

# Organizing, Training and Running a House of Worship Armed Congregant Security Team

## *An Interview with Emanuel Kapelsohn*

by Gila Hayes

*Frequently a Network member or an armed citizen who is interested in becoming a Network member asks if we would assist a member who uses force in defense of their church, temple, or synagogue – their house of worship. So long as the member serves in an entirely volunteer capacity, our assistance encompasses volunteering on the church safety team, as well as after self defense in their private lives. Of course, our member education efforts are equally applicable to a member defending himself, herself, a loved one or their fellow worshipers. Network Advisory Board member and attorney Emanuel Kapelsohn, who is very active in organizing and training church defense teams, has agreed to help us better understand the responsibilities and concerns arising when armed congregants organize to look out for the safety of their fellow worshipers.*

**eJournal:** Thank you for sharing your knowledge with us, Manny. Please tell us a little about your background.

**Kapelsohn:** Thank you, Gila. I'm in my early 70s. Many, many years ago, I got an undergraduate degree with honors from Yale University and a law degree from Harvard Law School. I've practiced law on and off since 1978. I've been a police firearms instructor and a defensive firearms instructor for 45 years now. Along the way, I became an expert witness in court cases that involved firearms, use of force, crimes committed with weapons, self-defense cases, and products liability cases involving guns and holsters and related products. I've been an expert witness for 39 years now in state and federal courts all across the country. I'm also a reserve deputy sheriff, an armed sworn position I've done for 27 years in two sheriff's departments in the two states that I've lived in.

In more recent years, I've spent a lot of time helping to develop, organize, train, and supervise armed congregant security teams for houses of worship. I've done that for several churches, one large synagogue, a faith-based community center, a private school, and some others. For about the last 5-6 years, I've been involved in not only actually training but working on the armed security team for a large church near us almost every Sunday morning and some holidays, as well.

**eJournal:** That's exactly the kind of from-the-ground-up experience we want to learn from. I am sure it entails a lot

more than standing guard outside the front door. How extensive are your responsibilities?

**Kapelsohn:** In order to preserve the anonymity of the church, I'll refer to it as Good Church; that's not its real name. On a typical Sunday morning there will be 2,200 to 2,500 people coming for one or another of the services

at 8, 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. We have daycare and Sunday school activities for everyone up through high school age and Bible study classes for adults. Our armed congregant security team is about 35 in number and our goal is to have at least five team members there at all times, so it isn't necessarily one person who's there from 8 a.m. until 12:30. In addition, we also have a medical team of people who are paramedics or EMTs or have some other advanced medical training. The armed security team members have first aid training – tourniquets and CPR and such. It's quite a good, extensive program.

**eJournal:** There was a time when people might argue that armed defense was unnecessary or even be appalled that anyone would carry a gun to a house of worship. That is changing.

**Kapelsohn:** I think we're all familiar with the active killer problem that exists. Some people who work in this field object to it being called active shooter because sometimes it's someone with a knife not a gun and some of the highest body count events in history were not committed with guns. They were committed with gasoline or dynamite, or a vehicle driven through a crowd. It's not always a shooter. The problem exists not only in the United States but in countries all around the world. There have been mass killing events everywhere from Russia to Canada to Japan to China. In a house of worship today it doesn't make sense to me not to have armed security because houses of worship are targets.

A problem common to all active killer events is that they are usually over very quickly. From start to finish, it is not uncommon

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mon for them to be over in 5-7 minutes. Studies by the FBI and the Secret Service, indicate that in the United States about 50% of the time, it is over before the first police officer arrives on the scene. I've spoken to boards of directors, trustees or clergy groups of congregations who say, "Well, we've got a plan. We're going to call 9-1-1." The police expression is, "9-1-1: when seconds count, help is only minutes away."

In many of these events, 3-4 minutes go by before the first call goes in to 9-1-1. You have to understand: when someone starts shooting in a public place, whether that's a church or a synagogue, a school, shopping center, office building or a movie theater, calling 9-1-1 is not the first thing people do. People duck, run for cover, get under their seat in the theater or whatever and it's not until a few minutes later that the first call goes into 9-1-1. Then, the dispatcher has to take that call and dispatch police. The police have to get to the location and if it's a large venue – perhaps a school with several stories and dozens of classrooms or an office building – the police have to find their way in to where the problem is occurring. Often by then, the problem is over because the person has either run out of ammunition, killed themselves, fled the scene or killed as many people as they intended to kill.

Ron Borsch, a friend of mine who is the single most knowledgeable person that I know about active killer events in the United States and perhaps the world, calls this timeline the "Stopwatch of Death." The point he's making is that every second that goes by – not just minutes, but each second! – more people may be killed. You have to have an approach that isn't just, "We'll call 9-1-1 and wait for the police to arrive."

There are parts of the country where police are not as readily available as they are in others. We have suburban and urban areas where response time for police may be two or three minutes on a good day when there's not much going on. When I lived in rural Indiana, response time by the sheriff's department might be 20 minutes if the deputies who were on duty were over on the far side of the county. That's with lights and sirens and no traffic to speak of. There are a lot of parts of the country where the police response is further away than that.

I think it behooves a congregation to have some planning and some armed security. The incidents that have been stopped right when they started or maybe after just one or two people unfortunately have been killed, have been stopped by people who are already there on the scene, whether that's a school resource officer in the local school or an armed or unarmed individual. A significant number of active killer events are stopped by unarmed civilians, non-police who tackle the person or hit the shooter with the chair or do whatever they can to intervene.

We have to understand that the goal of armed security in the house of worship is not to replace the police. It's not to deal with someone who's got their car double parked or even someone who's being a bit disruptive in a service. Call the police to evict a trespasser or to deal with someone who's intoxicated or under the influence of drugs and needs to be removed, that's a police function and so is protection of mere property as opposed to protection of life.

The duties of your security team, or at Good Church we call it the Safe Team, may not only be response to an armed attacker, but it may also be providing first aid. They should certainly be trained in things like CPR and regular first aid functions, treatment for shock and stopping massive bleeding whether that's with tourniquets or Israeli bandages or Quick Clot combat gauze. Whatever the system is, they should be trained in it.

The security team may also be trained to help evacuate the building in the event of a fire or perhaps a bomb threat and many other things that are beyond our subject today. The security team may do things as mundane as looking for a lost child. At Good Church we've had a number of instances where the child gets separated from the parents and the parents are looking for the child or the child is looking for the parents. *[Smiling]* Sometimes the parents don't even know their child is lost yet. The security team helps in that regard, so there are many, many functions the team can serve.

**eJournal:** It is hard to oppose a team that's helping lost children or giving first aid! If starting a safe team, who most needs to support the concept?



Click for streaming video of our talk with Emanuel Kapelsohn.

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**Kapelsohn:** The clergy must buy into having an armed security team. If the clergy isn't for it, it's not going to work. In some congregations, depending on their size and the makeup of the congregation, the congregation may need to buy in to it, as well. I've been a member of congregations that have thousands of members and I've been a member of what are called family churches. In my case, I was a member of a family church where the typical turnout for Sunday morning services might be 15 or 20 people.

**eJournal:** Size has to affect how safety is addressed, too.

**Kapelsohn:** It's just like the difference between fielding a varsity football team in a Big Ten school that has 40,000 students and having a football team in a small school that has 100 or 200 students. You're not going to have the same kind of football team. I work with some police departments that have 11 or 12 officers. Well, that's not a department that can have a SWAT team. There aren't going to be enough people for a tactical team. In the same way, the nature of the armed security provisions will naturally depend on the size and the makeup of the congregation.

In a large congregation like Good Church, you can have an armed congregant team. You can have a large enough armed congregant team that you have different people coming to different services or different weekends during the month. Of course, you want people also to be able to go to the services to participate in worshiping, not just be there for a security function, so it's common at Good Church for someone who's on the Safe Team to come for two services. During one service, they are assigned to a security post and the other service they're participating in worship.

In a family church where you might only have 12, 15 or 20 people on a typical Sunday morning, it might just be a number of congregants who carry guns. They have concealed carry permits and you provide them with training about the law, about appropriate responses to different situations, maybe first aid training and so forth. They're just coming with their families, as they would to a normal worship service, but they are prepared to respond in an armed capacity if that terrible event comes.

**eJournal:** Volunteers sometimes wonder if they need an armed guard license and that's affected by whether they're considered employees compensated by free training, free equipment, and free ammunition. What regulations do church entities and safety volunteers need to consider?

**Kapelsohn:** That's going to be a matter of state law and will vary from state to state, so there are fifty different formulas that I would not attempt to address here. If you're thinking about having an armed congregant team, one of the preliminary considerations is whether it's legal and what steps need to be taken to make it legal.

Is this a state where concealed carry permits are available and necessary for anyone carrying a gun concealed? Is it a so-called constitutional carry state where permits are no longer necessary? In some states where permits are no longer necessary, permits are still available to those who wish to apply. That may be a good thing for a security team, because the process of applying for and getting a permit means you've been put through a criminal history check by the police. That assures us that parishioner Smith who may have been a member of this congregation for 12 years and we all think we know him very well, doesn't have a felony on his record from when he lived in a different state. There's an advantage to getting concealed carry permits in places where they are available.

In some states, like my own home state of Pennsylvania, someone who is an employee as defined by law, who works in an armed capacity as a requirement of their job – such as an armed security guard or an armored car crew member or a bank guard or an armed private investigator – but are not law enforcement officers, must have certain state-required training and licensure. In PA, Act 235 requires a 40-hour course to work in an armed capacity unless you have previous law enforcement experience. It has to be renewed every five years. To the best of my understanding and legal judgment, someone who's a member of a congregation, who is just carrying their gun and helping serve a security function on a purely volunteer basis is not an employee. They're volunteering so they don't need Act 235 licensing. I'm not trying to give legal advice here; I'm just trying to address the subject.

In some states, if that congregant gets any benefits from their job that might be considered compensation, that can make them an employee, not a volunteer. Depending on the state, that may change the situation. This needs to be considered.

Another preliminary consideration is insurance. Some insurance companies that issue insurance to houses of worship and other businesses will not cover that facility, operation, or activity if there are any armed protectors, whether they are an armed security guard service that has its own liability coverage or whether it's armed congregants in a church, synagogue, or temple. I was involved in such a situation when the congregation I was part of wanted to have armed security guards. The insurance carrier said, "No, not with us you won't! We won't cover for that," so we had to find another insurance carrier.

There are two very large insurance companies, one called Church Mutual (<https://www.churchmutual.com/>) and the other is Brotherhood Mutual (<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com>), that cover, among other things, houses of worship. They will cover houses of worship with armed security, including armed congregant security. They want to know that you have

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a training program and about the setup of the program. After the insurance carrier said they would not cover us if we had the armed security guards, we found that with our armed security, another insurance company would provide us \$1,000,000 more coverage at a lower annual premium. Some of these are excellent companies. I mentioned two; there are undoubtedly others, but those are two I know about.

One of the congregations I was affiliated with also required each member of the armed congregated team to have his or her own insurance or something that would provide financial support. You might say, "Well, why does the individual need it? The congregation's liability coverage should cover." Yes, it did, but they wanted to make sure that if, for some reason, the congregation's insurance wouldn't, the person would still have their own financial support. It was also a way of making sure that the members of the team bought in, just like we're asking the clergy and the congregation to buy in. It's a reality check – are you really serious? Do you understand that there are potential liability ramifications?

**eJournal:** Let's pause to clarify that insurance coverage for liability from, perhaps missed shots for which the individual does bear responsibility, is different than Armed Citizens' Network's assistance which pays for the legal defense of our members but does not pay a judgment against a member. We get a lot of questions about paying for the legal defense of members who are volunteers at church, so let me add that we would count it a privilege to assist God's people and make sure that their legal expenses were taken care of after defending the sanctuary.

**Kapelsohn:** Thanks for clarifying that. Sometimes people ask, "If I become a member of an armed security team, might I have some personal liability?" Well, of course you will. If it snows and you don't shovel your front walk well enough and the UPS man slips and hurts his back, you've got liability. If you have a car accident, you've got potential liability. Whether ultimately you have liability or not is a secondary question; the first question is, "Can I be sued?" Of course, you can! People can sue you for virtually anything. If you carry a gun in your personal life, there's a responsibility and a potential liability connected. Something like Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network is so important.

**eJournal:** Beyond the church's insurance broker, who else needs to know about the armed safety team?

**Kapelsohn:** If you're going to have an armed team, your local police should know so if they respond to an incident, they're not surprised that there may be some congregants there, possibly even with drawn guns holding someone at gunpoint, who aren't bad guys. The police need to know that! Good Church has a good relationship with our local police and district attorney's office. Both gave the "thumbs up" to this program

before it was started. The district attorney's office sometimes teaches legal programs for one of the teams that I'm connected with. Coordination is important.

Other first responders need to know about armed security, too, whether that's your local ambulance squad or fire department. If there is a mass casualty event, there are going to be first responders arriving. If you've got a large enough congregation and a large enough team, you may be thinking of having a training exercise – whether it's a tabletop exercise or a meeting or two or a simulated event that involves your local ambulance crew or fire company.

**eJournal:** Let's say we are starting an organized church security team. What should readers know about choosing team members?

**Kapelsohn:** I recently saw a suggestion that I thought was terrible, just a terrible way to select teams. "Just put a notice in your church newsletter saying we're now accepting applications for armed security team members. Anybody who's interested, please see so and so about it." I think that's just an awful way to do it!

First of all, you are announcing to the world that you have armed security. You may not want to announce that to the world! Everyone in the world may not be your friend. Whether that's someone who's a potential attacker or whether it's an unfriendly voice in the local media, I don't think you want to announce that publicly any more than you would publish an article in the paper telling the world, "Our building is now installing a burglar alarm system and here's where the sensors are and here's how it works." That's not information the world needs to know.

The other thing you may get is people applying that aren't the people you want. I think there is a much better way. Hopefully, there are congregants that you know well and trust; people you think would be good assets for such a team. Ideally, if it's going to be an armed team, they'd be people that already have some firearms knowledge. In Good Church's large congregation, we have a number of team members who are retired police officers or state troopers. One is a judge. We have people with extensive prior military training, maybe even as military police, and people who are firefighters or EMTs. These are people who have experience dealing with critical incidents and stressful emergencies. They make good team members.

We recommend people from within our congregation. Someone on the team will say, "You know my friend Joe Smith who also attends our congregation? He and I go shooting together. He's a great guy, a family man who has good religious values and

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he's got some experience with firearms. I think he'd be a good member of the team." There should be some leadership group, maybe that's a member of the congregation's clergy plus one or two members of the team, that evaluate a proposal to put a person on the team.

In two sizable congregations of which I've been a member, we have had an actual written application form. We ask the person to fill it out and provide information about themselves. That form then sometimes serves as the basis for an in-person interview. We may be interviewing someone that we know personally but haven't addressed subjects like, "How does your spouse feel about you being on an armed congregant security team? Is this going to cause a problem in your family? Do you have the time to do this? Will you be able to devote time to X number of training sessions per year? Are you willing to pay for some equipment that you may need in addition to what the congregation provides to you?" Equipment is an issue that we'll mention later.

It's important that a member of your congregation's clergy is on the committee that helps choose who's proposed to be on the team. Sometimes the clergy will be privy to information that the rest of the congregation isn't. This congregant may have come to them and told them that he or she has an alcohol or drug problem or who knows what the situation is? The clergy may just say to the leadership committee, "Well, I don't think Joe Smith's a good applicant right now. Maybe after a little while, but we need to let this wait. Let's pass on him for the time being."

**eJournal:** It's a tough situation, particularly in the very small churches where denying a request to serve is a lot like telling a family member that he's not good enough! That's a really hard position to be in. Maybe it's buffered a little bit in the larger Good Church. How does this scale to small congregations? Do small churches even perform formal background checks?

**Kapelsohn:** We do several things. In our state, a concealed carry permit is still required. It's not a constitutional carry state, so the fact that someone has that CCW permit means that they have gone through a criminal background check conducted by law enforcement. We then require them to get the two childcare certifications that any teacher or daycare worker would have to have in order to work with children. One is a state certification, and one is a federal certification. Both are free for volunteer workers. The Safe Team gets a copy of the person's concealed carry permit and the paperwork that shows they have passed the childcare certifications, that they have nothing negative in their history in that regard.

We interview the people. There are two standards, I think, that are useful. Years ago, I was a staff instructor at Gunsite,

the American Pistol Institute. We taught defensive handgun, shotgun and rifle classes that typically started on a Monday morning and finished Saturday at noon with the man-on-man competition and scored standards drills. The people who went through that school could get one of several different certifications. The highest was expert. The standard that Colonel Cooper used for an expert rating was this: "Is this someone you would choose to have with you in a fight?" If the answer was, "No, I'd rather pick somebody else," that person didn't get an expert rating even if they came in first in the man-on-man competition, which after all is just competitive shooting, or if they came in first in the standards drills, which is marksmanship, speed, and accuracy. A lot is involved in wanting to have someone with you in a fight other than just how fast are they, how accurate are they, and can they win a competition? We're talking about people who have to be levelheaded and have good judgment and able to handle stress well and so forth. Cooper's standard was, "Is this someone you choose to have with you in a fight?"

Now I will give you our standard for the Safe Team at Good Church. "Is this someone to whom you would entrust the care of your children?" Hopefully, children are the person's most precious possessions. You know people who you might think of as the world's best gunslinger, if there is such a thing, but you'd not leave your kids with them. They're not the kind of person you would entrust your children to in an emergency. Someone to whom you would entrust the care of your children and someone you would choose to have with you in a fight is levelheaded, trustworthy, has good judgment and is mature and even-tempered in all respects. If you combine those two, you have a standard which is, admittedly, very subjective, but that we can all understand.

**eJournal:** OK, so a candidate gets selected. Are you going to control what they carry? Are you going to tell them what kind of equipment or even apparel? Do you ask them to conceal their gun, not let it print? How strictly should we manage a volunteer?

**Kapelsohn:** Well, I can tell you what we do at Good Church. We don't carry guns openly. I'm sure there are many members of the congregation, especially ones who are visitors or new members, who have no idea that anyone there is carrying a gun. We don't have a dress code. You dress however is comfortable for you as someone attending services. I often wear a blazer because it's the easy way for me to cover my gun and my radio and whatever else I'm carrying, and we have other people who just wear a sport shirt.

Greeters, ushers, building maintenance people and members of the Safe Team and medical team have name tags on lanyards

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around their necks. Our nameplates have just our first name; mine reads “Emanuel” and doesn’t have my last name on it. The nameplates are color-coded, so the Safe Team has a certain color nameplate. The world in general doesn’t know that code. Our nameplates also have magnetic codes that open certain locked doors in the facility – the door into the childcare area, our security communications center on the second floor, or the outer door. If you go outside and the door shuts behind you, you’re not locked out.

The Safe Team and medical team are issued radios or check out a radio from the communications center for their tour of duty. Our radios have ear buds, and the wire goes into your collar and so while it’s visible to someone who wants to look for it, it isn’t very obvious. We also issue armed security sashes and require people to carry them whenever they are there. These are the sashes made by DSM Safety Products – the initials stand for Don’t Shoot Me (<https://dsmsafety.com/security/>). It’s in a little pouch on your belt or in your pocket and when you deploy it, it’s a bright yellow or fluorescent green sash across your front and back. Ours say, “Security.” If you draw your gun, you are supposed to deploy your sash as soon as you can so that arriving police or other congregants who may be armed but not part of the Safe Team know that you have an official capacity, that you’re part of the security team.

We train our Safe Team in the use of pepper gel. We don’t require them to carry it, but we strongly encourage it as a less lethal option. We also give people hand to hand defensive tactics training on a periodic basis so whether they have the pepper gel or not, they do have means of using force other than deadly force. That is some of the equipment that people are required to carry or urged to carry, depending on what it is.

We have written policy that specifies the kinds of firearms that are acceptable to be carried. It specifies that you must qualify with the firearm you’re carrying not just a similar one, but the actual Glock or Smith & Wesson or Springfield or whatever it might be with that serial number. The ammunition you are carrying must be controlled expansion ammunition, not full metal jacket. If you should have to shoot someone, it’s more likely to be contained in the person you shoot and not pass through them and injure or kill someone else. People who are on the security team are prohibited from carrying other weapons which have not been approved and with which they have not been trained and qualified. In other words, they can’t just decide to

carry an expandable baton or a TASER® or something that the team doesn’t train with and authorize.

**eJournal:** Do you mandate certain calibers?

**Kapelsohn:** Yes, we mandate a minimum of 9mm or .38 Special and within a certain range of calibers. We list approved manufacturers, and we say that if you want to carry a different model of gun by some other manufacturer you need to get it approved by the team leader or the head firearms instructor for the team. I had one member on a team that I trained and worked with who argued strenuously that he wanted to carry a certain kind of gun, “In case the active killer was wearing body armor this would go right through it.”

I said, “Yes and when you miss, it’ll go right through three congregants, too.” There is no good expanding ammunition made for this gun. He said, “Oh, but the Secret Service carries it!” I said, “Well, with all due respect, you’re not the Secret Service. Our function is different, and you can’t carry that here.” There are good reasons for the congregation to control what kind of weaponry people carry and to make sure that they’re trained and qualified.

**eJournal:** Manny, it is clear that there is a tremendous amount of detail that goes into selecting and equipping a team of volunteers to protect people who’ve come together to worship. We have not even touched on documenting their training and skill maintenance, whether they guard assigned positions or simply join the rest of the congregation in the pews during services, and one element that will be challenging for many, creation of a use of force policy. I don’t want to give short shrift to any of those topics – or other aspects of armed church security about which we should be alerted – so with your understanding, I would like to take a break and come back next month to those and related topics in our next edition.

*Editor’s Note: Due to the valuable input Emanuel Kapelsohn contributed for members who serve their churches on volunteer security teams, we have also produced a video of this interview for Armed Citizens’ TV <https://armedcitizenstv.org/> where it is available for learners who prefer the streaming video format. We believe the written format may be useful as an archived resource that can be shared with church leaders and management that may have questions about mitigating any perceived liability attached to approving formation of a volunteer armed security team. Please return next month for the second installment of this interview.*



## President's Message

by Marty Hayes, J.D.

Recently, a prospective member asked how we go about making the decision to fund the legal defense of an act of self defense. I told him I would discuss this in the next *eJournal*, not remembering that I wrote about this two years ago. So, if that person is expecting to find that article in this issue,

just go to <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/june-2021-presidents-message> and read about our decision-making process.

The information in the 2021 article is still accurate. The only additional thing I want to mention is that today our Legal Defense Fund has grown to \$4,000,000.00 (four million dollars). I also want to reassure people that we exist to spend this Fund for our members. The last thing I want to do is turn down a request, and the reasons why we might have to do that are spelled out in another article at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/decisions-about-member-assistance>. I suppose I should do a YouTube video on decisions to fund a member's legal defense, as that seems to be how people get their information these days.

### Speaking of Videos

I expect to start doing many more videos on important topics. One thing that we need to get out is an explanation of who the Network is and what we do, to counter all the false claims being made about the Network. If you want to be the first to know about these upcoming videos, subscribe to Armed Citizens' TV at <https://www.youtube.com/@armedcitizenslegaldefensen4041>. We went to the effort of building a video production studio at our headquarters, and we are very pleased with how it is working out. Here is a photo of me in the studio while we were filming one video. Now, having mentioned the false claims about the Network, I should add that I don't believe (for the most part) they are made maliciously. What people do not realize is that programs change over time, and what might have been true five or ten years ago is not true now. But, nevertheless, they are still false claims and need to be countered.

### No News

We haven't heard a word from the appellate court yet about *Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network v. Office of Insurance Commissioner*. That is not necessarily good or bad, it just is. I monitor the

decisions from the WA appellate courts, and they do an awful amount of work. While I hate big government, in this case I would not be opposed to adding a division four to the court of appeals here in WA state. When we hear something, we will let you know.

### Times Change

When we first started the Network, our main problem was explaining to people what we did, and why there is a need for a membership program such as ours. Thankfully, we had several hundred students that we had previously trained at The Firearms Academy of Seattle who trusted us to look out for their welfare and agreed to be the initial guinea pigs. After we got a few hundred students signed up, we then went to a [Rangemaster Tac-Con](#) in Memphis and introduced the concept to that group, and we picked up more members. These days, our challenge is not to try to explain what we do, but to explain how we are different/better than the myriad of competitors out there, most of whom are selling "self-defense insurance."

### Are You an Insurance Agent?

I believe, in virtually all states, insurance agents need to be licensed by the state. But what if you are one of the recruiters who is selling an insurance plan from one of our competitors? At one time we had a commissioned recruitment program, where instructors could earn a commission to sign up their students to be a part of the Network, but when the WA Insurance Commissioner alleged that we sold insurance, we quit that program. We did not want any of our staunch supporters to be put in a negative light because they wanted to help the Network grow. I would respectfully suggest that if you are paid for the promotion or sales of one of the "self-defense insurance" programs, you take a look at your liability in doing so. Are you subject to a fine for selling insurance without a license? In WA state, the maximum fine can be \$25,000 for each occurrence.

That's it for this month. See you all next month.





## Attorney Question of the Month

*Vacation travel season is here and Armed Citizens' Network members are hitting the highways. In states that don't recognize their carry license, armed citizens are expected to lock up the gun, unloaded and separated from the ammunition, and not readily accessible, as has been the general rule for decades. We ask our Affiliated Attorneys' help reminding members of gun law pitfalls that could ruin their summer vacation*

*For this month's Attorney Question of the Month column, we asked our Affiliated Attorneys this series of questions --*

***What is the most common mistake visitors from out of state make that leads to violation of one of your state's gun laws?***

***Does the "Safe Passage" provision in the 1986 Firearms Owners Protection Act preempt more restrictive state laws like magazine capacity limits if the gun owner is merely driving through the state with the gun locked and inaccessible?***

***If a traveler possesses high capacity magazines or other things that are legal in the state they came from but are illegal in your state, do they break your state's laws if they stop at a rest area, to get fuel or to go into a restaurant?***

***Does the gun owner violate your state's gun restrictions if, overnighting in a motel or a parked RV, they unlock their gun for protection while they rest?***

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I primarily practice in Indiana. If it's legal in your home state and it isn't a James Bond-style ballistic knife, Batman replica batarang, or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles ninja star (or similar), it's almost certainly legal in Indiana, however and whatever you're used to doing in regard to carry or storage.

The major difference (that really all travelers to all states should keep in mind, as well), is that the license/permit carry exception you may have in your own state regarding federally designated school zones does not apply when you are not in your home state of residence. So technically you can carry a handgun loaded while visiting IN, but you should route your travel around school zones, where your carry is prohibited by federal law.

For Michigan, while the state lacks constitutional carry, it too is generally far more permissive than most other states, so travelers will mostly be OK relying on their normal habits while visiting.

The largest issue in Michigan may in fact be blade carry. Whereas Indiana has no state preemption on blade laws but also only a few municipalities regulating knife carry, Michigan has a state level knife carry restriction law, in addition to those further restrictions municipalities might impose.

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The biggest mistake most travelers make when carrying concealed to places outside of their own home state is thinking that the laws are identical to their home state. For example, gun free zones are different from state to state. Just because you can have a firearm in certain places in your home state does not make it OK where you are visiting.

Make sure you also understand two other big factors when traveling. First, if you are stopped by the police, do you have a duty to disclose you are carrying a firearm? In some states it's mandatory; others it's not necessary. Make sure you know before you go.

Lastly, make sure you are aware of magazine capacity limits. Some places have limits on the capacity of your magazine, and that could not only vary by state but in some places it varies depending on the city you may be visiting. Be safe and know before you go.

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***What is the most common mistake visitors from out of state make that leads to violation of one of your state's gun laws?***

Thinking their state's laws are the same as Massachusetts law, and their license, if any, covers them. It doesn't.

***Does the "Safe Passage" provision in the 1986 Firearms Owners Protection Act preempt more restrictive state laws like magazine capacity limits if the gun owner is merely driving through the state with the gun locked away and inaccessible?***

FOPA is treated as an affirmative defense; not a preemptive statute. I would not rely upon it to cover "large-cap" magazines.

*[Continued next page]*

*If a traveler possesses high capacity magazines or other things that are legal in the state they came from but are illegal in your state, do they break your state's laws if they stop at a rest area, gas station or to go into a restaurant? Does he or she violate your state's gun restrictions if, overnighing in a motel or a parked RV, they keep their gun accessible for protection while they rest?*

They are absolutely NOT covered if they have the gun accessible. Period. If they are passing through, they can invoke FOPA. Of course, the real issue is, "How did the cop know you had the gun(s) and magazine(s)?"

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*Q: What is the most common mistake visitors from out of state make that violates New York gun laws?*

A: Traveling through New York by car with a handgun or assault weapon and being stopped by police, and traveling through airports with handguns in luggage.

Half of all the illegal gun possession cases that I see result from a traffic stop. It is the stop which leads to the gun being discovered, so where there is no stop, there is no arrest.

In the northeast, if traveling through Massachusetts, state police generally will stop anyone exceeding the highway speed limit by more than 5 miles per hour (MPH). In New Jersey, a motorist usually can do 10 MPH over the highway limit, and even 15 MPH over commonly is ignored. But, when traveling with guns or other gun-related items, I will not exceed any speed limit by more than 5 MPH, and also I have no gun or hunting-related stickers on my vehicles. Keep in mind, too, that out-of-state license plates are a potential magnet for traffic officers, because a traffic stop might lead to the discovery of a firearm. Traffic officers know some of the differences in state gun laws, so do not give them any overt reason to stop you. Travel by day is better than night simply because there are so many other distractions to gain the attention of traffic officers. Also, the first few days of the month and the last few days are most critical, because it is at these times that traffic officers either are trying to fill-up their monthly ticket quota early, or catch up at the end.

With car travel, non-residents must follow strictly the provisions of the 1986 FOPA federal safe passage provision, because New York makes almost no allowance for non-residents traveling through with a handgun. Assault weapons are almost totally banned and are treated like handguns. Also, there are jurisdictions in New York which routinely violate the federal safe passage provision, and will arrest travelers despite lawful compliance. Avoid New York City, Albany and Buffalo, if at all possible.

Regarding airports, many travelers were known to bring their guns to New York when visiting, and then declare them as checked baggage when they flew home. But nowadays, when a gun is declared at the ticket counter the Port Authority Police are summoned to inquire why the person has a gun. When the police realize that the traveler is not merely making a connecting flight from another airport, and instead has spent time in New York with the gun, the traveler is arrested.

*Q: Does FOPA safe passage preempt more restrictive New York laws like magazine capacity limits?*

A: No, there is no provision in FOPA related to magazines, and I am not aware of any case law extending the exemption to magazines.

*Q: If a traveler possesses high capacity magazines or other things legal in their home state, but illegal in New York, do they break New York laws if stopped at a rest area, gas station, restaurant, or stay overnight at a motel or RV park, and keep their guns accessible while they rest?*

A: Yes, they are breaking New York law. The current FOPA requires continuous travel, though I have not heard of anyone being prosecuted for getting gas. My own habit is to get all the gas I need before traveling through bad states, and then not stopping until I reach a good state.

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Question number one: the biggest mistake most people make is assuming that their state laws are the same as Michigan state laws. Many times they are not. In many states, you do not need a concealed carry permit to have a gun in your passenger compartment of your car or truck. In Michigan, you cannot have a long gun of any kind loaded or unloaded. Many people who drive out with a rifle or shotgun in the back window of their truck find this out the hard way. Here, that is a felony, even if it's in plain sight. If it's in plain sight, you've just made the cops' jobs easier.

In other states, having a pistol in the passenger compartment of a car or truck is legal as long as the gun is not concealed upon someone's person. Here, it's still a felony, unless you have a concealed carry permit, in which case Michigan has reciprocity with most of the other states that recognize CPLs.

The third problem is knives! Any blade that's over 3 inches must be worn in plain view, but if it's over 3 inches and you put it inside the passenger compartment of a car or truck, it's a felony! Welcome to the People's Republic of Michigan!

Question number two: a person can drive through any state, re-  
*[Continued next page]*

ardless of restrictions as long as they don't make a stop more than overnight, and they're moving like they have a purpose. Whatever the item is, pistol, rifle, shotgun, or other must be legal in the state that they start out from, and the state they are ending up in. Simply stopping overnight or for a meal or to rest at a rest stop does not constitute a crime.

That being said, at the time of this writing, Michigan has no magazine capacity limits. What I have discussed is the law in the state of Michigan and the federal law. I am not speaking to the law of any other state in the nation or territory.

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*Thank you, affiliated attorneys, for sharing your experience and knowledge. Members, please return next month when we have a new question for our affiliated attorneys.*

*Editor's Note: The devil is in the details but how can you make sure you know all the details? Fortunately, there are good resources. Way back in July of 2011 Massad Ayob, who travels extensively both to teach and to work in the courts as an expert witness, gave us an interview on this topic (it is still available in the archives at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/our-journal/2011-journals/958-july-2011-network-journal#traveler>) in which he suggested reviewing <https://handgunlaw.us/> material on carry license reciprocity as well as gun and weapon laws of each state. Print the pages pertinent to the state(s) you plan to visit and put them in your gun case, especially if you'll be driving through multiple states, he advised.*

*If traveling by airline, you'll be interacting with both the airline you patronize as well as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) before you ever reach the state you intend to visit. About a year ago, retired law enforcement officer, Internet blogger and instructor Greg Ellifritz, offered advice from his considerable travel experience when he wrote [The Definitive Guide To Flying With Guns](https://www.activeresponsetraining.net/flying-with-guns) at <https://www.activeresponsetraining.net/flying-with-guns> which you will also find useful.*

## **Batting Cleanup**

Our May Attorney Question received one final observation, from our Missouri Affiliated Attorney Kevin Jamison. Here are his thoughts on our question about lawsuits for damages—

**If a person uses force in self defense, are they likely to be sued for damages? This is a pervasive fear amongst armed citizens many of whom believe that it is a near certainty. What is your opinion?**

**Have you had a client or clients who were sued after self defense? How did it turn out?**

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In Missouri, we have a statute that prohibits lawsuits in a matter determined to be self defense. The statute does not say who makes this determination but I have personal experience that it works. The statute awards attorney fees to the prevailing party. This does not stop the usual suspects. Lawsuits are crafted to claim that self defense was negligent. In one, the claimed negligence was that the homeowner did not put up a "no trespassing" sign so the burglar would know he was not allowed to break into the house. The insurance company settled this which I think only encourages bad behavior.

We asked a follow up question: **You mentioned that the law doesn't specify who should determine an incident was self defense so no lawsuit allowed – does that decision fall to judges usually?**

I have seen it used when prosecutors do not prosecute on grounds of self defense. Of course the defendant can ask for a hearing and let the judge decide. The attorney may have to educate the judge on this statute. Such a hearing exposes the defendant to cross-examination and the plaintiff/prosecutor now knows the defense case. Judges don't like to make such decisions. I don't do such hearings and will not unless I have an exceptionally good case.

## Book Review *Strategies and Standards for Defensive Handgun Training*

By Karl Rehn and John Daub  
2023 Edition Published by KR Training  
ISBN-13: 978-1798865798  
\$9.97 for Kindle; \$20.00 paperback at  
[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

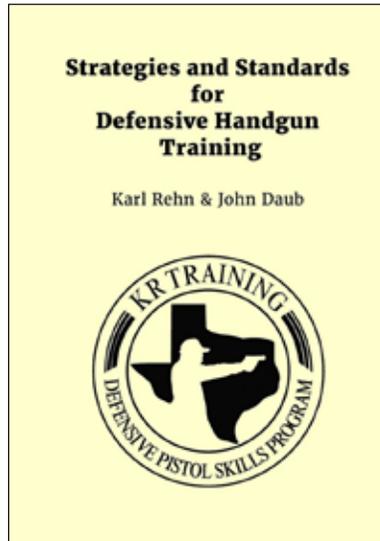
Reviewed by Gila Hayes

In January of this year Karl Rehn gave us an interview about skill development and practice for armed citizens, and during that conversation, we talked about the soon-to-be-released second edition of his book *Strategies and Standards for Defensive Handgun Training*, which he co-authored with John Daub. Writing and updating books is tedious work, and in the months that have followed, several members asked when the second edition would be available. Good news! When I saw Karl at the NRA Annual Meeting several months ago, in his hand was a copy of the second edition, printed this time in a larger format.

Like the first edition, the 2023 version explores realistic performance standards for defensive handgun practitioners and how to motivate armed citizens to work toward responsible levels of skill. In their first edition, comparing the ultra simple state carry license requirements (where they exist), Rehn and Daub asked, "If the state standards aren't realistic minimum performance standards and don't include all the skills the average gun owner should be trained in, what are those skills and standards?"

Many states have transitioned into permitless carry. Rehn and Daub explore that trend's effect on gun owners, some of whom would previously have at least completed the permit requirement training, even if they went no further. Statistics show that gun ownership is more prevalent than ever. Rehn writes in a later chapter, that compared against mandated training, likely more good has come from increased focus on skill and tactics in the firearms media, no-cost resources online, and formation of minority gun owner groups, be they focused on gender, race or political persuasion. He opines that state-mandated training did not produce much "actual benefit."

The authors expressed concern that, "99 percent or more of those who could, should, or would benefit from taking training beyond the state minimum either have no interest in it, cannot afford the money or time to attend it, or don't perceive enough value (even pure entertainment value) in it to attend." There is a lot of data to make that point but perhaps the best proof of the need for training comes from the Transportation Security Agency which as far back as 2015 to 2016 reported a 28%



increase in incidences of travelers caught with guns that they forgot were in their bags before they went through the security checkpoint. What would it take to reach such a disengaged audience?

Combining Maslow's hierarchy of human needs with analysis of video game culture leads Rehn to conclude that with humanity no longer primarily focused on assuring there's food and shelter to survive, classes and shooting sports fulfill the higher-level needs for achievement, social interaction and immersion. He comments that the most avid in the gun community love to customize their guns, have special clothing for range time and participate in range drills that are, to some degree, a form of live-action role play. "None of those things is inherently bad. My point here is that all those factors appeal to us in various ways, and they bring us pleasure and satisfaction," he comments.

Training, Rehn continues, generally includes segments on mindset and mental preparation, creating motivation to seek higher skill levels. If driven by acknowledgment of risk, armed citizens often react in one of three ways: mitigate (do something to change it), transfer (plan on police or others to provide protection) or accept risk without correcting it. He ponders other risks to health and well being, commenting that physical fitness, medical skills to address injury and driving skills all contribute more to life expectancy than "anti-crime skills." Even skills to counter criminal violence have many facets that are a higher priority than defensive gun use, and some claim, based on studies of private citizen self-defense shootings, that factors like drawing speed are overstated. Rehn disagrees.

What, then, is the rationale for training beyond the basics? Developing confidence and learning safe gun handling, he answers. Training reduces "negative outcomes," including--

- Failure to engage,
- Gun accidents,
- Legal issues stemming from bad decisions,
- Injury or death if deficits in speed or accuracy give a criminal assailant the upper hand.

Agreeing on the necessity of formal training, one might ask, "Will any instructor do?" Rehn issues a resounding "No!" explaining that instructors themselves need to possess high skill levels and continue training for their own updates and improvement. He weighs the value of "been in gunfights" experience, discusses the value of ancillary experience like knowing the legal system, and seeking out instructors who are the acknowledged experts, not just their disciples. His chapters advising instructors about successful business-building strategies he's used at KR Training can also form an instructor-selection criteria of sorts for students wanting to choose better instructors.

[Continued next page]

John Daub writes Section 2, a change that occurs about 1/3 of the way through *Strategies and Standards*. He begins by defining minimum competency, how it would be proven, the place of “minimum” in skill progression -- hint: it isn’t the end of the road by any stretch of the imagination. Context influences standards, he continues, noting that law enforcement agencies establish passing scores for qualifications, shooting competitions classify skill levels, and some states require carry permittees to pass fairly simple tests. Context for those carrying a pistol for defense of self and loved ones may be drawn from Tom Given’s analysis of FBI and DEA agent-involved shootings. It suggests the precipitating incident is commonly robbery, with one to two assailants, at 3-7 yards, involving three shots in three seconds.

Measuring license to carry test minimums against Givens’ probable scenario shows that tests that fail to require drawing from a concealment holster, for example, are too minimal. Instead, Daub and Rehn recommend standards that require drawing and timed drills of single or multiple shots at various distances.

Once basic competency and safety are ingrained, the shooter can improve through a self-directed practice routine. The authors include a collection of drills and Daub suggests working up through drills until running up against one on which you can’t turn in a 100% “clean” score. The drill element you can’t “clean” reveals what to practice, as well as calling out the human tendency to over-estimate abilities and under-estimate the difficulty present in a real-life situation. Resist the temptation to shoot the drills at which you shine; instead, practice the elements you have trouble performing the authors urge several times throughout *Strategies and Standards*.

Is your practice stymied by range rules against drawing or a “speed limit” prohibiting multiple rapid shots? Daub quotes Claude Werner’s advice to practice presentations from a high ready “starting at the pectoral muscle of the body’s dominant side” and pressing out to make a “good hit with the first shot.” This leads Daub into a thoughtful essay about nomenclature. He opines that “missed shots” always hit somewhere and should be judged as unacceptable. “What is acceptable is a very narrow band. What is unacceptable is quite wide. The implication is in practice, you must work (hard) to get acceptable hits and nothing else.”

Although *Strategies and Standards* puts much effort into determining minimum competency, the key take away is inspiration to practice effectively to increase skill level. “Untimed, unstructured target practice is not the same as practicing the drills... particularly if the practice does not include evaluation of current skill level via any kind of scored drill compared to a standard or goal,” Daub and Rehn write. In a later chapter, introducing a collection of drills, the characteristics of a good practice drill are enumerated. “They are quantifiable, repeatable, trackable, and thus allow for measurement and determination of progression – especially in areas that need improvement.”

In addition to skill acquisition, proof of mastery requires performing on demand, under stressful circumstances which doesn’t allow enough time to think through each step. At higher skill levels, the basics become nearly automatic. This is not a mindless sequence of actions that runs unchecked once started, the authors point out. With growing automaticity, comes greater resistance to negative emotions like fear, defeat, and self-pity because we’re confidently working to solve a problem.

While not permanent, once developed, well-learned skills stick with you longer and, with a little work, come back more quickly. “The farther you push your skills into automaticity, the longer they will be retained, and the losses in performance level will be slower to fade...Don’t assume because you reached a particular level once, for a short period, that the skill is available at that level if you don’t maintain it. But the good news is that it won’t take as long to get back to that peak level the second time around, and if you train past the level you can live with as a maintenance level, you can keep that with less intense and less frequent practice than it took to achieve the peak.”

Daub contributes a chapter on assessing minimum competency, emphasizing the need to practice and assess with what we carry; why realistic targets scoring zones matter (with a link to free downloadable target art); simple scoring – one point for an acceptable hit, zero for unacceptable. This leads to discussion of skill development beyond “good enough” into over-learning to combat the inevitable skill degradation under extreme stress. Other details include starting in various hand positions, including holding objects like an ammo box as if it were a cell phone, movement to get off the line of attack or transitioning from a body target to a smaller, more demanding head shot. While rooted in what may happen in a real-life situation, the additional “busy-ness” also serves to force development of motor automaticity, writes Daub. Movement – be that a side step or dropping what’s in your hands – increases the “cognitive load” so that steps like drawing, presentation, sight use or trigger control need automaticity. A later chapter includes problem solving as an element in drills used to increase skill.

If assessing minimum competency, Daub expressly avoids tests requiring reloads under time, one handed shooting or decision-making. Those are important for advancing skills beyond minimum competency, but are not integral to it. He discusses realistic decisions to maintain good competency, while allowing time for ancillary training like medical, survival, force on force or physical fitness over champion-level speed and accuracy.

I read and reviewed an earlier edition of *Strategies and Standards* a few years ago, so I was interested to weigh this edition against the earlier reading. While my perspective may have shifted, the new edition filled a lot more of the *Strategies* element of the book’s name by focusing less on inadequate state permit test requirements. I was much more engaged in this reading and came away with a stronger understanding of practice strategies and of skill development and maintenance.



## Network Sponsors Get You Ready for a Safer Summer

by Gila Hayes

### NETWORKING

Have you ever said, “Temperatures are really high today! I’m gonna faint if I have to wear the extra shirt to conceal my gun”?

You predict that evil won’t find you and off you go to the lake, the downtown sidewalk sale, or other summertime fun. Maybe your gift of prophecy will be accurate; maybe it will fail miserably and on the way back to the downtown parking garage a criminal decides he is willing to kill you to get your wallet, your wedding ring, or if you’ve made it to your vehicle, perhaps he finds your car of greater value to him than your life. If your skills at predicting the future aren’t 100%, wouldn’t it be nice to have some hot weather carry options? Without argument, we prefer belt holsters, but let’s not be so dictatorial that we leave folks without ways to go discreetly armed where, while legal, being seen carrying a gun would be likely result in great discomfort for others attending the event.

Two of the Network’s corporate sponsors have built small businesses (that are growing into larger enterprises) around very low profile concealed carry. With summer arriving and temperatures soaring, you may decide putting a gun in a pants pocket is your best option. How to do that safely?

If you carry a small gun, you’ll find help from the pocket holsters Tod Cole of Recluse in Gig Harbor, WA pioneered in 2006 and has been building ever since. In the beginning, pocket guns were primarily snub-nosed revolvers and .380 and .32 autos. Nowadays, a number of pocket nines are available, and Tod’s one-sided and two-sided pocket designs have kept up with holsters for the newer pistols that, if they print at all,



make an outline that merely looks like a wallet. His pocket holsters provide the safety of either a covered or a secured trigger guard in a rig that prevents the gun from shifting around and keeps it accessible for a smooth draw.

Recluse includes options that slip unobtrusively into a side pocket on cargo pants or shorts while remaining securely upright in the pocket, thanks to a wider, reinforced leather tab on the bottom. Other models, shown to the left, fit in a front trouser pocket.

Recluse holsters are made of black or tan horsehide for minimal bulk with maximum durability. Each holster is custom made according to the specifications from the customer, can be configured to accommodate lasers, oversized front sights, and some have the option to hold a spare magazine. Alternatively, pocket magazine pouches can be ordered separately. Tod notes that his order queue is so full that it is taking up to five weeks plus shipping time to get your custom Recluse pocket holster. Learn more at <https://recluseholster.com> or call 866-960-1264.

Generally, we pocket carry short-barreled pistols – snubby revolvers, micro-compact semi-auto pistols with two- or three-inch barrels. Jay and Georgeann French changed all that in 2010 when they introduced the purpose-built CCW Breakaways carry trousers with their snap-secured extra-large slash pockets that can carry a full sized handgun below the point at which hip and thigh flex, as the “X-ray” illustration below shows. With nearly the entire front panel of their trousers or shorts hiding a deep gun pocket, Breakaways work for either right-handed shooters or lefties. Breakaway shorts come in gray, tan, gold, stone or black khaki or denim, with the same fabric choices, plus navy for long pants.

As is true for any pocket- or bag-carry, no keys, pocket change, knives or anything else should ever be jammed in with the pistol! As an additional safeguard for those of us who like to double up on our safety provisions, CCW Breakaways brought out the hard Kydex® SkinTight Holster that fully covers the trigger guard. The little pouch has a tacky neoprene exterior that keeps it in the pocket when the gun is drawn. Jay also makes Velcro® backed magazine carriers – Magsocks – that can double as pouches to make sure your flashlight, pepper spray or blade always stays in the same place, too.

There are lots more details and a lot of video about CCW Breakaways at <https://ccwbreakaways.com> or call 717-774-

2152. Jay has stayed in touch over the years, so I’ve followed the way he has overcome difficulties common to any clothing manufacturing enterprise, and to Jay and his wife’s credit, they’ve hung in there through the hard times. It is great to see their success! Standard shipping brings your order to you in 2-8 business days, but if you waited too long to order and your vacation departure is coming up fast, Breakaways has a 1-3 business day premium shipping option for a little more.





## Guest Commentary

by Frank Sharpe

***“We don’t get to opt out of someone else’s reality because it doesn’t make sense to us.”***

***– Dr. William Aprill***

When I began instructing 20 years ago there were existing videos of gun and knife attacks, as well as beatings and brawls, but the material worth studying was limited.

With the advent of affordable surveillance systems, phones with video capabilities and body cams, video of almost every engagement worth considering is available.

Access to such resources has allowed me to study thousands of fights, and one thing I’ve noticed over the last 10 years is a massive shift in the levels of violence being inflicted on victims. Instances that would have once been a trade of a few blows between combatants have progressed into maiming and murders, often through mob action.

How a fight is fought is no longer bound by the traditional rules of western civilization like –

- *You don’t kick a man when he’s down.*
- *You don’t hit girls.*
- *Sucker punching is a cowardly act.*
- *It’s man against man, not group against man.*

Those tactics have lost the stigma of socially unacceptable to a vast swath of the population.

Practices once considered dishonorable and reserved only for prison inmates and gang members are now commonplace in grade schools. And it’s not just a single rouge “bad student,” it is regularly occurring with groups of five to 50 youths and often directed towards teachers and other adults.

On the streets, the pattern appears to be:

- Step 1 – Sucker punch (often from behind by a third party).
- Step 2 – Group jumps on stunned victim and beats them to the ground.
- Step 3 – Once victim is down, turns are taken kicking them in the head.
- Step 4 – Someone adds literal insult to injury by rifling the victim’s pockets and robbing them.

While I was typing this, a video just showed up in my inbox of a man in Minneapolis, MN, last Friday evening being stomped on by five men in an unprovoked attack. One of the criminals was leaping in the air and landing on the prone victim with both feet, as an accomplice emptied his pockets.

Last week I watched a video of a female assistant principle at Westfield High in North Houston, Texas, being attacked by a mob of ninth grade students, mostly boys, in the school hallway. As she was beaten to the ground, kicks and blows were delivered to her head. This occurred while dozens of other students cheered it on and shot video. She was hospitalized with serious injuries.

Dozens of events like this are happening every day, teeming with violent acts most of us over 35 simply can’t wrap our brains around. We couldn’t imagine engaging in such behaviors when we were kids. The thought of kicking anyone in the head, let alone an authority figure, was simply not on our list of possibilities. It wasn’t done. It was deemed by society as attempted murder.

We also didn’t entertain flash mobbing a retail store, stealing thousands in merchandise, and never being apprehended or prosecuted. We couldn’t in our wildest fantasies envision a world where carjackers and armed robbers would be released without bail, or where you could take over multiple city blocks in a major city like Seattle, declare a “Law Enforcement-Free Autonomous Zone,” and the police would actually comply.

Yet here we are.

Few are processing what this means for their personal security, or for the nation. Reality is about to collide with detachment. It’s going to get messy for more than just a few Zimmerman-like outliers as we’ve witnessed in the past. Any of us could be next.

When we scan over the horizon, we can easily predict that cut-and-dry cases of self defense are going to be charged by Soros-placed prosecutors (and the like) at a much higher rate. We just saw such a case in Texas with Daniel Perry.

We may be seeing a political prosecution soon in NYC with Daniel Penny, who recently subdued the violent actor on the subway resulting in the attacker’s death. [Note: After this article was submitted, Penny was arraigned on second degree manslaughter charges.] Of course, the news is covering the deceased as an “innocent, black subway performer who impersonated Michel Jackson and was distraught over the passing of his mother” rather than the mentally ill career criminal with over 40 arrests, who routinely threatened violence and death while battering train passengers that he was.

The same can be expected in our future self-defense events.

When the mob attacks and one of us is forced to use our firearm while facing certain grave bodily injury or death, we can expect the media narrative to focus on “poor, innocent, peace-

*[Continued next page]*

ful protesters who were the victims of vigilante murder at the hands of” whatever demographic labels they assign. Homophobic, racist, trans-phobic, religious, sexist, Nazi, gun nut, etc. It doesn’t matter what lie they tell, as long as the reversal of the actual victims and criminals creates a nullification in the minds of their voters of any claim of legal justification by the defender. That’s the goal.

What will not be discussed on the major news outlets is disparity of force, the pounds per square inch of force delivered by a 175 pound, 17-year-old male’s shoe-encased foot, mob action, felony murder, or any of the basic tenets of self-defense law.

Soon, there is going to be a plethora of absolutely outrageous prosecutions of a blatantly legal uses of force that contain no precedent for charges, let alone anything like them ever being prosecuted before.

Don’t think for a second that if a former president can have his home raided for literally no legal reason, or that same president can be charged, arrested, and processed for an alleged accounting error occurring in a business at a time when he was no longer running it, that any of us can’t be thrown into the judicial system meat grinder on a whim. We can, and we will.

The rules have changed for criminals, and they have changed for us.

Gone are the days of common behavioral expectations, self-discipline, self-control, restraint, shame, or simply saying “pardon me” and moving on. The rule book for settling conflict among civilized individuals was burned in the riots of 2020.

However, the legal rule book still remains – and its full force is being weaponized against the righteous.

When the power of an agenda-driven media (instigating a politically motivated mob) is coupled with Soros-funded prosecutors in jurisdictions that care more about the support of criminals than the lives of the law abiding, the legal quagmire will not be something any of us will successfully navigate alone. We’re going to need LOTS of help!

The beating you survive on the street will only be the beginning. The monetary, health, emotional, vocational, reputational, and relationship beating the legal system is about to inflict will be just as destructive, and equally as criminal!

As they say, life comes at you fast. Well, so does death. That’s why we take appropriate steps to defend our lives. However, sometimes death can be slow...like, life in prison slow.

So, I say this with true concern and caring to all good people reading: This day in age, only a fool would waive the opportunity to have the Armed Citizen’s Legal Defense Network in their corner! Then, get proper training – you’re going to need it.

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*Editor’s Note: Network member Frank Sharpe contributed these thoughts for publication, for which we are grateful. He operates Fortress Defense Consultants, a mobile training school based in Indiana offering public and private courses nationally in defensive firearms and medical/wound treatment, as well as security consulting. Don’t miss the blog posts on his website at <https://fortressdefense.com/>. He can be reached at [frank@fortressdefense.com](mailto:frank@fortressdefense.com) and by phone at 708-522-8060.*

## ***About the Network's Online Journal***

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