



# THE ARMED CITIZENS' LEGAL DEFENSE NETWORK:

[ BY KATHY JACKSON ]

**Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network founder Marty Hayes recently concluded his year-long series of columns for Concealed Carry Magazine, "Incident to Acquittal."**

In that series, Hayes addressed some of the issues and difficulties an armed citizen might encounter with the legal system following a self-defense shooting. The series was well-received, and struck a deep chord with CCM readers. As a result of those columns, both my email box and the USCCA member discussion forum regularly receive questions from readers who want to know what they can do to protect and defend themselves from an unrighteous prosecution if they use a firearm in self-defense.

So I recently sat down with Marty Hayes to discuss his work with the ACLDN, which is his answer to that very question. Here's how it went.


***Tell me a little bit about the history of the Network.***

We formed the Network in 2008. I hit upon the concept about two years earlier while I was going through law school. I originally started law school to fulfill a long term goal of mine to become an attorney. But an inspiration came to me one day: instead of joining the

unwashed masses, I might find a better, higher calling by putting together an association or network for armed citizens where if one of us is wrongfully prosecuted or sued for a legitimate act of self-defense, then this network would come to the aid of that individual. So that's what I decided to do. I kind of liken this to the ACLU for gun owners. If one of our members is attacked by the prosecution, then we have financial resources to help that member fight the attack.

***Tell me what the Network doesn't do.***

The Network doesn't do many things. It doesn't bake bread. It doesn't wash your car. It doesn't even defend you in court if you are wrongfully prosecuted. We are not a group of attorneys. What



An experienced expert witness in the field of firearms, ACLDN founder Marty Hayes took the stand at a recent civil trial to testify on behalf of the plaintiff. Although this case was not related to self-defense, its successful conclusion was personally satisfying to Hayes, who invested more than 1000 volunteer hours over 7 years to see the issue brought to trial. "Victory is sweet," Hayes said after the jury returned its verdict. "Very sweet."

## AN INTERVIEW WITH

# MARTY HAYES

we are is fifteen hundred men and women<sup>1</sup> who have banded together and thrown a little bit of money in the pot so if one of us is prosecuted, money is available to help that person out. By the time this article is published, we'll be looking at having more than \$30,000 available for legal defense. That's starting to get into some pretty serious money and some pretty serious support for one of our members.

***How is the Network membership different from insurance? If I wanted to go buy the NRA self-defense insurance, for example, how is the ACLDN different?***

Let's not specifically look at one individual policy, but simply the broad concept of self-defense insurance. Insurance is lacking in some fundamental ways, the most serious being that none of them will pay money up

front to help pay for your attorney, for expert witness fees, or for special investigators to go out and actually contact those witness who should be contacted by the police but many times aren't. The insurance programs all say, "We'll reimburse you if you are found innocent." The problem is, it's going to be damned difficult for you to be found innocent and thus recoup that money if you don't have the financial wherewithal to put up a legitimate self-defense case.

So we took a different approach. We're like the AAA roadside assistance program. If you are a member of AAA and your car breaks down, you can call AAA and they'll come tow you out. They won't repair your car for you, but they'll get your car to a reputable shop. Likewise, we won't defend your case in court, but will provide you with some money up front so you can hire an attorney and start your legal defense.

***What do you recommend a person does after a shooting? If they are a member of the Network how do they go about contacting you?***

I don't recommend that a Network member contact me directly. I recommend that a Network member's attorney contacts me. If a Network member doesn't have an attorney already picked out, somebody that they are comfortable with and somebody they can call in the event of a self-defense shooting, then they need to get that going. That applies not just to Network members, but to anybody reading this. They need to have an attorney in case of emergency, just like they have a doctor. Here is the thing, if the police decide to arrest you and you don't have an attorney already picked out, you'll be stuck down at the police station playing roulette with a phone book that may have some pages missing. If all you can do is glance



through the smiling faces and say, "That's going to be my attorney," you're about half way lost already.

So, after a self-defense incident, the Network member's attorney calls me and we can discuss things which will remain privileged information. Because here is the deal, if a Network member calls me and starts talking about this incident that they are involved with, that is not a privileged communication and that communication could be used to perhaps cast aspersions upon that person in court. So have your attorney contact us after a shooting. Don't contact us yourself.

#### ***What other benefits do members get?***

The financial resource part of it is two fold. First, we will pay the member's attorney an instant \$5000 fee deposit in the event of a self-defense incident. This gets the ball rolling. Then the attorney will have money to cover their retainer and to send out an investigator to make sure that all of the people that should be interviewed are interviewed. Beyond this initial \$5000, a member has

the right to petition the Network for additional financial assistance.

Aside from that, there are other member benefits. One of those benefits is discounts of training material. We sell books at a discount through our online book store. Also, whenever a member signs up or renews, they get additional educational benefits. Initially, members receive a three-DVD set explaining the rules of the road regarding self-defense and the law. After that, we follow up with additional DVDs explaining different aspects of the self-defense world.

Also, many of our members are self-defense instructors who give a 10 percent discount off their training courses for Network members. A member who is serious about training can literally pay for the cost of their membership from the money they save taking two or three training courses a year.

***This last year you did a column in CCM, "Incident to Acquittal." Did you write that column to drum up business for your Network?***

Of course, and I think it was success-

ful. The health of the Network is based upon the size of the Network. The more members we have, the more resources our members have available to them.

But that's not the only reason I wrote the articles. As a teacher, I want to educate people. I think that these articles actually opened some people's eyes as far as what can happen if they are involved in a self-defense shooting. All of the nuances, all of the experiences, all of the thoughts in those articles came out of incidents that I was personally involved with as a defense witness or that I had studied first hand. So that wasn't imagination. That was hard core experience for either myself or somebody that I was one step away from.

***Did you enjoy writing that series of articles?***

Actually I kind of dreaded it to begin with because I hadn't done any serious writing for a long time. But once I got into it I found that it was really quite enjoyable. I didn't have to do a lot of research because most of the stuff I had to talk about was from my own experi-



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ence or from my own legal education. Personally, I found it a good review for myself of material that I think is very important. I think we had about eight articles there and each article went about 1500 words, so I managed to get out a lot of good information.

***Tell me about your plans for the coming year in terms of what you're going to be writing for the magazine.***

Well, kind of like the "Incident to Acquittal" series, I'm going to do a series on instructor development based upon my 20 years of experience as a firearms instructor teaching many thousands of new people how to shoot guns. I want not only to touch people who are learning how to shoot, but I want to touch other instructors who are teaching people how to shoot. I'm not sure yet what the title is going to be but we'll figure something out.

***How is your search for Network attorneys going?***

I'm glad you asked because we are still actively pursuing attorneys. We

don't have nearly enough yet. We've been putting most of our effort into developing Network membership in order to boost that legal defense fund up high enough so that if one of our members gets into a jam early on we've got the financial resources to help. Now that that has taken shape and is looking pretty good, we will redouble our efforts to get attorneys. So if there are any attorneys reading this that are advocates for armed self-defense, please get a hold of us and we'll get you set up as a Network-affiliated attorney. We'll start referring our members to you in your local jurisdiction. My goal is to have a good attorney who understands self-defense in every county of every state in the union.

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**CONTACTS:**

Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network  
[www.armedcitizensnetwork.org](http://www.armedcitizensnetwork.org)  
(360) 978-5200

1. Approximate number of members at the time this article was written.

**“IF ONE OF US IS WRONGFULLY PROSECUTED OR SUED FOR A LEGITIMATE ACT OF SELF-DEFENSE, THEN THIS NETWORK WOULD COME TO THE AID OF THAT INDIVIDUAL.”**



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