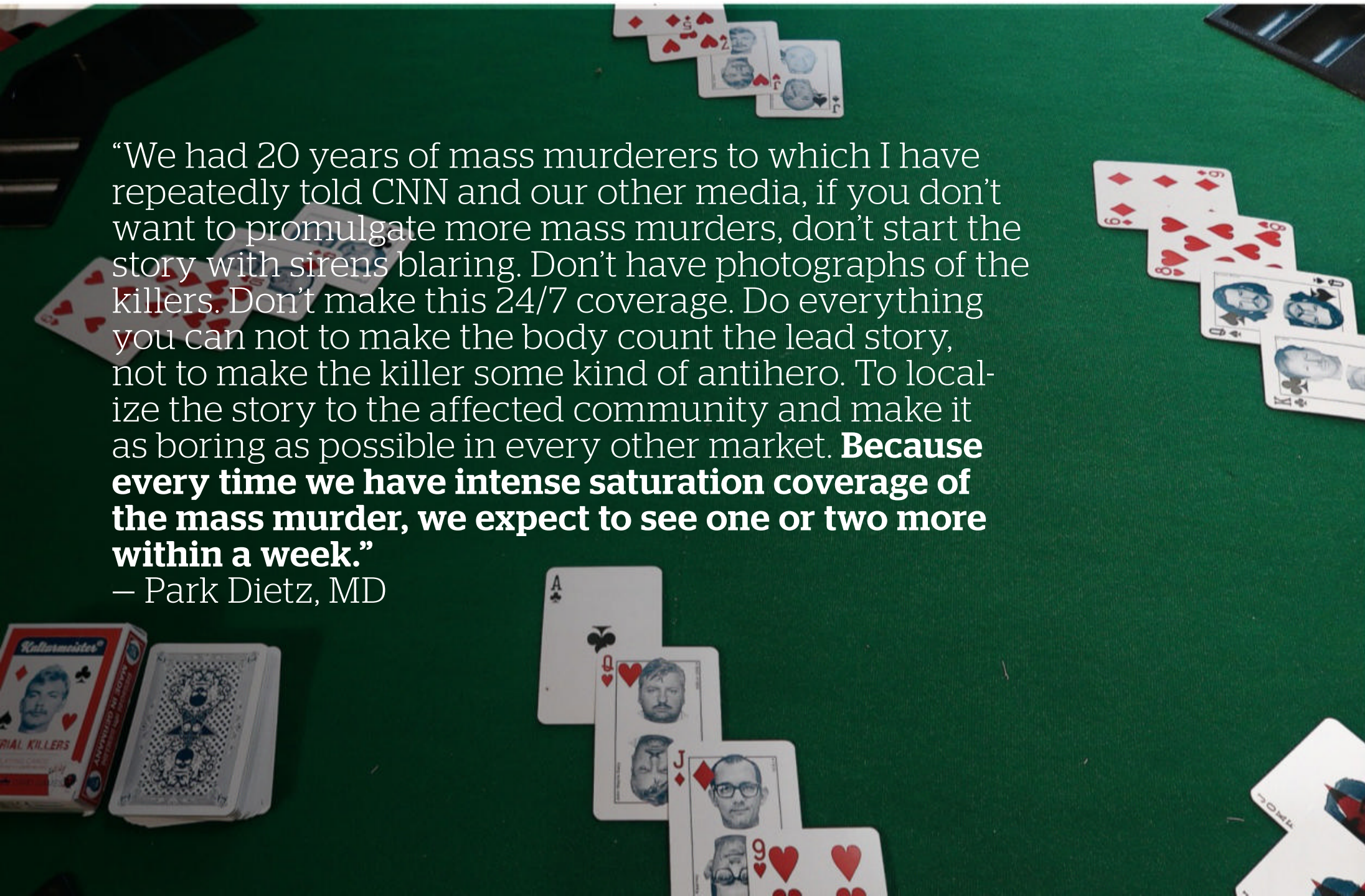
“There is no such thing as a person who, at age 35, suddenly changes from being perfectly normal and erupts into

totally evil, disruptive, murderous behavior. The behaviors that are precursors to murder have been present and developing in that person’s life for a long time — since childhood,” says Robert K. Roessler, author of *Whoever Fights Monsters: My 20 Years of Tracking Serial Killers for the FBI*.

Serial Killers and the Media

From *Badlands* to *Summer of Sam*, patterning the main character after a known killer is an almost guaranteed box-office success. There are numerous true crime books, magazines, novels, films, and television productions devoted to the serial killer. But why are they so popular? Perhaps people are fascinated simply because what serial killers do is so horrifying. The public is repulsed by the murders, but voyeuristically seduced by the anxiety and raw fear they experience reading about or watching productions about serial killers.

Some people take this fascination a step further. Until recently, a search on eBay for “serial killer memorabilia” turned up personal items of convicted serial killers, including clothing, paintings, and letters. eBay banned the sale of murder memorabilia after protests by victims’ rights groups. One website sold serial killer action figures, calendars, and trading cards.



“We had 20 years of mass murderers to which I have repeatedly told CNN and our other media, if you don’t want to promulgate more mass murders, don’t start the story with sirens blaring. Don’t have photographs of the killers. Don’t make this 24/7 coverage. Do everything you can not to make the body count the lead story, not to make the killer some kind of antihero. To localize the story to the affected community and make it as boring as possible in every other market. **Because every time we have intense saturation coverage of the mass murder, we expect to see one or two more within a week.**”

— Park Dietz, MD

The New Hunting Ground

With certain internet skill sets, the serial killer has the capacity to move in and out of a victim's social media without leaving a fingerprint, DNA, or trail that could lead back to him. The internet and access to social media and the naïveté of people using their computers helps to create a fertile hunting ground.

The new serial killer can stalk his victim in his malignant fantasy world until he decides to act. Serial killers have dis-



“Serial murderers are a bit like natural disasters: In the scheme of things they're quite rare, but when they happen, they demand our attention. They interest us for several reasons, but especially because they're so dramatically threatening, and **they profoundly challenge our sense of our own everyday safety.**

— Eric W. Hickey, author of *Serial Murderers and Their Victims*

covered chat rooms and use methods that can be learned on the internet to move like a ghost along the cyberspace highway avoiding detection.

Research for this article indicates that some serial killers have been discovered and apprehended through unrelated and accidental interactions with law enforcement. The internet has the capacity to eliminate that variable since the serial killer has new ways to stalk his prey prior to acting on his crime. This also has created the need for people who are attuned to the intricacies of the computer world to help in the capture of these individuals before they kill again.

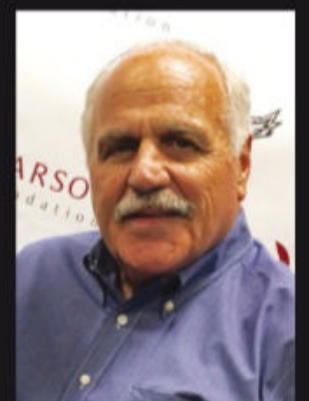
As a forensic psychologist, this author has an opportunity to see the world of the criminal from multiple angles. The world of the serial killer, particularly the organized one, may have evolved into the world of social media. That's not to say that some serial killers no longer stalk their prey in the old-fashioned manner by following, observing, and planning for the “right” moment.

From an early age, young people, including children, and their parents need to be made aware of the dangers that could arise from internet ignorance. That's not to say that children should be apprehensive about using the internet, but they need to be aware of the potential danger to themselves and their families if basic safety rules aren't observed.

Every day hundreds of millions of children, young adults, and parents journey into the internet jungle with the assumption that because there's no personal contact, there's no danger. As children move through various developmental phases in their lives, they need to be continually updated on not only the positive aspects of the internet, but also the ever-increasing dangers. This isn't an option; it must be a necessity. ❄

About the Author

Dr. Neal H. Olshan is the developer of the Evolution of Mindset and an internationally recognized critical incident psychologist, forensic evaluator, and consultant to corporations utilizing his Mindset program. He's also a glider pilot, award-winning photographer, and author of both nonfiction and fiction books. He lives with his wife, Mary, in Scottsdale, Arizona. Contact Neal at drolshan@gmail.com.



Classroom Disaster

Increasing a Teenager's Level of Disaster Awareness

By Mark Linderman



“Surely this can’t happen here.” The truthful answer is yes, it can. Critical events happen to average Americans every day, mostly without foresight or warning. Our nation’s school systems are no different and should warrant greater concern from families and lawmakers than ever before. Within our school corporations is a microcosm of society that represents the best and worst of us, mostly fueled by children finding their place in life while balancing that with hormone development and social angst.

Generationally speaking, our children face harsher environments within our school hallways today, be that in

rural America or the inner-city classroom.

Are They Hearing or Listening?

It’s not that we have a lack of communication in America today. We just don’t do it well. We live in an era where we entertain dozens of ways to communicate electronically. Talking is less a form of communication today than it ever has been. We share lots of information, but we rarely interpret that information in intimate ways.

David Tyner, a high school principal from Hagerstown, Indiana, sees the need for better communication within our student populations. “Over the course of time, you have more information, but how is that information relevant to



u're Here!



what's happening in their lives? Because students are inundated with information, they quickly dismiss what may be going on around them," he says.

Sun Tzu, in his book *The Art of War*, instructs his readers to "know the battlefield." For Tzu, a warrior must know the terrain preceding them to better position themselves to win the battle. Children today are more apt to miss the patterns of danger than ever before because we haven't conditioned them to be socially aware of present dangers. Society has faced an increased guilt to have taken those ingrained patterns of humanity, the patterns that recognize danger which know how and when to act, and unknowingly taught kids to replace them with distractions such as social media.

While void of a physical battlefield, adults have allowed our children to be digitally conditioned to the point that they're less aware of the social battlefield before them. Understanding patterns of danger, along with the ability to read others, can aid in recognizing potential dangers in our surroundings. Our children are quickly losing this ability, if many of them haven't lost it already. "No one thinks that an active shooter is going to come into their school, or a pandemic is going to decimate society, or that terrorism could exist in our school systems and communities. It's here and it's going to take a fundamental shift in emotional understanding and acceptance that this is life," says Tyner.

Randy Retter, an elected Sheriff in Wayne County, Indiana, and subject matter expert in school safety, has examined both physical and emotional levels of preparedness for surrounding school corporations. "Young kids tend to have an implicit sense of trust in people they don't know, or think they know, because they've acclimated themselves to relationships in a virtual world. They tend to drop their guard more and get themselves into a situation that's hard to get out of when they don't

recognize potential threats. They've not conditioned themselves to be aware of them."

Because of this, post-Sept. 11 kids are inundated with bad news. Families, along with government agencies and school officials, are constantly imposing precautions and safeguards upon their children. The end result is that they tune out further warnings and education, but mostly they tune out their surrounding environment. "It becomes white noise to them, and they have a need to escape from reality because they feel that they have been robbed of their innocence. They seek out distractions to help them deal with this immense pressure that we've laid on them," says Retter.

It's important to note that social and digital media



Student Resource Officers (SROs) are hired security contractors to ensure the safety of student populations within school systems. Within the past decade, SROs have become commonplace within academic institutions as state funding increases to supply school corporations with safety measures.

aren't the underlying issues in our children's disconnect from their surroundings. The notion that American culture has relieved the burdens of primordial mechanisms from children, namely that of self-preservation, should be examined as an underlying issue instead. Retter furthers his analysis of student-based preparedness: "When kids are encompassed in a digital world, they're only using two of their senses, which are sight and sound. We've been given five senses that we need to make appropriate decisions in life. If we're faced with a situation, even if we're not completely prepared for it, we've got to use all five of our senses to often make the best decision. If we only consistently utilize two of our five senses, then the rest of our body becomes weak. We may not recognize surrounding threats because our other senses are dull. I'm afraid that's what's quickly happening to our youth today."

Children, in turn, have lost their sense of threat in many scenarios, in large part because they've become masters of their own universe. The average child can

create a world, virtual or societal, that appeals to their level of comfort and control. This, in turn, can damage realistic expectations of life and diminish their need for self-preservation.

Former member of the CIA and best-selling author, Steve Tarani, also believes that being situationally aware is becoming a lost art. "Situational awareness is the ability to dynamically observe, identify, process, and comprehend the critical elements of information about your immediate environment. In other words, knowing what's going on around you in real time. If you fail to see it, smell it, or hear it coming, then you'll be blindsided by a developing threat and forced to try catch up to the action-reaction power curve."

In his book, *Your Most Powerful Weapon: How to Use Your Mind to Stay Safe*, Tarani discusses a particular retention mechanism known as "normalcy bias." According to Tarani, normalcy bias encompasses a state of mind we enter when faced with a threat that over-

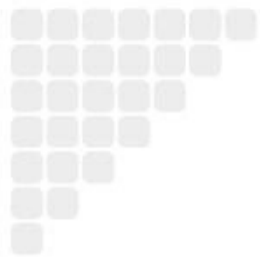
whelms our mental capacities. "It makes you disbelieve your situation when faced with grave and imminent danger," and causes you to "greatly underestimate the severity and most likely consequences. In turn, it causes you to reinterpret the event, rather than taking evasive or decisive action."

In history, we often see examples of normalcy bias in case studies involving victims in Sept. 11, many of which were observed to search for personal belongings as their office was engulfed in flames. The reality of a disaster often doesn't settle in the minds of potential victims, especially if those minds haven't reached full maturity. Tarani notes a 2004 article published at the University of Lancaster that states anywhere between 85 to 90 percent of those involved in a disaster scenario are influenced by the effects of normalcy bias, whereas 10 to 15 percent remain calm or fall into blind panic.

In a society that's more or less distracted by media of any platform and communication falls within snippets

Teenagers unknowingly face a disconnect from their surroundings when they enter the classroom. Security measures, such as in-classroom cameras, help monitor student behavior for safety concerns and are an indication of how far society has drifted from what used to be a safe environment for teenagers.





of abbreviations and emojis, teenagers are more apt to spend their time secluded in their bedrooms than invest in the world where many of life's truest lessons are taught. The result has produced a growing population of teenagers who are ill-conditioned to face a growing system of threats that surround them.

Facebook Depression

Researchers have proposed a new phenomenon called "Facebook depression," defined as depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, such as Facebook, and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression. Acceptance by and contact with peers is an important element of adolescent life. The intensity of the online world is thought to be a factor that may trigger depression in some adolescents. As with offline depression, pre-adolescents and adolescents who suffer from Facebook depression are at risk for social isolation and sometimes turn to risky internet sites and blogs for "help" that may promote substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, or aggressive or self-destructive behaviors.

(Source: The American Academy of Pediatrics)

A Point of No Return?

One of the greatest strengths of Americans is our ability to adapt and change to meet the growing pressures of history. There are times when we can forecast unsettling challenges and rise to meet the occasion. There are also times when emergencies must drastically interfere with our life for us to make important decisions to avoid further disaster. The growing loss of situational awareness for future generations falls within both scenarios. We, as adults, should see the growing storm in which our chil-

dren will be ill-equipped to emotionally and physically deal with an increasingly tumultuous world.



This begs the question as to whether school corporations should be responsible for increasing our children's awareness of danger, and teach them the ability to respond appropriately? The answer could be "yes," but not in the way that appropriates massive resources to the forefront of education.

Returning to the notion of normalcy bias, Tarani discusses the findings of two researchers, Shunji Mikami and Ken'ichi Ikeda, from Tokyo University who have spent time and resources to overcome normalcy bias in disaster scenarios. According to the two researchers, those who survive disasters had done so in preparation prior to a disaster event through preparation and repetition. In doing so, multiple disaster scenarios are no longer foreign to them, which enables them to react quicker and not suffer the effects of normalcy bias.

Tarani believes that if physical practice isn't conducive to a certain environment, such as school safety drills, then the visualization of various scenarios can be as effective as physical preparation to familiarize one's self to survival situations. Visualization of disaster scenarios preloads the mind with the information necessary to familiarize ourselves with particular situations, and frees



us to act, rather than become paralyzed with indecision.

Tyner takes Tarani's approach a step further from an academic perspective: "There is a sense of holistic teaching that incorporates not just area of study, but of life principles as well. Teaching how to respect others, for example, is a life lesson that well-founded educational institutions incorporate into raising young men and women to enter society. Some in education have placed such a strong emphasis on testing requirements that they've gotten away from the idea of holistic instruction. Rather than instruct students on basic life principles, they've traded many life application instructions for meeting educational benchmarks."

There are many threats in existence today that kids of all ages should address both physically and emotionally. While environmental drills, such as fire and tornado drills, are essential and mandated by state requirements, many in emergency services believe that such drills only skim the surface of disaster preparation in schools today.

"A lot of kids know what needs to be done to increase protection and develop situational awareness in their lives, but we as adults aren't listening to them and doing



Getting Teens Involved in Disaster Discussions

Getting prepared for a disaster is the same for any age. Teenagers can get involved in various ways that makes disaster preparation both interesting and relevant to their location and lives.

- Talk about disasters with parents and identify ways that they have responded to stressful events in the past that were useful.
- Help parents make a plan and prepare a disaster supplies kit.
- Decide how to stay in touch in an emergency.
- Learn about your school and town's preparedness plans. Contact your local emergency management agency.
- An adult may not be around every time there's an emergency. Teens should know basic emergency skills such as basic first aid, CPR, fire-fighting, and home defense skills.

Knowing Disaster Basics

If a teenager is away from home, they should take note of their surroundings, including the people close to them. They should be well-prepared for a multitude of situations and know how to contact parents or friends for help, evacuation routes, and what/where to avoid.

Disaster Kits

Having an emergency kit is essential. The emergency supply list should include all the necessities they may need to survive during an emergency. The kit should contain food, water, and first aid equipment.

Other emergency supplies that they might need include flashlights, duct tape, liquid bleach, crowbar, etc. Be aware of any items prohibited on school grounds. Make sure teens know where the kit is, what the items are for, and how to use them.

Every teenager should be aware of the various weather disasters and how they should act during each type of disaster.

Disasters unfortunately happen sometimes. Don't sit back and hope for the best. Survival during an emergency sometimes depends on our level of disaster preparedness. Teenagers are likely to face a lot of challenges during emergencies. But if they're physically and mentally prepared, they can cope with the situation better and even be counted on to help.

While many safety drills in schools are mandated by state regulations, many security professionals believe that a larger emphasis should be placed on active shooter training and instructing students on how to be more aware of their surroundings.

what needs to be done. One of those things that we as adults can do better is randomizing drills, such as active shooter drills in schools," says Retter.

"We might have one or two of them a year at convenient times when conditions are perfect, and we tell them what to do. They're herded like sheep so they don't have to think about what they must do, and they don't get stuck in uncomfortable situations that might come at random times. They're not required to think as an individual anymore during school drills and trainings. Keeping drills random, unannounced, and relevant to the current threats that are around them is vital in a student's life today."

Student culture in modern America is often inundated with reminders of how dangerous society is today, often enveloping our children in an atmosphere of fear. Unfortunately, many of our teenage populations are socially unaware of their surroundings since warnings like this have become more commonplace in their lives.

Rethinking Education

The importance of situational awareness is its application throughout the learning environment. Both Tyner and Retter agree that there are methods that are reflective of 21st century learning that can aid in both preparing students for the variety of emergencies they could face, as well as increase their situational awareness, in daily living.

“Educational benchmarks are vital, but education, in its purest form, has to be more. It must encompass those life essentials that drive us to be better citizens that contribute to the betterment of society. We’ve programmed our students in America to be good test takers. We haven’t programmed them to be good life survivors. We have got to return to bringing life improvement principles back into the classroom and start early in a student’s educational journey and build upon that every year,” mentions Tyner.

It may prove beneficial to find alternate ways to interact with the kids. If kids are using social media, then may-



be school officials could implement ways to educate and train students in ways that are relevant to their upbringing. Social and digital media stand as our children’s most prominent form of communication. Maybe there are teachable moments through digital mediums that educators have either not explored or taken the time to implement within their lesson plans. Rethinking education may no longer be a phrase discussed within academic circles, but a reality that should be implemented to once again give our teenagers ownership in their self-preservation, both in academics and life.

Survival in the 21st Century School

One can see a growing trend in the dangerous scenarios our children face in school systems across the nation. As time goes on, these statistics in crime- and disaster-related incidents will only rise as they are strategically met by the school administrators who care for our children.

School Safety

During the 2017-'18 school year, an estimated 962,300 violent incidents and 476,100 nonviolent incidents occurred in U.S. public schools nationwide.

71 percent of schools reported having at least one violent incident.

65 percent reported having at least one nonviolent incident.

During the 2017-'18 school year, there were an estimated 3,600 incidents nationwide involving the possession of a firearm or explosive device at school.

A higher percentage of middle schools reported that student bullying occurred at school at least once a week (28 percent) than did high schools (16 percent) or primary schools (9 percent).

Higher percentages of middle and high schools reported that cyberbullying occurred at school or away from school at least once a week (33 and 30 percent, respectively) than did primary schools (5 percent).

School Response

Of the written plans that schools may have to address various crisis scenarios, the ones reported most commonly were for natural disasters (94 percent), active shooters (92 percent), and bomb threats or incidents (91 percent).

About 46 percent of traditional public schools had a School Resource Officer present at school at least once a week.

In school year 2017-'18, about 51 percent of schools provided diagnostic mental health assessments to evaluate students for mental health disorders, and 38 percent provided treatment to students for mental health disorders.

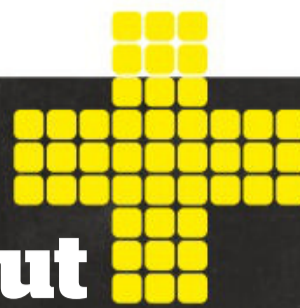
(Data used from the National Center for Education Statistics: School Safety Survey 2017-2018)

Retter agrees with Tyner's holistic strategy: "As we interact with students, we need to find a way to teach life lessons within that interaction. It would require problem solving and experimentation, and most importantly, a chance for failure. If kids don't have the chance to fail, then there's no ownership in what they're doing. They need ownership in their daily lives to take it seriously, and to realize that there are threats out there that can impact them at any moment, which would help them to better prepare for not only disasters, but life in general." Tyner summarizes his thoughts that concern the combination of academics and student safety: "Once you start understanding the patterns of danger, then you're able to read people, and to know that something may not be right in your surroundings. Our children are quickly losing that ability, if many of them haven't lost it already."

In his decades of experience in law enforcement, Retter has seen significant changes in school safety, including communication patterns that are shared between children and adults. "Becoming situationally aware is something that each of us need to make a commitment to. If we're going to make ourselves better and our children better, then we must commit to having that daily interaction with them. Nothing frustrates me more than to see parents who go out with their kids, and as soon as they sit down to eat, everyone pulls out their mobile devices and not say a word to each other. We have got to do better to engage each other if we ever hope to have our children engage their surroundings."

If our children are indeed our future, then we have a responsibility to invest in them on a level that transcends their academics or careers, but in their ability to sense their surroundings that helps ensure their health and safety. Gone are the days in which American teachers guide their students through increasing levels of academics. Education, rather, may do well to aid in our children's awareness of life principles and the terrain of personal preparedness.

While social and digital media are here to stay, today's adults must swim in the ocean that they've created for their children, take ownership in the problem, and discard any attempt to ostracize their digital creation. Digital and social media, rather, should be intently utilized with the purpose of reaching our children in fresh ways to strategically bring awareness to the world around them, be that a world filled with fascinating joy or monstrous evil. Either way, today's adults can ignite a reversal process that turns our children from an existence of detachment to a life in which they grow in awareness of their surroundings ... and that's never a bad thing. ❄️



About our Panel



David P. Tyner is the principal at Hagerstown Junior/Senior High School. David has 15 years of school administration of experience, and received his bachelor of science in education, as well as his master of art in education from Ball State University. David is married of 24 years with four children.



Randy Retter is a 32-year veteran of law enforcement and currently serve as Wayne County Indiana Sheriff. During his professional career, Randy has performed a training role as a law enforcement instructor to include physical tactics, firearms, and officer survival. His leadership experience includes patrol supervisor, field training program coordinator, investigations supervisor, enforcement division commander, SWAT sniper team leader, and sheriff.



Steve Tarani is a former full-time CIA protective programs employee and defensive tactics subject matter expert who served on POTUS 45 pre-election executive protection detail. He's the lead instructor for NRA's non-ballistic weapons training program offered nationally. Tarani is also a DoD and FLETC-certified federal firearms instructor who has been on staff at Gunsite Academy (Arizona) for 21 years and remains a service provider for DoD and other government agencies.

About the Author



Mark Linderman is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and 19-year veteran of public health. He instructs Disaster Preparedness courses for seven universities, including Indiana University's Fairbanks School of Public Health, and teaches Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication courses for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Mark is considered a subject matter expert in the field of disaster-based communication and is a widely received public speaker and advocate for disaster preparedness. He channels his passion through his own blogsite, Disaster Initiatives, where he regularly interviews world-renowned survivalists, authors, academics, and government officials.

www.disasterinitiatives.com



THE MINNESOTA PORCH WIKINGS

MINNEAPOLIS POLICE

Spontaneous Emergency Networks
in the Minneapolis Riots

By **Forrest Cooper**
Photos by **Samantha Lauraina**





s Americans living in 2020, we each are searching on our own for a defining moment. We all do this to some degree, either actively in the pursuit of grand goals, or passively, waiting for life to bestow some sense of meaning. We do this with events too, attempting to put into perspective what something like the death of George Floyd or the subsequent burning of the Minneapolis Third Precinct means for America. These considerations typically take place in the aftermath of such events, invariably influenced by pundits, politicians, and people seeking to control narrative. In the moment, however, neighborhoods came together to protect local businesses and their own homes – and spontaneous Emergency Networks spread across the city. As a Minneapolis native, this first-hand narrative represents the antifragility of the American people.

Chaos And Conjecture

As the façade of public safety went up in flames to the sounds of chanting, the eerie nature of the moment didn't have time to sink in. This wasn't a nightlong siege of an embassy in a foreign country – this was home. A phone call interrupted. Was it another family member? A friend calling to check in? Or was it word of something new?

In the background, flames leaped from buildings and smoke plumes melted into a dawn skyline. For miles, the smell left a slight metallic taste in the mouth. It wasn't recognizable, but it was familiar.



A caravan of impromptu parades streamed across the city, through neighborhoods, blocking traffic. The closer you got to the epicenter, the less anyone concerned themselves with following the rules of the road.

Whether in solidarity or for camouflage, many businesses marked their own properties with the same phrases that those in the street were shouting, hoping it would keep them from getting looted.

The city, this city, our city wasn't the same in the morning air. All night we were monitoring, watching, and sending out patrols. Little did we know by the end of the week that we'd be convoying nursing mothers away from their homes to safety. Was this Minneapolis, or was it Mogadishu?

We were no longer measuring this event in hours, but days. The previous 24 hours we watched what started as protests turn into burning buildings and a form of looting that looked too relaxed to be anything but surreal. A man in socks and sandals stumbled out from the rubble of a smashed employee entrance with a carton of eggs, some cooking oil, and a half-eaten candy bar. With a casual air, he stepped around a barrier, chuckled at the hull of a burning car, and disappeared into the residential streets. A few miles away, men with body armor and carbines sat inside cars in grocery store parking lots and outside apartments to protect businesses and the community.

Sorting through and qualifying the information escalated to a necessity, as rumors spread like wildfire through social media and news outlets. The white supremacists were coming to town – or was it the Black Panthers? Boogaloo boys or antifa? Believable? Yes, but not nearly as relevant nor immediate as the gas station burning at the end of the block. The National Guard was now using live ammunition? A quick check with a friend in the chain of command said otherwise; another case of bad information reaching further and faster than fact.

It didn't take long for rumors to breed distrust, with speculation spreading fear that some infamous "them" could be coming to town to take part in the trouble. But how could we verify who they were or where they were coming from, or even where they were going? And then

there was the matter of who we were. Were we a group of concerned friends? A rescue operation? The latest evolution of the neighborhood watch?

On the couch rested a plate carrier, hearing protection, and a rifle. Half of the dinner table became a command center, busy with communication on every channel, texts, phone calls, live video, and each social media platform a blur of new information that had to be evaluated.

When it all started, we simply called each other. Some of us were friends, others family, some as distant as former colleagues or a valued professor from years ago in college. A former coworker had left town, but he was monitoring the police chatter in our area through a scanner. Establishing the network was spontaneous. What came next couldn't be. We had to systematize our communication – quickly – before it became too jammed up to do any good.

Decentralization

Nicholas Nassim Taleb, in his work *Antifragile*, observed that highly centralized organizations were prone to collapse when the head was cut off from communication. The world of Special Operations long ago incorporated this principle by maintaining an unwritten standard that each member of the team must be capable of performing the duties one or two levels above and below themselves. In emergencies, situations will escalate from bad to catastrophic when arguments over leadership take precedence over the threat at hand.

An emergency network stands apart by defining itself primarily around an area of operations, not a rank structure. It's not an organization that needs hierarchy, but a team that requires cohesion. Spread across Minneapolis,

Across the street from the 3rd Precinct, a family owned liquor store burned throughout the night as its merchandise was passed through the crowd, regardless of age.



each person represented a node, a point to gather and cross-reference any information that popped up. Some brought unique expertise – a retired police officer, a member of the National Guard, a nurse, another who was social media savvy. No bunkers, HAM radios, or bug-out Hilux imports in sight, all communication took place over cell phones and computers. By establishing various information-specific group text messages or chat rooms, we isolated pertinent, actionable information that could be shared across the whole group while limiting the noise of rumors and conjecture.

Next, we used tools like Google Earth to clearly define and disseminate where each person lived to determine key routes of travel and the greatest danger areas. People could drop a pin where they lived, and if they saw something first-hand, it could make its way onto the map. If a building started burning, it was shared with the group. As time progressed, various streets, roads, and highways would be blocked by police, protesters, or riots, and that'd determine how we'd get people out of a bad place.

When establishing a network as a crisis is in progress, the decentralized nature of the group begins naturally. By self-regulating the various streams of communication, the network prevents itself from getting too crowded, allowing the most pertinent information to stay on the top. By reserving phone calls for immediate threats, part of the team can get rest knowing that if they were needed

the ringer would wake them up. Just as some streets set up shifts to keep watch over the neighborhood, so could the network look out for each of its members while some slept for the first time in 36 hours.

Evaluating Information

For the third night in a row, the city burned with no end in sight. As the skyline began to give way to the gray of dusk, we wondered if tonight we'd see it aglow by fires in this neighborhood. The rumor coursing through the wires and waves of the city was that tonight the rioters were going residential, now that the police precincts had hardened their defenses and the businesses worth looting had been stripped bare. All day, pallets of plywood emptied out of lumberyards for boarding up gas stations, liquor stores, and churches within a 20-mile radius.

A computer had been synced to relay text messages, as it took too long to type on a phone keyboard. A screenshot came in, this time a social media post: THE WHITE SUPREMACISTS ARE MARCHING SOUTH FROM NEW BRIGHTON. If that were true, it would be a problem. Could this information be verified? We didn't care about who they were, only if the threat was real.

We had more information at our fingertips than we could handle. In order to turn it into OSINT (open-source intelligence), or actionable information, we needed a way to evaluate what came in. People flocked to Minneapolis, some for a chance to get in on the action, others to catch the spotlight for political gain, still more to protect property and people from the fires, or to watch what felt like history in the making. All the attention brought a spotlight and the struggle for it.

The battle over the streets was matched with a battle over the headlines. That distinction meant everything to those who lived where others fought. In the papers and across the web, people argued over who was starting the fires, or who was coming to town, but to us, it didn't matter — we sent an armed escort to the home of a National Guardsman who was receiving threats. As the street violence continued to escalate, he'd been called in, leaving his wife and 1-year-old child home alone. Despite the curfew, they were quickly and quietly escorted to the safety of family outside the city.



If it could be lit on fire, in time, it probably would.

Makeshift signs ranged from pleas for change, to overt calls for violent revolution.





Triggers

It wasn't the alarm of white supremacists on Twitter that drove us to action, but the reports coming in from government sources and confirmed by our own people on the ground. When rumors of threats began to spread, it became the responsibility of each person to verify what they heard and dismiss anything that couldn't be confirmed. In this case, the National Guard was briefed on the expectation for the riots to move into residential areas, and we considered it actionable intelligence when multiple vehicles were spotted driving through without license plates. The previous days' reports and videos floated across Minneapolis, depicting cars stripped of tags driving through in search of soft targets to quickly smash-and-grab them when the police were nowhere in sight.

The saying "trust but verify" pertains to more than just leadership strategies, especially for information that could qualify as OSINT. An emergency network remains flexible by operating with a decentralized structure, but it relies on a systematized approach to information and the responses. New information is sifted according to its credibility and then assigned triggers that warrant specific actions. Social unrest seized Minneapolis in a matter of hours, so the establishment of an emergency network was both organic and reactionary. However, once the channels of communication were established, it was time to become proactive. This meant forming an amalgamation of tactics and standard operating procedures. With people remaining in their neighborhoods, sometimes

Above: From their porches, streets, and rooftops, citizens watched the chaos unfold, holding down their little section of home.

Right: Maintaining the "Minnesota Nice" exterior as some marched to defund the police, others prepared for the crime wave that would soon follow.

Top right: Some parts of the city were wholly abandoned by the fire department, where in others struggled long into the night.



minutes and sometimes miles apart, we needed to know exactly when it was time to act and how to act.

As we tracked the movement of the riots, mapping out the locations of burning or looted buildings, we were faced with this question. So far, none of us had been immediately threatened. Our hatchets sharp, powder dry, and plate carriers loaded, our team was at the ready, but as the violence escalated, it stayed away from our doorsteps. Our greatest danger wasn't a torch-wielding mob — at least not yet — but rather the weariness of endlessly waiting for a threat to manifest, hoping that we'd have the mental fortitude to make wise decisions.

Tangible triggers dictate appropriate responses. When someone identified vans without license plates roving around their neighborhood, someone outside of the danger area would drive to their location and provide security for the night. If someone needed food but couldn't leave their home, another would provide a meal. In the event of a nearby fire, people with trucks were at the

ready, fully knowing the hazard of entering a part of the city barred from police, medical responders, and even the fire department.

By establishing triggers, each tied with predetermined response, the team moved from a reactive posture to proactive planning. As the unrest progressed, fear spread through rumor gave way to a systematized evaluation of information. This evolved further to make room for the network to look for ways to improve our position, instead of waiting for bad news to come home.

Aftermath & Loose Rounds

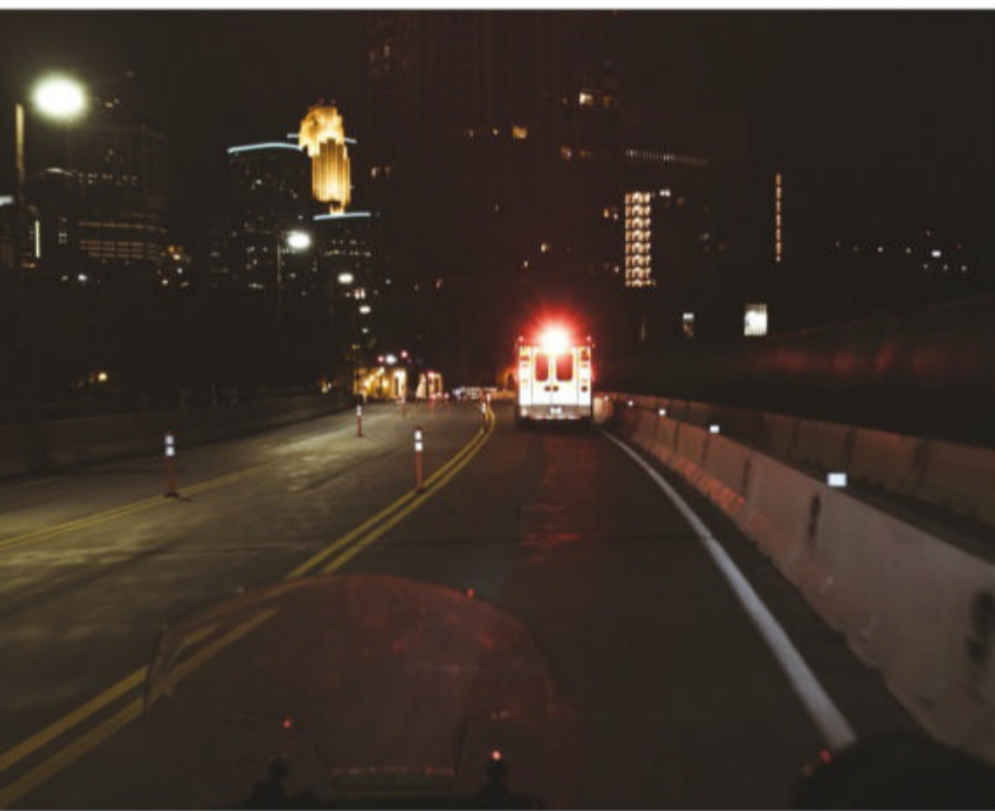
In the weeks following the riots, after the fires had long gone out and the smoldering wreckage of businesses be-

Bottom left: Those looting the stores rarely looked like comic book villains. Many came just for the spectacle and went home with a free lunch.

Below: As the looting continued, it became more and more banal. Soon windows were smashed just for the hell of it.

gan to assess how or if they could rebuild, some looked to politicians to save them from the aftermath. Our network, however, remained in place to look after our own. No one was coming to save us, and this was our home. This city was ours, but its eyes had grown wide with suspicion as it questioned who could be trusted. Neighbors debated who started the fires or looted local businesses, and the machine of media turned its attention from reporting on what it saw to arguing over which politician was to blame.

Behind the scenes, men and women stood up to look after each other, not by obligation but by choice. And it was that conscious decision that set them apart. No longer burdened by a search for meaning, they had found theirs – not in trying to identify victimhood, but to act and make themselves more able to act. In Minneapolis, behind the politics and the posturing, these emergency networks still stand, defined not by what happened to them, but what they were doing when no one was looking. ❧



STRONGER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET

Plates and Carriers for Self-Defense in a Time of Crisis

By **Tom Marshall**, Photos by **Patrick McCarthy**



hen it comes to protection of self, family, and home, we spend a lot of time talking about guns – not only our own, but also those a potential adversary may be using. But there's

a second leg to that conversation that often doesn't receive due consideration: body armor. The proliferation of commercially available hard armor plates has spawned an ever-expanding market for plate carriers. On one end are the ultra-minimalist "slick" plate carriers. These are typically meant to be worn under light clothing with little or no capacity to carry equipment. On the other end are military-type plate carriers that often come with an array of pouches permanently sewn to the carrier body. These pouches accommodate everything from spare mags to radios, grenades, hydration, and everything in between. The fastest-growing segment of the carrier market is the middle-of-the-road option of modular plate carriers. These carriers can be worn stripped down, but often come with Velcro or buckle attachment points to facilitate the addition of pouches, chest rigs, or placards that can be swapped out to carry different loads. With so many shapes, sizes, and configurations of plate carriers available, we wanted to provide a few examples of what's out there, best uses, and options for configuration. Your needs will

determine which style of carrier works best for you, but here are some examples from across the style spectrum ...

Plate Carriers

"Slick" Carriers

The absolute minimalist expression for running hard armor plates, stand-alone carriers are the best option when discretion is the order of the day. These types of carriers can be made to all but disappear underneath a light windbreaker, button-up shirt, or even an oversized T-shirt. If you want armor protection but aren't carrying a rifle, this may be the way to go. These kinds of carriers can be seamlessly integrated into your normal EDC, imposing minimal restrictions on wardrobe while allowing unimpeded access to IWB holsters and other defensive tools.

Our example here is from First Spear and is appropriately named "Slick." The Slick is just about the sleekest, leanest footprint you could ask for from an armor carrier. The body of the carrier is made from ultra-thin, stretch fabric material, with a stretch cummerbund that Velcros in place. It also features simple, Velcro-adjustable nylon shoulder straps. This model was designed specifically for low-profile law enforcement, intelligence, and protective missions that require the armor to be worn under any variety of street clothing. If you remove the plates, the entire carrier can be balled up and stowed in a large cargo pocket. There's no



For a full breakdown of contributing editor Patrick McCarthy's Tyr Tactical PICO-DS plate carrier as seen in this photo, go to offgridweb.com/?p=20582.

provision to carry gear directly on the carrier, but it can be paired with a minimalist chest rig (such as the Blue Force Gear Ten-Speed we reviewed in Issue 36) if the situation dictates.

A carrier like this might be good for members of your family who aren't designated as primary responders to an armed threat, but who want protection from said threats. It's also an excellent choice to keep in your vehicle if you frequent high-risk areas or must pass through urban areas under civil unrest.

“Full-Up” Plate Carriers

At the opposite end of the spectrum are dedicated “full-up” or direct-action-oriented plate carriers. These carriers come with on-board load carriage built in, and are favored by military special operations and law enforcement tactical teams, who will almost always be working with a carbine or submachine gun and require supporting equipment like radios, hydration, extra ammo, and distraction devices.

Our example is Tyr Tactical's Basic Plate Carrier. The BPC comes covered in PALS webbing loops for attaching MOLLE pouches and includes a “kangaroo” pouch in the front that can hold three AR-style magazines. This particular carrier was used by the author while working as a high-threat protective specialist overseas. In addition to the kangaroo pouch, an additional magazine pouch, trauma medical kit, flashlight pouch, and hydration carrier were attached for daily protective duties in war zone environments.

The utility of this style of carrier is somewhat limited for the “average” citizen, due to its bulky nature and overt profile. But if you're protecting a ranch, business, or other large property where the use of rifles is appropriate and the appearance of being armed (or armored) isn't a concern, the ability to carry extra ammo and gear on your person could be a boon.

Modular Carriers

Modular carriers are quickly becoming the most popular style of plate carrier due to their flexible, reconfigurable nature. They bring a best-of-both-worlds utility to those looking for a single plate carrier to cover an array of potential scenarios. These can be worn as a slick carrier, or in full-up configuration with the addition of placards and drop-down pouches.

Seen here is the Defense Mechanisms Mission Essential Plate Carrier (MEPC). The MEPC can be pieced together on Defense Mechanisms' website, with multiple sizes of plate bags and different types of cummerbunds added à la carte. This allows you to put together the carrier that fits your needs most



Above (Top): First Spear's “Slick” plate carrier is an ultralight, bare-bones carrier designed for maximum concealment.

Above (Bottom): Tyr Tactical's Basic Plate Carrier is a design suited for full-time tactical teams and armed professionals, but will be hard to conceal when fully laden.

closely. Speaking just to the cummerbunds, there are four versions available: a 3- and 5-inch-wide version with two and three rows of nylon mesh MOLLE webbing, respectively. Each of those are available as a MOLLE-only version, or as a “hybrid” cummerbund, featuring a section of MOLLE mesh attached to a section of stretch material. The hybrid version can expand/contract to accommodate extra layers of clothing or small size differences between multiple users; this variant also comes with ROC quick-release buckles. These quick-disconnect latches come in handy when using the MEPC with a placard or chest rig, allowing you to don/doff the carrier without lifting up the placard to tear away the Velcro between the



Above: The HRT Maximus Placard can be configured for multiple types of weapons and paired with hanging pouches like the Gadsden Dynamics ROM.



Above: The Defense Mechanisms MEPC with Maximus Placard.

cummerbund and front plate bag. Our test sample came with the 5-inch hybrid cummerbund. The MEPC comes with two Fastex buckles hard-sewn to the front of the carrier to facilitate the use of placards while minimizing bulk if you choose to run it slick.

Defense Mechanisms does offer their own front placards, which are scalable in their own right, but we wanted to illustrate the cross-compatibility of these types of carrier/placard systems. So, for our “heavy” configuration, we used a Maximus placard from HRT Tactical Gear. HRT makes their own carrier, but the de facto standardization for placard attachment means there was no issue transplanting their Maximus placard onto the MEPC. We really like the Maximus for situations that require a substantial amount of load carriage – it comes standard with a kangaroo pouch for ammunition, two square general-purpose pouches and pistol-mag-sized pouches on either end. This placard was also designed for maximum modularity. The open-top pistol magazine pouches include flexible polymer inserts for magazine retention. Since these are secured in place with Velcro, we removed them and repurposed those pouches to carry a pair of SOFT-T tourniquets. The kangaroo ammo pouch is also Velcro-lined, and the Maximus is available with three types of soft-loop inserts for different types of magazines: a three-mag insert for AR-15 style mags, a two-mag insert for larger AR-10, FAL, or M14-style mags, and a five-mag insert for submachine gun or pistol-caliber carbine mags. The two general-purpose pouches include loops for gear retention. We used one for medical equipment and one for pyrotechnic gear – a Sport Smoke smoke grenade and IWA international civilian-legal flashbang device. This combination of placard and carrier allow us a high-profile armor carriage setup ideal for tactical training or high-threat defense scenarios.

If a couple of spare mags is all you need to have on you, Tactical Tailor makes Velcro-backed magazine pouches (not shown) that can attach directly to the loop panel on the front of the MEPC. This gives you a few extra reloads without the bulk of a larger placard like the Maximus.

Finally, if you already have a stand-alone chest rig, this can also be integrated onto the MEPC, assuming your buckles line up properly. A small company called AXL Advanced produces a handy product called the Chest Rig Retention Kit. This kit consists of four Fastex buckles on shock-cord loops that can be threaded through the MOLLE loops in your cummerbund. The system allows you to adapt a variety of chest rigs to your modular plate carrier. This is a great tool to have in your gear locker if you want to run multiple types of carriers with one chest rig.

In our examples here, you see the Redwire Gear Emergency Management Rack chest rig, which was featured as a stand-alone chest rig in Issue 38. With the AXL Advanced kit, that same rig was adapted to the Defense Mechanisms



Above: The AXL Advanced Chest Rig Adapter kit can adapt chest rigs into plate carrier placards, with its ingenious system of buckles and shock cord.

carrier as placard. Now you only need a single chest rig that functions with two types of plate carrier configurations.

But if a placard or chest rig alone isn't enough load carriage, modular plate carriers can often be augmented with drop-down or abdominal pouches, sometimes referred to as danglers. These pouches hang freely below the plate carrier itself and are typically used by tactical teams to carry medical, breaching, or signaling supplies. To illustrate this, we tried out the Removable Organized Modular (ROM) pouch by Gadsden Dynamics. The ROM is a simple, single-compartment drop-down pouch that's fully loop-lined and comes with several removable loop retainers for gear organization. The ROM offers a unique quick-detach feature, allowing it to be "torn" off of its mounting placard via the use of friction-release buckles. Paired with a dedicated placard like the Maximus, it can be used as a larger compartment for more comprehensive medical kits. The Redwire EMR is also paired with that company's own Demo Pouch, which we filled with chemlights, strobes, and a Sport Smoke as an emergency signaling kit with low-light capability. Individual equipment load-outs are highly personal and mission/need specific, but drop-down pouches allow an exponential increase in storage without any extra front-facing bulk.

These are by no means the only options available in each category. There are many companies offering a myriad of car-

riers, placards, chest rigs, and drop-down pouches. But these examples offer a good outline of the different types of carriers, their potential uses and different options that can be cobbled together for that Goldilocks just-right-fit for your wants and needs in armor and load carriage.

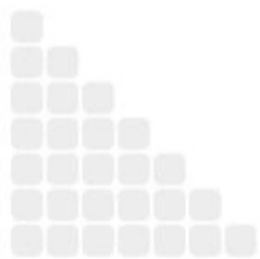
Some Notes About Plates

Armor plates, protection ratings and cuts/sizing could fill an entire article all by itself, but since we're talking about carriers, we wanted to touch on some of the variations in plates and what's out there.

For the sake of brevity, we're going to talk about Level III and IV plates, and we're going to skip over rolled steel plates – which, despite their bargain-basement cost, come with a host of pitfalls including substantial weight and higher risk of spalling. Of course, steel plates certainly offer better protection than no plates at all, but they aren't our first choice given the existence of ceramic and polymer alternatives.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has set forth a standardized testing protocol for armor plates that has been the national template for many years. The top two tiers of rifle-rated hard plate protection set forth by NIJ are Level III and Level IV. The very thinnest of bottom lines is that NIJ-compliant level III plates must defeat six rounds of 7.62x51mm NATO ball ammunition, similar to commercial .308 Winchester. Level IV plates must stop between one and six rounds of 7.62x63mm NATO (.30-06) M2 armor-piercing ammunition. The commercial market has filled in the gaps with non-standardized protection levels like Level III+ and "Special Threat" plates, which may augment the NIJ standards with additional protection against 5.56mm NATO "green tip" armor piercing rounds or 7.62x54mm rounds like those fired from the Russian Dragunov sniper rifle or PKM machine gun. *Make sure you thoroughly read the manufacturer's protection ratings before purchasing any hard armor plates to ensure they fulfill your personal requirements.* Also, note that many plates are said to "meet NIJ standards," but may not have been independently tested and certified to be NIJ Compliant. Always check the manufacturer's documentation thoroughly for test results, or search for the most current Compliant Armor list on nij.ojp.gov.

From an end-user perspective, most people are concerned with a couple of key characteristics: cost, protection level, weight, and thickness. Lighter plates are easier to wear for long periods, but may also be thicker. Thicker plates may offer more protection but also add bulk, if concealability is a concern. And all of these things will affect price. What follows are some examples of plates at different protection and price levels We'll highlight the key dimensions for direct comparison. In an attempt to keep the comparisons as "apples to apples" as possible, all plates are size medium SAPI-cut plates.





Level III Plates
Prime Armor

SIZE: Medium
DIMENSIONS: 10 by 12 inches
THICKNESS: 1.1 inches
WEIGHT: 3.75 pounds per plate
ADVERTISED PROTECTION LEVEL: III
ADVERTISED THREAT ROUNDS DEFEATED:
 5.56x45mm NATO M193 FMJ
 7.62x51mm M80 FMJ
 7.62x39mm FMJ
PRICE: \$398
 (set of 2 - note: sold per plate at \$199 each)

NOTES: This is the only model of plate that Prime Armor sells, and we think these plates are an excellent starting point to balance price versus protection. However, they're so thick we had to swap our size medium Defense Mechanisms plate carrier for a large just to fit these plates. They aren't what we'd choose for low-profile use. If that's not a concern, a pair of plates comes in at sub 8 pounds and sub \$400, which is a pretty good ratio of cost to weight to protection.

Be aware that they won't protect against any armor-piercing rounds. This includes the ever-popular 5.56mm "green tip" M855 ammo that's widely available on the commercial market, and, in our opinion, the armor-piercing ammo you're most likely to encounter inside U.S. borders. There's also "mild steel core" ammunition available in 7.62x39mm Russian, which is similar in capability. Though less common than green tip, it's still out there and should be factored into the level of protection you choose.

Having said that, we also think these plates are an excellent option for CQB and shoot-house training classes. Such classes often require students to wear rifle-rated plates, but also prohibit the use of any kind of armor-piercing ammo. So, Level III plates hit the sweet spot for a situation that requires rifle protection but where you know armor-piercing rounds won't be present. Their lightweight polyethylene construction makes these plates a breeze to wear for hours on end multiple days in a row.



Level III+ Plates
Spartan Armor

SIZE: Medium
DIMENSIONS: 10 by 12 inches
THICKNESS: 1.1 inches
WEIGHT: 4.65 pounds per plate
ADVERTISED PROTECTION LEVEL: III+
ADVERTISED THREAT ROUNDS DEFEATED:
 5.56x45mm M193 FMJ
 7.62x39mm M67 FMJ
 7.62x51mm M80 FMJ
 5.56x45mm M855/SS109 AP
 7.62x39mm M43 Steel Core
PRICE: \$721 (set of 2)

NOTES: These plates are the most expensive on our list, by a healthy margin. This is a good opportunity to re-emphasize the balance of cost against other factors. It might make sense on the surface that higher protection levels equal higher cost. But, really, it's a combination of protection and weight that produces the cost.

The Level IV plates listed on the next page offer higher protection, but these Level III+ plates are substantially lighter for almost the same level of protection. In fact, the only difference in protection between these Level III+ plates and the Level IVs are .30-06 armor piercing. Unless you're expecting to get in a firefight with adversaries carrying M1 Garand rifles, Level III+ plates will stop anything you're likely to encounter inside the United States, and they're almost 5 pounds lighter than Level IV equivalents. Does that matter? A loaded 30-round AR magazine weighs 1 pound. A 100-ounce water bladder weighs over 6 pounds. Then, add pistol mags, smoke grenades, radios, or whatever else you keep on your kit. Depending on what your loadout looks like, the extra money and small sacrifice in protection level may provide you with a more comfortable, well-rounded setup that still meets all your needs.

As previously stated, "Level III+" isn't an official NIJ rating. By that scale, these plates are only Level III-rated as they don't cover the aforementioned .30-06 AP rounds. But if you see that plus sign, or other notations like "Special Threat rated" on a product description, make sure you read down into what specific calibers/rounds are covered by that plate.

Left: The wide variety of composite armor plates available to civilians includes different sizes, weights, protection levels, and even outer shell coatings.



We have two examples of Level IV plates here, both from Hoplite Armor. We wanted to show you how even two plates of the same rating from the same manufacturer can offer trade-offs in dimensions and cost. Hoplite has a wide selection of plates in a variety of protection levels. The two models seen here are #26149 and #26135 respectively. The primary difference, on first glance, is that the 26149 plates are covered in a thin fabric sheath while the 26135 plates are coated in a hard Line-X coating.

Why does the outer shell matter? If you've ever seen a photo of a plate that has been shot, you may have seen a light, almost flaky substance that appears to be crumbling and falling out of the bullet hole like crushed plaster. This is normal to see, as the composite material gets crushed/sacrificed to protect the wearer. Hoplite says that using Line-X coating instead of fabric helps hold this material together and keep it inside the plate, enhancing the multi-hit capability of the 26135 model.

The 26149, with fabric shell, is still multi-hit capable. The hard shell is simply an enhancement of this capability.

Level IV Plates Hoplite Armor

SIZE:

26149 - Medium (SAPI Cut)
26135 - Medium (Swimmer Cut)

DIMENSIONS:

26149 - 12.5 by 9.5 inches
26135 - 11.3 by 9.6 inches

THICKNESS:

26149 - 0.74 inch
26135 - 0.74 inch

WEIGHT:

26149 - 7.65 pounds per plate
26135 - 6.7 pounds per plate

ADVERTISED PROTECTION

LEVEL (BOTH MODELS): IV

ADVERTISED THREAT ROUNDS

DEFEATED (BOTH MODELS):

5.56x45mm NATO M193 FMJ
7.62x51mm NATO FMJ
5.56x45mm M855/SS109 AP
7.62x51mm NATO AP
7.62x39mm API
7.62x39mm M43 Steel Core
7.62x54mmR L/LPS/B-32 API
.30-06 M2 AP

PRICE:

26149 - \$479 (set of 2)
26135 - \$598 (set of 2)



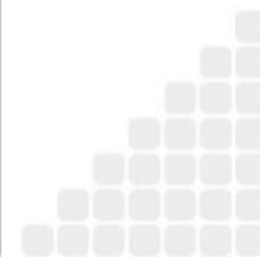
NOTES: If you choose to run a carrier like First Spear's Slick, which is made of a very thin fabric material, the rough Line-X coating on the 26135's may eventually damage the carrier. An ultra-light, slick carrier run by itself (no chest rig or pouches attached) may make the heavier plates with fabric shell an acceptable trade-off. But if you're running a larger carrier with four to five loaded magazines and additional equipment, the 2-pound difference between these plate sets starts to matter a little more.

Conclusion

Again, your armor plates are part of a larger load-out. The key to long-term success with minimal fuss and no double-spending is to do your research ahead of time and assemble your components as a protection/load carriage system that meets all your requirements. Size, weight, thickness, and protection level will all influence plate selection. Load-carriage requirements and concealability/outward posture will likely be deciding factors for plate carriers. The examples shown here are by no means a comprehensive list of what's out there, but a sampling of some of the different combinations that can be had. 🍷

SOURCES

First Spear > www.first-spear.com
Tyr Tactical > www.tyrtactical.com
Defense Mechanisms > www.defensemechanisms.com
Redwire Gear > www.redwiregear.com
Gadsden Dynamics > www.gadsdendynamics.com
HRT Tactical Gear > www.hrftacticalgear.com
Prime Armor > www.primebodyarmor.com
Spartan Armor > www.spartanarmor.com
Hoplite Armor > www.hoplitearmor.com



Work life balance.
Sounds like fortune.



We didn't become our jobs. They became us—handloaders, hunters, and a hardass or two, long before we ever got here. Handcrafting ammunition just gave us an excuse to think about our passion, day in and day out. Good thing. To craft something this tried and true, we've needed every last waking minute.

TO LOCATE A DEALER NEAR YOU,
PLEASE CALL 800.568.6625



Ammunition

WWW.BLACK-HILLS.COM



EVERYDAY CARRY
THE ACE

ERIC OCHS DESIGN

3" S35VN BLADE

INTERCHANGEABLE
MARKER



GOLPHERS.COM

WASTED SPACE

A Detailed Analysis of Everyday Carry, Range, and War Belt Setups

By Patrick McCarthy

Humans have been making clothing with built-in pockets since at least 1200 AD, when our ancestors started cutting slits in their tunics to access coin purses or keys stashed in their undergarments.

However, the concept of storing tools on a belt is far older than that of carrying them in our clothes. The frozen body of Ötzi the iceman, who is believed to have died between 3400 and 3100 BC, was found clad in a leather belt. Pouches sewn onto his belt contained a scraper, drill, awl, and fire-starting kit with flint and tinder fungus. Ever since those ancient times, utility belts have seen continuous use, carrying everything from primitive survival supplies and farming implements to swords and six-shooters. They offer quicker access and more load-carrying capability than garment pockets, and can be configured in countless ways to meet the task at hand. With this in mind, let's take a look at three common categories of belts related to emergency preparedness and self-defense.

Belt Categories

First, everyday carry belts are designed to be slim and comfortable enough for daily wear. Most are intended to provide additional support for concealed carry of a gun, medical gear, and other items. EDC belts also offer higher load-bearing capacity for pants that are weighed down with anything beyond the normal phone, keys, and wallet.

Second is the category we refer to as range belts – the type you'd wear at a shooting class or competition. These tend to be more overt and sturdy; items that were stored inside the waistband (IWB) are now stored

A good belt makes it easy to carry gear without constantly stopping to hike up your pants.

The pictured Agis appendix holster from Tier 1 Concealed distributes weight well thanks to two clips and a flexible midsection.



outside the waistband (OWB), and additional magazine and accessory pockets are added. Range belts sometimes feature a thin inner belt and detachable outer belt connected by hook and loop material, making it easy to tear off the entire loadout in seconds without dropping trou. Buckles and webbing tend to be larger and stronger, since concealment is no longer a priority.

Finally, battle belts or war belts are the most high-profile and full-featured category. Even if you're not literally going into combat, these setups are made to handle that level of physical activity and abuse. This is where you'll typically see more mission-driven gear loadouts, padded layers for comfort during extended wear, and in some cases, active retention holsters that restrict unauthorized access to a handgun. You might think every inch of these belts will be packed with gear, but that's not necessarily true. War belts are often worn as one part of a larger load-bearing system, so some of the equipment may migrate off the waistline and onto a chest rig, vest, or plate carrier. Refer to our article "Front Toward Enemy" in Issue 36 for a thorough look at each of those systems.

Now that you understand the divisions between these three types of belts, buckle up and read on as we show some of the options and considerations for each. All of the following belts and accessories from Carbon Tactics, G-Code, and Snake Eater Tactical are made in the USA.

Everyday Carry Belt

Whether you're wearing a suit and tie or jeans and a T-shirt, there are EDC belt options that complement almost any type of attire. I tend to fall into the latter category most of the time, so my belt stays concealed beneath the hem of my T-shirt. Thankfully, this means I'm not restricted to styles that look like they belong on the shelf at Men's Wearhouse.

The Foundation: I picked up two belts from Carbon Tactics, a company that designs and manufactures its products in my home state of Arizona. The first is called the BadgerStrap, and consists of a clever split buckle that's held in place using a strong magnet and CNC-machined, interlocking latch. Although the BadgerStrap was recently discontinued, Carbon Tactics offers the Quicky with a similar magnetic mechanism, as well as the new Cipher, which augments the magnetic latch with a tensioner dial. All of the company's belts are available with single-layer (more flexible) or double-layer (more rigid) nylon webbing in your choice of black, gray, or coyote brown. A hybrid Biothane option is also offered, integrating an outer layer of polyester webbing coated in tough thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU). I chose this option since it prevents fraying or staining, and makes the belt slightly stiffer than a single-layer style.

The BadgerStrap's magnetic buckle is rock solid – allegedly strong enough to lift a motorcycle – and I like the fact that its styling is relatively inconspicuous. The nylon and Biothane hybrid construction is supportive without being excessively stiff. I noticed the BadgerStrap has a tendency to loosen slightly throughout the day, especially when it's loaded with a holster or other heavy items. The brass slider on the male side of the buckle doesn't grip the webbing as securely as I'd like. That said, this belt is a great choice for those who prefer minimalist loadouts without too much weight on the waistband.

NO	Carbon Tactics BadgerStrap Biothane Double-Layer
\$	MSRP \$85 (discontinued, see notes)
URL	carbontactics.com

Carbon Tactics also provided a second belt, the Epoch, which demonstrates a heavier-duty EDC option. This belt's CNC-machined buckle features a trigger-shaped release mechanism on the female side of the buckle. This looks cool, and allows for easy one-handed opening. Apparently, the filmmakers behind the 007 series also liked the design, since this belt is featured in the recent movie *No Time to Die*. Another benefit of the Epoch is its ability to fit through belt loops; unlike the split-buckle BadgerStrap and Quicky models, you won't need to slide the Epoch's buckle off the webbing to swap it between pairs of pants. As for the webbing, this belt features double-layer Coyote Brown nylon.

I found the Epoch buckle design to be more comfortable and convenient than the BadgerStrap; it's slimmer and has built-in flexibility

NO	Carbon Tactics Epoch Coyote Double-Layer
\$	MSRP \$100
URL	carbontactics.com

between the male and female halves of the buckle, allowing it to contour to my waist. I also didn't have any issues with this belt loosening during the day, even with a holster, spare mag, and trauma kit inside my waistband. Some users may find the double-layer nylon to be too stiff – it holds a semi-rigid oval shape at all times. It can be ordered with single-layer or hybrid webbing, depending on the user's preference and load-bearing needs.



A strong magnet embedded in the BadgerStrap causes the split buckle to snap together with a satisfying click.

The Carbon Tactics Epoch features a unique trigger release mechanism, but our favorite part about this design was the fact that it's slim enough to slide through belt loops without removing the buckle.



The EDC Loadout

HOLSTER OPTIONS

I tried out two different holsters with these belts – one made specifically for appendix carry with a spare mag, and a more traditional stand-alone option with a separate mag carrier.

Notes: The Agis is designed for appendix carry, and includes a detachable magazine carrier. Many colors and configurations are available; shown is Storm Gray

Kydex set up for a Glock 19 and Streamlight TLR-7A weapon light. With its canted spare magazine, adjustable clips, concealment claw, and flexible midsection, I found this holster to be extremely comfortable and easy to conceal under a T-shirt.

No **Tier 1 Concealed Agis Holster**

\$ **MSRP**
\$130

URL
tier1concealed.com

No **Veil Solutions Mantis Holster / Veil Solutions C2 Glock Mag Carrier**

\$ **MSRP**
\$96 / \$34

URL
veilsolutions.com

Notes: Modular appendix holsters aren't everyone's cup of tea, so I also tried out a stand-alone holster and mag carrier from Veil Solutions. This holster is set

up for my G19/TLR-7A, and it works well for either appendix or strong-side carry. The MOD Wing helps reduce printing, and the optional Discreet Carry Concepts clips make sure it doesn't move around on my belt. The C2 mag carrier is the same durable Kydex design featured on the war belt setup later in this article, but reversed for IWB wear.

INDIVIDUAL FIRST AID KIT (IFAK)

I believe every prepared individual should have basic medical gear and Stop the Bleed or equivalent training. I always carry a bigger kit in my backpack, but an IWB IFAK ensures I'm never without the most critical life-saving gear.

Notes: When I first saw this elastic med kit, I wasn't sure if it'd end up being too bulky to wear every day. I soon learned it's surprisingly slim and comfortable, even while sitting in a car for extended

periods. It curves to fit my waist and holds a C-A-T tourniquet, H&H mini compression dressing, Celox hemostatic gauze, and gloves. Two metal clips hold the kit securely in place. My only gripe is that the TQ's hook material sometimes snags on the inner hem of my T-shirt, causing it to fray; switching the C-A-T for a SOFTT-W will alleviate this.

No **Immediate Casualty Care Min-E-Med IWB Flat**

\$ **MSRP**
\$40

URL
immediatecasualtycare.com

OTHER GEAR

Although the rest of my EDC gear isn't directly attached to the belt, it's indirectly supported by it. The more you fill your pockets, the more support you'll need.

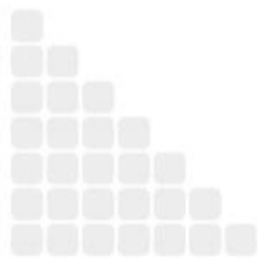
- ▶ POM Industries pepper spray (concealed inside the waistband)
- ▶ SureFire E2D LED Defender Ultra flashlight
- ▶ Microtech Ultratech single-edge pocket knife
- ▶ Zippo lighter with butane torch insert
- ▶ Fossil leather wallet with concealed Serepick Bogota Titan lockpicks
- ▶ Tuff Writer carabiner
- ▶ iPhone in Otterbox Commuter case with Nite Ize magnetic mount

Range Belt

There are many instances where the amount of gear you can carry, and your ease of access to it, is more important than how discreet it appears. You might be hiking, camping, or hunting in the backcountry, or you might be in a setting where overt carry is expected, such as a gun range. For the sake of simplicity, we'll refer to this category as range belts. They typically include two or more magazine pouches for primary and secondary weapons, a larger med kit, and an OWB pistol holster, plus any other pouches or tools you may need. Competition-oriented belts, such as those used in USPSA or 3-Gun matches, would technically fall into this category, but they're much more specialized than the multi-purpose setup seen here.

The Foundation: Although it's certainly possible to piece together a range belt setup from off-the-shelf components, there are also several companies that offer range belt starter kits. I selected this G-Code Scorpion Low Viz Belt system, which is based around a two-piece Contact Series Operator's Belt. Its 1.5-inch-wide inner belt fits through normal belt loops, and is Velcro-lined to attach to the outer belt. A G-hook secures the belt once it's tightened. The outer belt is made from dual-layer 1.75-inch nylon, with the exterior layer wrapped in wear-resistant Cordura. A sturdy Cobra buckle is standard. Belts are available in black, OD green, coyote tan, wolf gray, MultiCam, or MultiCam Black.

Veil Solutions' Mantis light-bearing holster provides a minimalist way to carry my Glock 19 and Streamlight TLR-7A. Its metal DCC clips ensure it won't budge or slide on my belt.





Each Low Viz Belt kit comes with three G-Code Scorpion rifle mags, three Scorpion pistol mags, an Optimal Drop RTI pistol holster platform with elastic leg strap, and an RTI Rotating Belt Mount for an accessory of your choice.

The latter two items are compatible with detachable holsters, pouches, and accessories that feature G-Code's RTI

mounting system. I found the belt kit to be very versatile, and have used it at Steel Challenge and 2-Gun matches, as well as for some of the pistol and carbine classes featured in my *Final Weapon* column.

The Range Loadout HOLSTER

G-Code's RTI mounting system features three posts that lock into holes on the belt-mounted RTI plate. This allows the wearer to easily swap between holsters for different guns without a need for special tools or removal of the belt. Many manufacturers offer RTI-compatible holsters, but I decided to get a holster straight from G-Code along with my belt.

No **G-Code OSL RTI Kydex Holster**

\$ **MSRP**
\$83 (as configured)

URL
tacticalholsters.com

Notes: The OSLr features a pre-installed RTI hanger and sturdy Kydex construction in your choice of black, OD green, coyote tan, gray, or MultiCam. A soft "fuzz" finish

is optional if you prefer that over bare Kydex. This holster feels well-made, with a positive click as my G19 slides into place. G-Code doesn't offer a version that's compatible with

The included Optimal Drop RTI mount positions the pistol grip even with the belt line, making it easier to draw quickly. It's not nearly as cumbersome as an old-school drop-leg holster.

Removal of the G-Code belt is simple: Disconnect the Cobra buckles on the belt and leg strap, then pull the hook-and-loop material apart. The inner belt will keep your pants where they belong.

If you're looking for your first range belt, G-Code offers the Scorpion Low Viz belt as a complete kit with almost everything you'll need. They'll even ship it to you fully assembled – just clip on the RTI holster of your choice, and you're good to go.



my current Streamlight TLR-7A carry light, so I went with the SureFire X300-U. I also selected the RMR cut option (\$5 extra) and black anodized hardware (another \$5). Paired with the Optimal Drop platform that came with the belt, the OSLr sits comfortably near the natural resting point of my hand, making it easier to draw quickly. The elastic strap prevents the holster from shifting as I run, kneel, or go prone.

MAGAZINE CARRIERS

A total of six soft magazine pouches were included with the Scorpion Low Viz belt kit.

No **G-Code 6-Pack Scorpion Softshell Kit**

\$ **MSRP**
Included in belt kit; \$140 if purchased separately

URL
tacticalholsters.com

Notes: These mag carriers are made from rubberized polymer woven together with elastic shock cord, which can be loosened or tightened to adjust retention. The rifle carriers can accommodate

AR-15, AR-10, and AK magazines; the pistol carriers fit single- or double-stack mags and are available in Tall or Short (we chose Short for Glock 19 mags). This is a notable advantage



over hard Kydex mag carriers if you plan to use your belt with a variety of weapon types. The elastic design does a good job holding mags in place, and allows them to be removed by pulling straight up or levering outward to break retention. R2 and P2 Operator mounts can be attached directly to the belt, or they can be stacked atop each other to conserve belt space.

INDIVIDUAL FIRST AID KIT (IFAK)

To make use of the RTI Rotating Belt Mount, I picked up an RTI-compatible med pouch from G-Code. Alternatively, a standard med pouch could be attached directly to the belt using clips or MOLLE-compatible soft loops.

Notes: Measuring 6 by 5 by 2 inches, this zippered clamshell pouch is lined with an array of elastic loops for medical supplies. I filled it with

No **G-Code Contact Med Pouch**

\$ **MSRP**
\$36

URL
tacticalholsters.com

supplies for major trauma and range-day cuts/scrapes: C-A-T tourniquet, Rescue Essentials pressure dressing, QuikClot hemostatic gauze, NAR S-rolled gauze, HyFin Vent chest seals, shears, medical tape, assorted Band-Aids, antiseptic wipes, gloves, and a mini Sharpie marker. The pouch itself is great, but I'm not sold on the RTI mounting system for this application – it causes the med kit to stick out further off the belt, making it feel a little cumbersome. A direct-mount kit would work better, unless you need to swap pouches frequently.

OTHER GEAR

I finished off the range belt setup with the following items:

- ▶ Blue Force Gear Ten-Speed Dump Pouch for shotgun shells or other loose items
- ▶ ITW Grimloc carabiner to retain Mechanix gloves

War Belt

A war belt or battle belt takes the concept of a range belt to the next level, offering a platform that can be worn in a professional context along with other load-bearing gear.

You might wear a range belt a few weekends each month, but duty belts for law enforcement and military personnel need to withstand continuous daily wear. That includes high-intensity activities like running, climbing, and hand-to-

hand fighting, as well as long periods of walking, standing, or sitting. Durability and comfort are paramount, as is retention of all equipment – I shouldn't have to explain why

losing control of your weapon or other gear in a real fight would be disastrous.

Wide, padded belts are standard in this category, since they provide the most comfort and support for heavier loadouts. The most traditional approach is to slide a belt through a padded sleeve that's covered in MOLLE webbing. These sleeved systems can be worn over untucked shirts or jackets since they aren't attached to the user's pants. However, they're bulky and may shift or rotate during physical activity – that's not ideal if you expect to find your gear in the same place every time.

Suspenders (as seen on old U.S. military ALICE systems) and belt keeper loops (as seen on many LE duty belts) have been used to prevent movement, but Velcro hook-and-loop layers are a more modern solution. The belt I selected comes from Snake Eater Tactical, and features three layers connected in this manner.

The Foundation: The SET War Belt Three-Part System

We combined the Snake Eater Tactical three-piece War Belt with a Level 2 retention holster and Kydex mag carriers from Veil Solutions. This setup is maneuverable and comfortable enough to wear while running, jumping, climbing, or crawling.



starts with a thin and light piece of 1.5-inch Hypalon fabric, with a simple pass-through loop on one end for tensioning. This is the absolute minimum needed to hold up a pair of pants, but it's effective. Next, a 4mm-thick layer of closed-cell foam is wrapped in breathable nylon mesh, with hook material sewn to one side and loop material sewn to the other. This creates a thin yet breathable padded layer between the inner and outer belts. It's wider than the other belt layers in order to provide cushioning for holster mounts and other hard accessories. Finally, the 1.75-inch outer belt is constructed from a double layer of Type 13 nylon parachute webbing, with an inner layer of hook material and a black Cobra buckle. Heavily reinforced stitching throughout this belt shows that it was built with longevity in mind. SET War Belts are made to order; at time of publication, lead time was four to eight weeks.

This three-part system can be used as a two-part system. For example, the middle and outer layers can be worn over a jacket or untucked shirt, much like a traditional padded belt (with the aforementioned drawbacks). The middle layer can be removed for a slightly slimmer waist profile, but after wearing the full system, I can't imagine wearing it without the padding – it makes a huge difference. The SET

War Belt is head and shoulders above a regular range belt for long-term daily wear.

The War Loadout

HOLSTER

Given the nature of this belt setup, an active retention holster is a logical choice. Passive retention, as seen on the other holsters in this article, relies on friction induced by the shape of the holster to keep the weapon in place. Pull hard enough, and it'll pop out. Active retention adds at least one device that must be released before drawing the gun. It ensures the gun won't get knocked loose while you're running around, or more importantly, won't be easily accessible to any bad guy who tries to take it.

Notes: The Fett features a thumb break – essentially a small lever on the inside edge of the holster – that must be pressed firmly to release a spring-loaded hood. When

the hood flips forward, the gun can be drawn normally from passive retention. Each holster is drilled for various mounting patterns including Safariland, G-Code RTI, and Tek-Lok; I picked the ubiquitous Safariland Mid-Ride hanger (\$20 extra). It'd be easy to add a thigh strap to this setup if desired, but I felt it was stable enough without one. Even though I'm not working at an LE agency or other job that requires a retention holster, I appreciate the peace of mind

No **Veil Solutions**
Fett Duty Holster

\$ **MSRP**
\$145 (as configured)

URL
veilsolutions.com



it provides. You never know when you might want to do some tactical cartwheels. When the hood isn't activated, the Fett works great for range practice or competition.

MAGAZINE CARRIERS

While my range belt came with three rifle mags and three pistol mags, I picked up two and two for the war belt. This is because I'd typically wear it with other load-bearing gear that contains more magazines, such as a chest rig or plate carrier.

Notes: Universal mag pouches have pros and cons, but application-specific, molded Kydex carriers provide the most secure fit and retention.

No	Veil Solutions C2 Pistol Mag Carriers / Rifle Mag Carriers
\$	MSRP \$34 each / \$36 each
URL	veilsolutions.com

They're also durable and easy to clean. Veil Solutions' C2 series, which stands for Competition & Carry, is available with a reversible polymer belt clip or an optional Tek-Lok clip (\$8 extra per carrier). The pistol carriers are available for Glock, SIG, HK, CZ, 2011, and B&T applications; the rifle carriers are available for AR-15, AR-10, and AK mags. Numerous finishes and colors are offered, from plain black to Rhodesian Brushstroke. I'm a fan of the slim profile and strong retention provided by these C2 carriers.

INDIVIDUAL FIRST AID KIT (IFAK)

Much like the magazines, this medical gear is supplemented by gear in my chest rig or plate carrier. This belt IFAK serves as my first-line trauma gear. Second-line trauma gear and "boo-boo" kit items are stored elsewhere.

Notes: The Micro TKN consists of an elastic sleeve and a tear-away insert that can be pulled out using the tabs on either end. It can be purchased fully loaded or empty;

No	Blue Force Gear Micro Trauma Kit NOW!
\$	MSRP \$70 (contents not included)
URL	blueforcegear.com

I packed mine with an H&H mini compression bandage, QuikClot hemostatic gauze, HyFin Vent Compact chest seals, medical tape, and gloves.

Pressing the thumb break lever causes the retention hood to snap forward, allowing the gun to be drawn normally. This takes some getting used to, but it beats losing your gun.

A war belt will often serve as one piece of a larger load-bearing gear system, such as this Tyr Tactical PICO-DS plate carrier. See offgridweb.com/?p=20582 for a detailed look at all of its components.



Since my micro trauma kit doesn't have room for a standard TQ, I picked up this carrier from NAR. It attaches securely to the belt with snap straps, and has an elastic cover that protects the Velcro on the C-A-T tourniquet from dirt or abrasions. The straps on the back offer a convenient place to store a set of shears.

No	North American Rescue C-A-T Holder
\$	MSRP \$18
URL	narescue.com

OTHER GEAR

Just because you *can* load down your war belt with six AR mags, four pistol mags, throwing knives, and shark-repellent spray doesn't mean you *should*. The only item I'd consider adding is a dump pouch if the situation called for it. It can be used for cycling through a large number of

partial mags during reload drills, picking up brass at the end of a range session, or carrying loose ammo for specific weapons (e.g. shotguns).

Closing Thoughts

Much like the emergency preparedness "line gear" Tom Marshall wrote about in Issue 38, it's not unreasonable to have a few belt setups for different purposes. Many of you reading this article won't need to spend a big chunk of change on a full-blown war belt. Virtually everyone needs a good everyday belt, unless you wear a bikini or silkies 24/7, in which case we hope you're good at hand-to-hand combat and MacGyvering your way out of danger. Instead of building a jam-packed belt that would make

Batman jealous, consider the situations you face most often, and focus on finding the most efficient way to carry what you truly need. ☘



MAKE FITNESS HAPPEN

A Few Easy Ideas to Make Dieting and Exercising Seem Less Daunting

By **Dr. Dave Miller**



I've taken a few firearms training classes over the years and loved every single one of them. A common theme that I was often told was, "you're a good shooter but you just need to get in better shape." We often hear that gunfights last only seconds and think that no matter what shape we're in, we could last that long. That is, until you do the training and realize that maybe you're not in as good of shape as you think you are.

As I've gone through classes (e.g. shooting and moving, vehicle classes, hand-to-hand combat classes, etc.), I realize that I'm not the only one who could use some help on improving fitness. A comprehensive plan should include mindset, diet, exercise, and rest. You need to make fitness happen. There's no easy way to do it, so suck it up, but-tercup!

Mindset

It doesn't matter what your level of fitness is – without a proper mindset and realistic goals, you will not achieve your fullest potential. If your goal is to lose weight, a reasonable goal is to take the weight loss in 10 percent increments of your current body weight. If your goal is to lose body fat/gain muscle, get a body fat analyzer to track your progress. If you're "just trying to feel better," I believe you aren't being specific enough and are destined to fail. I once lost 50 pounds busting my hump to feel better. Despite being successful in that weight loss goal, I still felt miserable. Why? My mindset wasn't focused on "proper" diet and rest. I gained it back and started over. My goal

was shortsighted, and I lacked vision.

I remembered a book I read in college called *Peak Performance: Mental Training Techniques of the World's Greatest Athletes* by Charles A. Garfield and Hal Zina Bennett. I realized I was going through the motions and not visualizing my goals. This was a critical piece that was missing, and once I added it back, I found success. In order to visualize effectively, it helps to have a measurable metric. Such metrics can be percent body fat, waist circumference, and total body weight, to name a few. These should be checked at the beginning of your exercise program and every six weeks. Write everything you do down: diet, calories, macronutrients, exercise, etc., as this holds you accountable to yourself. This can provide valuable feedback toward your progress and improve your chance of success.

Another part of the success and mindset is attitude. This year, I decided to do something I sucked at and turn it into a positive. Since the number-one thing on the list was running, I went all in. In preparing for a half marathon, I was coached by many of my running friends that not every run will be a good one. I challenged myself to find a bit of good in every run. Some days I didn't go far, but my blood sugars stayed steady. Other days my blood sugars tanked, and I had to walk for distance. Maybe on one run I had trouble with hip pain, but I focused on technique to make it through the run. I always tried to stay positive with every run. With each outing, I improved. By staying positive, I found that my motivation remained high ... even when my friends were yelling, "Run Forrest, RUN!"

Diet

Many people think about a diet as a four-letter word. How do you choose which diet is right for you? There are all kinds of recommendations; however, I like to keep it simple. First, use an app like myfitnesspal (www.myfitnesspal.com) to track calories and nutrients. I find that people who track their progress on an app tend to maintain their dietary goals for a longer duration. The key to using any form of diet tracker is to be completely honest with how much you're eating. Measure everything out.

When I counseled patients on a "medically supervised weight loss program," I first had them record what they ate for one week without any direction from me. I found that 90 percent of the people who came in the following week had obvious issues with their diets. Most of these patients thought they were doing right by eating what they were eating. We would discuss some simple changes, whether it was total calories or macronutrient composition. I'd set goals, or benchmarks, for them to attain. I'd then see them back in three weeks and check on their progress. I'd challenge them to lose half to 1 pound a week. Often in the



early weeks I'd see 5 to 10 pounds of weight lost, depending on how bad the diet was initially.

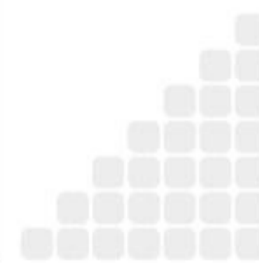
If I thought they were overindulging on calories, I'd take their first week's data and cut 250 to 500 calories a day. For the average person, it takes 3,500 calories cut to equate to one pound of weight loss. If the patient came back three weeks later and had not lost weight, it was often due to underreporting of food consumed. If the patient already had a reasonable calorie intake after that first week, we'd focus on macronutrient composition. I know there are a lot of different views on what this should be; however, I'd look at their first week's data as a guide.

Invariably, people would either be heavy on carbs or heavy on fats. We would adjust these to more reasonable levels and discuss foods that would be better substitutes to meet their goals. To reduce carbohydrates, I'd encourage them to avoid processed foods and eat as many vegetables as they could. They were encouraged to eat fruit every day. I'd often direct people to www.allrecipes.com to help them with ideas on using vegetables in meals.

To boost protein, I suggest that people try to get 1.5 mg/kg of body weight a day. Personally, I have to supplement with protein powder to reach that mark. Having a good amount of protein will help with muscle gain as well as recovery after workouts. I'd also try to adjust the amount of protein, as well as calorie consumption, based on activity of the day. Remember that too much protein can be harmful to the kidneys. You might periodically check in with your physician to have a blood test or urine test to ensure that all is good there.

Fats are an important part of our diet and should not be eliminated altogether. In college, I got a wacky idea to cut my fat consumption to less than 10 percent of my total calories. Guess what happened? I got massively depressed.

Fruits and vegetables are important, but don't forget herbs and spices to aid in recovery.



As I was reading about dieting and nutrition, I came across a passage that described how important fat is in our diet. I went to the store to buy some Skippy and felt better in a few days! My depression was caused by not having enough fat in my diet. Now, I aim for 20 percent of caloric intake from fat as part of my macronutrient goal.



Exercise

If diet is a four-letter word, exercise is twice as foul, right? But it doesn't have to be. This goes back to having the right mindset. I think about exercise in three different contexts and believe the weight of each in your routine varies depending on your level of fitness. First, think about the importance of stretching. Not only does it help to get circulation flowing to the muscles, it can reduce the chance of injury even when we push our bodies physically.

As we age, flexibility is also important for joint mobility and can help ease the pain from arthritis. Whether you choose to do basic stretching, yoga, or some iteration of these is up to your preference. I like a stretching program by Scott Sonnon that he calls Intuflow. YouTube has multiple videos from Scott, and others, that are helpful. Diamond Dallas Page has his version of yoga that includes isometrics in the movements. Check out his program at www.ddpyoga.com. He has an excellent app if you sign up for his program.

The second aspect of exercise should involve cardiovascular fitness. I love the saying that you can't walk a mile without taking the first step. For some patients, I'd literally recommend that they walk 20 feet, several times a day. You would be amazed at the lack of fitness some people have

that requires them to start at this level. If they can do it, so can you. Start a walking program. Once you can walk for time, say 30 minutes, then increase the speed and walk for distance within that time.

Continue to increase your goals every week. When you decide to start running, try walking for one minute then running for one minute. Again, pace is up to you, but try to work up the time, say 15 cycles of the walk one/run one. Maybe every week or two, increase the amount of time you run (e.g. 2/1, 3/1, 4/2, etc.). Of course, you can also try cycling, rowing, or anything else that increases heart rate. Your goal should be a target heart rate of 85 percent of your predicted maximum (220 minus age, then multiply by 0.85 to get your target heart rate). With fitness watches, such as the Garmin Fenix 6X Pro, you can collect data to guide you to improve your fitness.

The last aspect of exercise is strength training. One important part of adding muscle is that it also increases the efficiency at which you use calories. There are several different methods to incorporate strength training. You can go old school and put in your VHS tape of *Pumping Iron* and work out with Arnold. If you don't have weights available, you can use body weight exercises and improvise weights. (Tires or 5-gallon bottles of water are just a couple ideas.) Check out Brute Force Sandbags (www.bruteforce.com), which is an excellent option as well.

Another exercise I like is using TRX suspension bands (www.trxtraining.com). I personally found TRX to be helpful with building core strength and cardio, as well as being fun. Functional strength training is another option but requires access to weights. A site that I find useful, along with their Instagram and Facebook pages, is Mouser Strength Dynamics (www.mouserpower.com). I've learned quite a bit

A mixture of strength training, stretching, cardiovascular and core exercises round out a good program.





from John and Hannah over the years and find them both to be excellent teachers and motivators.

In Summary

Taking the first step to becoming more fit is often the hardest part for anyone. Once you get started, the momentum will pick up steam, and you'll be on your way to making fitness happen. It takes a good mindset, a solid plan, goals, and a combination of diet, exercise, and rest. Where people struggle is maintaining their pursuit of healthy living. This is why I encourage people to write down everything in a notebook every day. It also helps if a spouse or significant other is training with you. You're less likely to give up on your goals that way. The last part that people struggle with is maintaining their success once their goals are reached. Your choices are to set new goals, to maintain where you are, or, like some people, reverse course and fall back into bad habits. The way I protect the latter is to set a ceiling on weight. Once that ceiling is reached, I get back on the fitness plan, so I don't erase months of success.

There are multiple ways to accomplish each aspect of your fitness journey; however, you have to choose what's right for you both mentally and physically. If you have trouble developing a plan, look into a local fitness professional to help meet your needs. The websites that I've included are just some of the ones that I've found helpful. There are many more that are available if these don't suit your needs. Good luck on your fitness goals. Your life may depend on it!

Successful Mindset

1. Set realistic goals: If you weigh 250 pounds and want to lose 50 pounds, start with 25 (10 percent) and it isn't so overwhelming.
2. Keep re-evaluating your goals: If you aren't reaching

goals over seven days (e.g. losing 0.5 to 1 pound per week) then look at your diet.

3. Rest is important: Remember, this is the restorative portion and, if neglected, you may not see the progress toward your goals.
4. Stay positive: Place sticky notes around the house with positive sayings to keep up your motivation; set goals with a partner to encourage each other.
5. Celebrate milestones toward your goal (e.g. 2 percent weight loss, 1 percent body fat loss, seven consecutive days of exercise).

Dietary Suggestions

Protein is always good with a goal of 1.5g/kg body weight. Eggs and chicken breasts are great; however, vegan options include almonds, oats, quinoa, and lentils.

Fiber is excellent for colon health with a goal of 20 to 30 grams per day. Fruits, nuts, vegetables, and grains are great sources of fiber.

Unless you're on a potassium-restricted diet due to heart disease or kidney disease, potassium is a challenge to get enough of the daily requirement (about 4,000mg daily). Foods such as bananas, white potatoes, spinach, and salmon contain good amounts of potassium. ❄

Above left:
Omron Body fat Analyzer

Above right:
Garmin Fenix 6X Pro

About the Author

David L. Miller, DO, FACOI is an internist in private practice for 20 years. His experiences away from the office have included time as a fight doctor in regional MMA events and as a team physician for 10 years at a mid-major university in the Midwest. Currently, he serves as the lead medical instructor for the Civilian Crisis Response team based out of Indianapolis.



By **Mel Ward**
Photos by **Georgeonna Ward**
and **Viktos**

Testing Out the Viktos Operatus XP Jeans

The world we live in seems to be crumbling around us these days. I want a pair of jeans that allows me to carry everything I need to deal with unforeseen events, without advertising my preparedness to every passerby. I need to wear these jeans for work and chores. They need to be functional. They need to last. They need to perform. Too tall an order? Nah.

I spent the last 45 days wearing the Operatus XP jeans by Viktos. For me, finding a set of durable work jeans was like Ahab hunting his white whale. It haunted me. I tried other brands of tactical jeans to no avail. They were made of paper-thin denim that decayed into tissue paper from the constant wear-and-tear of a large man doing ill-advised things in them.

Levi's or Wranglers are fine, but don't come with the extras some of us want and need in a do-everything jean. Some heavy-duty jeans, like those by Carhartt, are great if it's 30 degrees outside. They won't wear out, but you'll be sweating balls in them until you dehydrate in anything but winter conditions. What I needed was a bit of a hybrid – something durable enough to survive the stresses placed upon it, yet light enough to wear in the summertime when I should be wearing shorts but can't.

I also needed real pockets that you can, like, actually put stuff in. Too many jeans out there implement pockets as a design aesthetic rather than a functional feature. Pockets become decorative iPhone holders with gaudy stitching and – Odin help me – pocket flaps. I feel dirty even writing it. People who do stuff need pockets that hold stuff. Ever have a grenade and no place to put it? I know I'm not the only one.

How about belt loops that don't shear off when I run a rigid nylon inner-belt through them? Durable zipper? Gusseted crotch? Yep. I need the things that make jeans more than a fashion statement. Jeans are a tool for me, just like my knife, my phone, or my pistol. They have to work when called on and make my job easier.

Enter the Operatus. No, it's not a part of your anatomy or a poorly titled James Bond film. It's the one jean I've found so far that meets or exceeds all of the above requirements. Let's examine Operatus' DNA and find out if these jeans might be a good fit for you, too.

Survival Traits

Some of us work for a living and can't afford seven \$100 pairs of jeans for every day of the week. Some of us also don't like doing laundry and end up wearing our pants until they don't need us inside them to stand up. I end up running my pants to an early death because I'm either too cheap or too busy. So, I need quality, and I need durability.

The Operatus uses a stretch denim blend that I've punished lately by wearing them daily without rotating them. I built a shed in them over the summer, which, in retrospect, makes little sense, but I did it. I also installed a lightbar on my wife's truck wearing them. I thought for sure I'd scuff up the knees as I knelt on the driveway to route the switch wiring through the firewall, but Operatus held up. Viktos' Attackposture fit also allowed me to squat and contort as needed, whether I was kitted up with rifle and armor running some drills or digging under my wife's dashboard to figure out where the hell I was routing my wires.

The Operatus XP jeans are available in blue denim and black denim, aka "Nightfall" if you prefer.



Opposite page: Whether going low-vis or full-kit, the Operatus XP jeans make a sturdy and comfortable addition to your daily battle uniform.

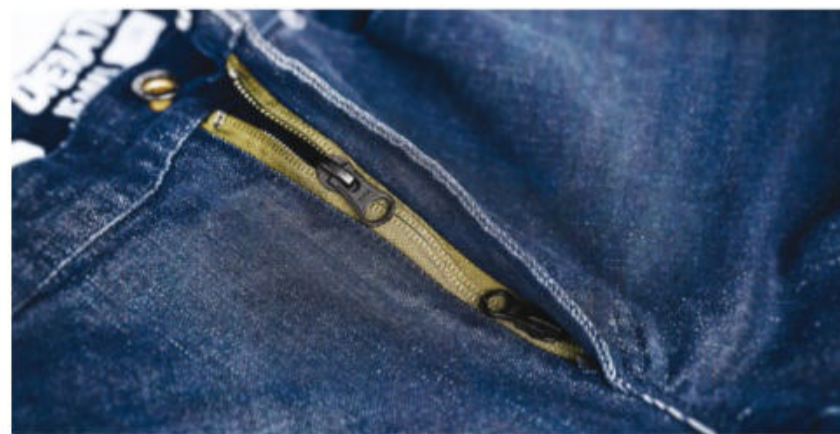
Right: Details include a bidirectional zipper, gusseted crotch, and Viktos' typical-style accents.

Below: The pockets on the Operatus XP aren't obnoxious, but provide substantial load carriage.

I kept Sharpies and pocket levels in the mag pockets as easily as I did mags. There are four extra pockets like this embedded in the Operatus chassis in addition to the traditional five-pocket jean design. If you're running extended pistol mags like me, they'll poke out a bit, but not enough to draw anyone's attention. Standard mags will sink into the pocket, but that also has merit for concealment and you can just slide your finger up your leg until the bottom of the mag pokes up over the pocket opening for grasping.

You can also run AR mags, or a combination square, in several of these pockets. What I really like about this configuration is it allows me to drop some of the bulky Kydex mag holders, should I choose to. I was running two AR mags, two pistol mags, a flashlight, and a knife all in the pants pockets.

What really appeals to me here is the jeans are multi-purpose. They're very low-vis and appear as everyday jeans, save for some subtle detailing like the Viktos sword and shield logo. This allows me to go into the big-box store with-



out looking like a gun nerd. When I get home from the store, I can just as easily load my pockets with tools as weapons and ammo. So, whatever my mission profile is for that day: Honey-do or SHTF, Operatus has me covered.

I'll break down my testdrive into some relevant categories.

Fit

I got the 36x36. The waist is fair and true to size with a little breathing room for gaining and losing pounds depending on what I'm doing for PT. The length is perhaps a bit longer than I'm used to, but their site mentions their sizes running a size larger than standard. As mentioned earlier, Viktos is calling the fit of this pant Attackposture.

The design here has the rear of the jean riding higher on your lower back. Plumber's crack is thus eliminated. Sorry, plumbers. Intent here seems to be preventing the waist from riding down when squatting, kneeling, or otherwise getting your tactical on. For those of us wearing holsters and kit, if the waist doesn't shift our gear doesn't shift with it. It's reminiscent of the fit you get with a Crye Precision combat pant, but in a jean.

Part of this proprietary crotch-tech also comes with a looser overall fit. No skinny jeans here. By design, the freer fit allows for less restriction while doing actual work versus holding up the bar at your favorite watering hole. The gusset is well-placed and tacked with heavy-duty stitching. If there's one thing that gives me the ass about my ass is when the gusset fails from being weak, thin, or ill-placed. So far, that doesn't seem to be a problem here.

Finally, the denim has a little stretch to it. I've worn tactical jeans before that did the same thing. There apparently

seems to be an inverse relationship between stretch and strength. The more flex it has, the thinner it is and sooner it will wear out. I hate that. Fortunately, Viktos seems to choose strength over stretch here, so high-fives are authorized.

Function

Now that it fits, it has to work. I mentioned the pockets. I love the pockets. There are nine of them in these suckers if I'm counting right. Standard five-pocket design, plus four built-in mag pouches. It's great. I immediately stopped carrying my Kydex pistol mag holder and just rocked my 9mm mags in the provided pockets. Using the AR mag pockets will impede your movements some, but if we're loading 5.56 into our pants, we're probably going to be OK with the trade-off.

Notably, for those who have trouble employing the old trouser snake while wearing a gun-belt, Operatus features a dual-fly zipper. That's right, Rangers. When trying to release the Kraken, forget hunting for that zipper way up under your gun belt or front dump pouch. The garage door on these jeans goes down and up. Just reach for the other slider at the bottom of the fly and pull up to hydrate the earth.

Durability

Forty-five days and counting. So far, so good. I haven't noticed any premature wear thus far – and believe me, I've been looking. When my last pair of so-called "tactical jeans" started to wear into Kleenex at the seat, I couldn't friggin' believe it. Now I have premature pant failure disorder, or PPFDD, and am constantly checking them to see if they've let me down. Nothing to report yet.

The stitching and hardware are premium; solid riveting throughout and no sign of thread-fray. They look to be as well-constructed as can be for a relatively lightweight pant. Again, if it's the dead of winter, you can rock those heavy construction pants where the denim is like an inch thick, but if there's no snow, I'm wearing the Operatus.

Comfort

Pfft. Whatever. Let's pretend comfort matters to someone. Not me, of course. Way too hard for that. What I wanted was Viktos to line the inside of my pants with 220-grit sandpaper, but they wouldn't do it. Oh, OK, guys. You'll come around. In the meantime, yeah, the jeans are "comfortable."

Gripes

The one thing I didn't like was the angle of the opening of the hip pockets. I found when carrying my pistol in an outside-the-waistband holster and my pocket knife at the same time, the holster prevented me from accessing my knife. Partly, this is on me because I like to carry at the 2:45-ish



position when running OWB holsters. Carrying a full-size Glock 17 with light pretty much occludes access to the right-side hip pocket where I'd normally clip my knife. The geometry forced me to move the knife to the pistol mag pocket on that side, which isn't a deal-breaker, but I'd rather not do it.

I think the easy fix would be to simply lower the attachment point where the pocket meets the outside seam of the pant. This would allow more clearance to run a pocket knife or light in that go-to position of our jeans while still maintaining its cover as a run-of-the-mill pant.

Verdict

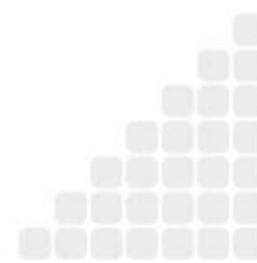
Easy. Get these. I plan to endurance test these things even more over the coming months. If they hold up to what I throw at them, I'll be buying several more pairs. If they don't hold up long-term, I'll report back and let everyone know what I experienced, and my hunt will go on.

In the meantime, if you're like me and want to be ready without looking ready, these might just be the jeans you've been looking for. 🍻

NO **Viktos**
Operatus
XP Jean

\$ **MSRP**
\$99

URL
www.viktos.com



Watch Your Favorite Firearms Personalities on



RELEVANT. HONEST. UNFILTERED.

Viking Chronicles with Kyle Lamb
InRangeTV with Karl Kasarda
Forgotten Weapons with Ian McCallum
Snipers Hide with Frank Galli
Thin Green Line with game warden John Nores
Rogue Survival with survival advocate Morgan Rogue
Trident Concepts with former Navy SEAL Jeff Gonzales
The Way of Tracking with Kyt Walken
Firearms training expert Frank Proctor

Tactical, military, and outdoor video channel Pipe Hitter Media
Executive protection expert Byron Rodgers
Combat veteran and trainer Dan Brokos with Lead Faucet Tactical
XG Productions
Combatives expert Craig Douglas of ShivWorks
Firearms training expert Dave Spaulding
Martial arts expertise with Funker Tactical and Aperture Fight Focused
Firearms gear reviews and training tips with Hannah Hannah
Night vision and firearms gear reviews with SilentSolutions



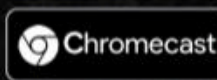
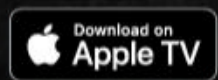
Brought to you by:



Presented by:

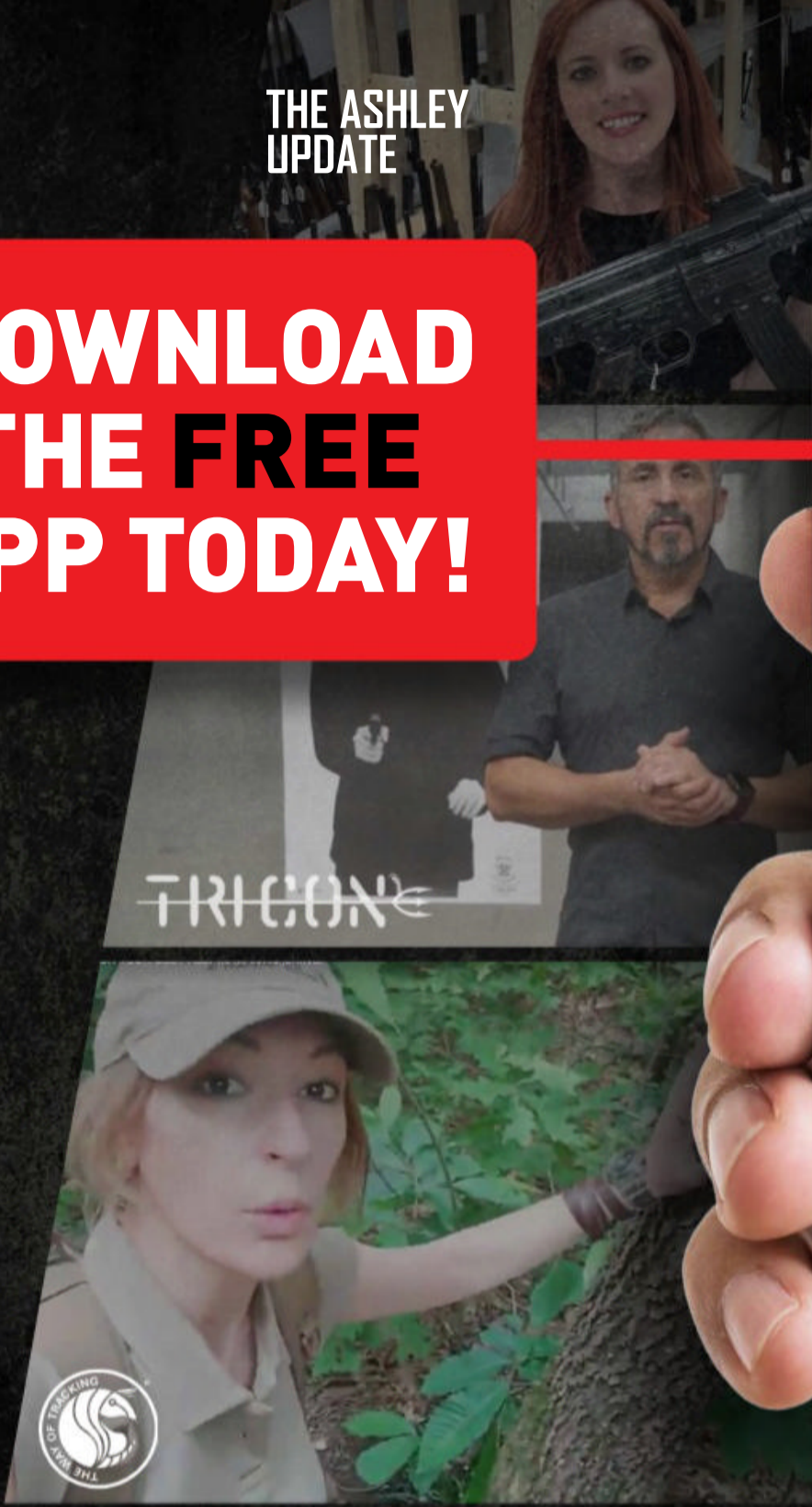


AVAILABLE ON:



THE ASHLEY
UPDATE

**DOWNLOAD
THE FREE
APP TODAY!**



 WWW.RECOIL.TV

Gray Man

EDDC Bag

There's a Difference Between Trying to Look Discreet & Actually Being Discreet

By **Cody Martin**



This discontinued version of the Surge pack is more than a decade old, but still going strong.



As a federal agent for 12 years, I never knew if I'd be conducting surveillance, responding to a bomb threat, or meeting with a U.S. attorney. Defensive, medical, survival, and day-to-day gear had to be accounted for. My work has now shifted to consulting, but my desire to balance practicality and preparedness hasn't diminished.

The Backpack

When it comes to bags, I like something very low key. I want it to be able to blend in regardless of whether I'm at a college campus, urban area, rural area, or airport.

My current go-to bag is a 10-plus-year-old North Face Surge backpack. Weighing in at 3 pounds unloaded, it's slightly heavier than some alternatives, but the organization and comfort make up for the extra heft.

The capacity is just over 2,000 cubic inches (33L), which is smaller than some of my other bags, but still sufficient. The overall dimensions come in around 20 by 13.5 by 9.5 inches.

I find this bag to be very comfortable under heavy loads, which makes it easy to carry for longer periods of time. It has a waist belt that facilitates carry when on the move, but it can be hidden when not in use. It also has a pretty beefy grab handle, which is important when you have to grab and go.

Work Gear

As part of my job, I spend a lot of time online or on the phone. I need to be connected or have the ability to be connected to get work done while I'm on the move. I do a lot of work on my laptop and also my cell phone. Keeping these devices charged and functional is critical.

In order to support my electronics, there are certain things I need to carry, which include an assortment of cables, an Anker PowerCore 10000 power bank, and a set of AirPods.

I also carry a small canvas zippered bag with other peripheral items like an encrypted thumb drive, adapters, pens, pencils, and Nite Ize Gear Ties to keep small pieces of gear organized. If I need to go analog, a notepad and pocket-sized notebook are in there as well.

Medical

When it comes to medical gear, I always carry basic first-aid items. For normal everyday aches, pains, scrapes, and scratches, I carry an Adventure Medical Kits Ultralight .5, which I have supplemented with additional medication and bandages.

If I encounter more serious issues, I always have a tourniquet in my bag (and a second one on my body), as well as hemostatic gauze, chest seals, and so on. These are kept in a Maxpedition Moire pouch and stored for easy access.

When considering carrying medical gear, it's important to not just focus on shooting-related incidents. You're significantly more likely to encounter work-related accidents and vehicle-related accidents. Be prepared for all likely scenarios.

Self-Defense

In addition to the spare mag I carry on the body, I carry an extra magazine to support my primary carry weapon, in case I need it for an extended fight.

I also carry a less-lethal option in the form of OC spray. I prefer Sabre Red, and I keep this spare in my bag in case I forget my primary at home. I can grab it quickly and throw it in my pocket if I'm heading out into certain public areas or anywhere else that warrants extra attention.

A SureFire EDCL2-T flashlight is stored as a backup to my primary EDC light. To ensure it always has power, I carry a battery case with extra CR123 batteries.

One of the features I like about the Surge backpack is it has an extra interior compartment/sleeve on the back of the pack. I use it to house a Level 3A Hardwire Bulletproof Bag Insert.

This panel offers IIIA protection and measures 10 by 13 inches. It fits flat against my back and can also double as a dry erase board. This has proven to be an extra benefit several times when meeting with clients or teaching classes.

Survival

Like most of you, I store expanded survival kits in my home and my vehicle, so this bag is intended to supplement them. Most, but not all of these items, have multiple purposes, which is always a plus.

I have a pouch made by Tuff Possum Gear that houses fire-starting tools like a Bic butane lighter wrapped in duct tape, an EXOTAC titanLIGHT liquid-fuel lighter, a ferro rod, survival matches, and tinder tabs.

Water peripherals, like the Sawyer Mini Water Filter, are carried in the same pouch as my fire gear. I also have a GRAYL Ultralight Purifier Bottle that's used as a regular water bottle, but can also provide quick purification when needed. I have a Platypus collapsible water bladder to house purified water or extra water if the situation warrants. It sits with my fire gear and the Sawyer.

There's also 100 feet of paracord on a spool for those times when I need cordage. Outside of all the survival benefits and uses of paracord, it can be used for a lot of everyday tasks as well. The spool helps keep the cordage neat and organized instead of ending up in a big knot.



Inside you'll also find a small E&E pouch containing various saws, blades, lock picks, handcuff keys, a signaling mirror, and other extras. You never know when you might lock yourself out of the house.

A pair of waterproof pants and a jacket from Mountain Hardware are rolled up at the bottom of the main compartment in case I get caught out in a sudden downpour.

Additional Gear

In addition to the gear above, I've also stashed the following items in various compartments in my pack:

- › Multi-tool
- › Spork
- › Bandana
- › Hand soap
- › Earplugs
- › Cash
- › Headlamp
- › Locking carabiner
- › Chemlights
- › Gloves
- › Clif Bars

There are more miscellaneous tools stuffed here and there, but you get the gist of the pack. Again, this is mainly for work and daily life, but I feel like there's a fine line between what's normal and the next major crisis. Being able to comfortably walk that line and having the ability to move in either direction is paramount. ☘

My EDC bag loadout contains mundane office supplies as well as emergency survival tools.

MAKE & MODEL
North Face
Surge

MSRP
\$129 (current version)

URL
www.thenorthface.com

A Competitive Advantage

“The final weapon is the brain, all else is supplemental.”

- John Steinbeck

By **Patrick McCarthy**

I recently participated in my very first two-gun match alongside Iain Harrison, RECOIL's editor-in-chief, and Nick Saiti, a frequent contributor to the magazine.

Both of them made the stages I struggled with look easy. I soon learned that Saiti, who I had just met that morning, is a Grand Master in all eight USPSA divisions. He was kind enough to offer me some pointers and encouragement, and at the end of the match, he invited me to join him at an upcoming Competition Pistol Clinic hosted by his training company, Secret Weapon Training. After watching him shoot, there was no way I was going to pass that up.

Unlike prior classes I've written about, this class was specifically designed to help competition shooters. Before you dismiss this as impractical, remember that it's a different approach to the same end result: fast, consistent hits on targets. There are differences, of course, but if you're a good competition shooter, it's not hard to apply those same skills to self-defense.

Saiti explained that he breaks down shooting skills into six manageable chunks, which must be mastered individually and then layered. The first subject of the day was stance. Feet should be shoulder-width apart, hips square to the target, and knees and elbows slightly bent to absorb recoil. Saiti recommended shifting more weight onto the balls of my feet until I almost toppled forward. I felt my toes digging into the ground and shin muscles tightening – this greatly improved my stability.

The second topic of the clinic was grip. Some instructors recommend 60/40 or 70/30 pressure from your support and dominant hands; Saiti recommends 100/100. Grip the gun as tightly as possible with both hands, as long as trigger finger dexterity isn't diminished. Choke up high on the grip, make sure there are no voids between the hands and the gun, and push the support thumb forward on the frame.

Third, Saiti discussed draw technique. Both hands should be moved in unison to the level of the holster; this symmetrical movement prevents favoring one side. Establish a consistent, strong grip, and bring hands together in the workspace where you'd naturally clap your hands. Keep the barrel flat as you drive the gun up and out to eye level, fast

at first, then slower to acquire a sight picture. To test your draw, start with a good stance, close your eyes, draw normally, and open your eyes. If your mechanics are perfect, you should see a clear sight picture every time. Saiti says, “Technique will take you most of the way. Your eyes just confirm it.”

These three topics are the most fundamental layers – if you can nail them, you're off to a great start. Reloading was the fourth topic. Focus on getting the mag up to the gun and aligned quickly, then guide it in and re-establish grip. Too many students try to save time by slamming the magazine in quickly; this is only a tiny fraction of the reload time. Topics five and six, efficient transitions and movement, offered more “meat on the bone” to shave time that can be spent taking shots.

Saiti closed the Competition Pistol Clinic with an analogy. If you spill nails on the floor, what's the fastest way to clean them up? You could go get a vacuum, rig up a magnet on a string, or Google a solution, but the real answer is to simply bend down and pick them up immediately. Learning to become a Grand Master is much the same – it's a matter of time and hard work. At the end of this class, I noticed measurable improvement in my speed and consistency, and felt renewed determination to keep working on my fundamentals.

For more information on Secret Weapon Training, go to www.secretweapontraining.com or check @secretweapontraining on Instagram. 🍷



When time isn't on your side, RESCO is

www.rescoinstruments.com
(619) 203-4581
@resco_watches



Photo by @_bluecifer_

RECOIL OFFGRID

www.offgridweb.com
www.facebook.com/OFFGRIDmag



ELITE GRADE



The Spartan-Harsey Dagger
"When Technology Meets History"

625 SE Service Road, Southern Pines, NC 28387
910-757-0035 contact@spartanbladesusa.com
www.spartanbladesusa.com

- CPM S35VN
- 4-Way Micarta
- Double Deep Cryo treated
- Full Tang

RECOIL
SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE
COVID-19 RESISTANT

Order today and your magazines will be shipped to you in a #4 LDPE 100% recyclable polybag along with a protective privacy insert to keep your investment safe.



SUBSCRIBE NOW:
WWW.RECOILWEB.COM

Why + How = Who

Review of *The Killer Across the Table*

By John Schwartze

Premise: Criminal profiling has come a long way over the last several decades, both in terms of its investigative methods and prominence in pop culture. One name that stands out in this area of study is John Douglas. His FBI career not only brought him face to face with some of the most notorious criminals in recent history, but his pioneering research in the field of criminal profiling has made him an esteemed lecturer, consultant, and author. The Netflix series *Mindhunter* is based on Douglas' extensive work.

His most recent book, *The Killer Across the Table*, compares and contrasts four different murderers to provide greater insight into what makes violent offenders tick. Douglas immerses us in his interrogative world to help better understand whether killers are born or made when examining their motives, rationale, and childhood. The author also parallels the anatomy of these crimes and their perpetrators to his experiences with other prolific criminals such as Charles Manson, Edmund Kemper, Dennis Rader, and Gary Heidnik, among others. We're treated to a front-row seat of how a malignant desire for power goes from conception to conviction. As Douglas says, there's "one universal among all serial killers and violent predators: Other people don't matter, they aren't real, and they don't have any rights."

The 411: *The Killer Across the Table* is divided into sections on each individual profiled, walking us through their crimes, how they were ultimately caught, and their own interpretations of what they'd done. Douglas recounts his chilling interviews with these men while simultaneously providing an analysis of their behavior and pathology. The first criminal evaluated is Joseph McGowan, a school teacher who killed 7-year-old Joan D'Alessandro when she came to his mother's house selling Girl Scout cookies. The second is Joe Kondro, a drug addict and drifter who killed several young girls who were children of friends and acquaintances. The third is Donald Harvey, who may have killed as many as 87 patients at hospitals he worked in over a 17-year stretch. The last is Todd Kohlhepp, a real estate broker who killed several people he felt had betrayed or insulted him.

The book is rife with intuitive passages that distill the thought process of these criminals and explain why, in most cases, rehabilitation after their crimes have already

begun is practically impossible. We see how patterns in these killers' lives contributed to who they became and why. Douglas shares classic indicators that murderers often exhibit when their violent tendencies are still evolving, such as the "homicidal triangle" – fire-starting, cruelty to animals or people, and chronic bedwetting.

The author also reveals common ploys often seen by criminals to manipulate their trial or parole hearings, and the dichotomy between criminal insanity versus conscious choices within that narrative. He goes on to discuss loopholes in the judicial system's evaluation process that enabled, or could've potentially enabled, dangerous criminals to be set free. Douglas describes how killers often participate in searches for victims and have premeditated their crimes so carefully that they've formulated strategies to misdirect suspicion away from themselves. "Predators may look and sound and often act like we do, *but they don't think like we do*. Their logical process is completely different," Douglas says.

The Verdict: As the reader, you feel like you're sitting in the room with Douglas during his interviews. For those who wince easily at descriptions of violent acts, this book may be a bit too intense. Douglas does a very professional job of keeping the tone conversational and empathetic; however, in order to understand these crimes, we must wade deep into the waters of visceral discomfort. Douglas has numerous other books, both on criminology as well as fiction, but for those who want to understand the mentality of a murderer, this is an excellent place to start. You'll walk away a bit more confident in knowing *why* there are insidious people who, in their own way, are profilers looking to detect and exploit the vulnerability of potential victims. Works like Douglas' serve as important tools on how to recognize and protect yourself from society's criminals. 🍷

BOOK & AUTHOR

The Killer Across the Table: Unlocking the Secrets of Serial Killers and Predators With the FBI's Original Mindhunter

John Douglas and Mark Olshaker

PUBLISHER

HarperCollins

MSRP

\$17 paperback (Amazon)

URL

mindhuntersinc.com

PAGES

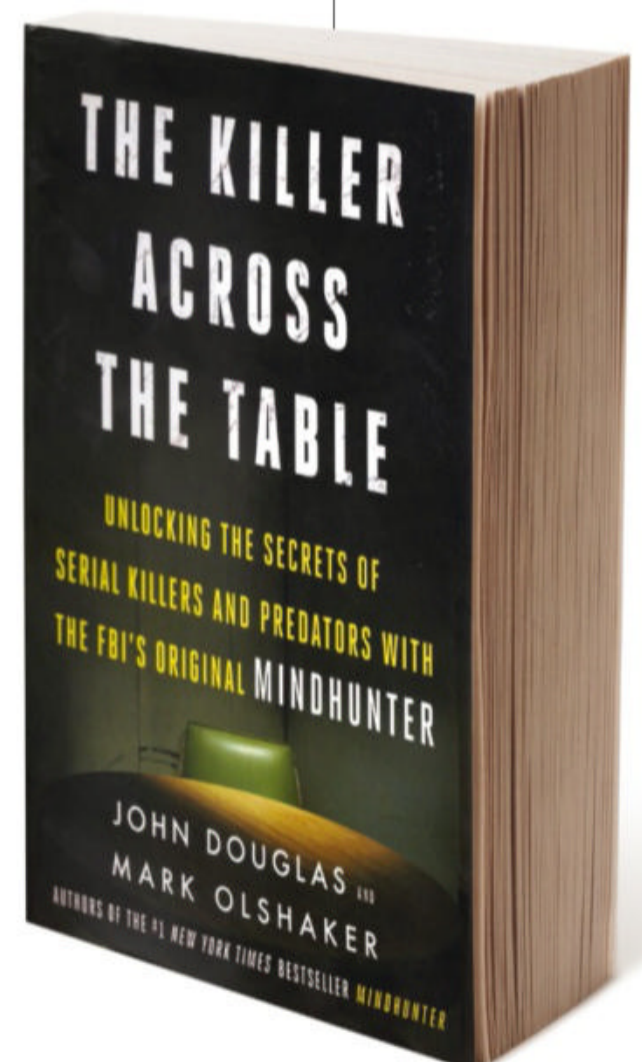
352

RATING

THRIVE

~~SURVIVE~~

~~DIE~~





PATRIOT

PROFESSIONAL GRADE WEAPONRY®

BRAVOCOMPANYMFG.COM

**WILDPEAK
M/T**

KNOW NO BOUNDARIES

Your off-road rig can only go as far as its tires will take it, which is why the WILDPEAK M/T is built to withstand the most punishing conditions. Make sure you're prepared to face any challenge that comes your way. When adventure calls, answer it with the WILDPEAK M/T.



MAXIMUM OFF-ROAD TRACTION BUILT FOR THE TOUGHEST TERRAIN

The rugged WILDPEAK M/T is built to get you there and back whether you're on the pavement, mud, snow or rocks. The M/T features Falken's proprietary three-ply DURASPEC Sidewall Technology with two high ply turn-ups that provide an additional layer of protection and durability.

26 TIRE SIZES | 15" - 20" RIM DIAMETERS

FALKEN
TIRES