

"The main objective in a close-quarter gun fight is to put your enemy out of action in the shortest possible time."

(Chic Gaylord, 1997, p.103).

There are "no second place winners" in a gunfight.

(Bill Jordan, 1989).

These words were written in the 1960's and they are no less true today. In fact, today, with the proliferation of material on technique, this reminder becomes all the more important. In a gunfight, the person who puts bullets into their opponent first is usually the winner.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

This is quite simply because a person who has taken bullets is just not going to be functioning as well anymore!

The realities of defensive handgunning are that the best defense against a deadly attack is an aggressive and lightning fast reaction to that attack (Jeff Cooper, 2006). That means putting rounds on the attacker before he has a chance to put them on you!

As the good guy or gal, you are going to only need to use your handgun in self-defense if someone is trying to kill you! You are going to have mere seconds to get bullets onto the center of mass (COM) of your attacker. The facts are that in a fight, the fastest one to get hits on the other normally is going to win! Period. End of story. As if there is anything "normal" about a gunfight!

An open top pancake or belt slide holster like this Don Hume offers the quickest access to your handgun.

Bruce's Isosceles stance while firing in the desert.





This means that when we train to *fight* with a gun (Yes, fight! That's why we should be carrying a gun—to have it if we need it in a fight for our life), we need to keep the above self-evident truth in mind. Whatever slows you down will likely get you killed in a fight for your life! What can we do to acquire such speed?

Recently, I had the opportunity to train with Robin Brown, known to many as "Brownie," a firearms, edged weapons and stick trainer. His background includes being a former United States Marine, former special police officer, former PI, and the owner and maestro of the *Threat Focused Forums* at www.ThreatFocused.com/forums. Visiting with "Brownie" at his home outside of Phoenix in the desert, he helped me simplify, strengthen, and speed up my convoluted and overly-complicated draw stroke (i.e., presentation of my handgun from the holster). We also worked on my stance and my grip. It was back to basics! A simple handshake will do for the draw—"Hi, how are you?" (one fluid motion).

It's as easy as...

It is all about re-learning what you do naturally: *Reach, scoop, getting the support hand onto the firearm if shooting*

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two-handed, and extend. It has to flow in one continuous motion and it should be practiced that way—not as a sequence of separate steps. The point is that drawing the gun is as natural as reaching for something and pointing at it. Just because it happens to be a gun that you are pointing does not change the fact that the fastest path between two points is a fluid, smooth line. Drawing a gun just happens to be a natural human ability that does not have to be and *should not* be overcomplicated.

Drawing from concealment might add a half of a second to the draw stroke presentation, if it is practiced. In fact, it is recommended that if you carry concealed, you practice drawing from concealment. Practice and train the way you will need to fight in real life. Brownie also repeatedly stressed practicing your shooting skills one-handed under twelve feet until you can keep all your shots inside that eight inch group COM with speed—as very often that's where you'll find yourself defending yourself with your firearm.

When I think about it, I have been doing this (as a kid, I remember drawing a toy gun like this) all my life. The skill is lodged deep within my muscle memory. Boy, how is it possible that it ever got so complicated? I journeyed out to the Arizona desert to train with Robin Brown to reduce my confusion brought about by training with so many different instructors over the years.

Mission accomplished! I now remember that as a kid, playing Cowboys and Indians, I knew how to draw a gun. Admittedly, that little plastic six-shooter was not concealed, but the idea is the same!

When someone is trying to kill you, you do not have time to dawdle. The quicker you can get the gun out, the quicker you'll be able to start to stop the threat presented. The skills must be subconscious. You cannot afford the time to have to think about them when someone is threatening your life! You have to go. You have to move! You cannot clutter your mind! Time is of the essence. You have to let your mind do what it does instinctively and what you have trained to do.

Little old man:

Bad guys see a little old man or woman and expect that person to be helpless—a "soft target." Well if you are trained to use your defensive handgun,

this need not be the case. Whether you carry a pocket gun or a larger handgun in a belt holster, you must be prepared to get your gun into action as soon as you realize that your life is in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death from the attacker's actions. It does not matter how good of a shot you are, if you cannot bring your gun into action fast enough. It is important to realize that combat shooting is not bull's-eye shooting. You don't even want two inch groups. Eight inch groups will do! If when you practice, you are shooting two inch groups, then you should speed up. And, when you practice, if you are shooting thirteen inch groups, then you should slow down a bit.

Surviving a violent attack requires ingrained, subconsciously imprinted, automatically deployable fighting skills. If you have to think about it, you will die thinking. Robin Brown takes defensive handgun training to this level. He helped me consolidate a basic platform of skills and concepts from which to practice my ability to survive with a handgun in a violent confrontation.

I was reminded to use my natural ability to draw and shoot—putting multiple rounds with speed on the COM of my target—in this case, paper silhouettes or steel plates. The steel dimensions were 16 inches by 13 inches—the size of the chest area of a normal humanoid. While training with "Brownie." I practiced the drills that I can practice on a square indoor range at home so that I can improve my speed and accuracy at hitting COM.

Eyes in the back of your head:

All is for naught if you are asleep at the wheel. You need to remain in Condition Yellow until something comes into your radar screen that moves you into Condition Orange. When you are in Condition Yellow you need to maintain a continual state of free-floating attention to everything within your 360-degree world. It means exercising your peripheral vision and your incidental hearing. It means having eyes in the back of your head. We all have to be ready for whatever may come up.

Surprisingly, this state of being and awareness is not psychologically taxing. Quite to the contrary, it is psychologically invigorating! It wakes you up to the world around you. It enables you to see everything with fresh vision and greater depth. You take nothing for granted. You are at the ready so that no one can sneak up on you.

Summary:

The draw/presentation of the handgun from the holster is so easy, why make it complicated? It's as simple as "Hi. How are you?" Surprise!!! With the proper grip/hold, trigger control, and visual and kinesthetic reference points (using your natural pointing and visual abilities), you are rewarded with hits on target.

Not only hits count:

Hits without speed are like driving without a well-functioning transmission, or like driving a two cylinder car cross-country. You have to get the gun out fast and pointed on the threat, then start getting bullets on the person who is trying to kill you before you take damage yourself. It is all about getting right into the bad guy's reactionary curve and beating him to the punch—like a winning boxer.



(1) Grip handgun in pocket.



(2) Your elbow comes up as you lift the gun out of the pocket.



(3) The elbow comes down as you point the gun at the target.

I came home from the desert with practical and practicable skills:

On our last day together, we went out deep into the desert to the old Silver King Mine. We met a great guy named "Hawk" and his wife "Di" who take care of the place. We then went out into a wash in a deep canyon, and with an SKS 7.62x39, shot Quick Kill™ rifle. Using this skill I learned how to pick out targets (boulders and bushes) in the canyon (25 to 350 yards) and snap the SKS up onto the target and immediately fire using my visual reference point, this being the end of the barrel.

The "trick" is to NOT stop and think about it BEFORE you fire. Maintaining a solid and consistent cheek weld on the stock and consistent trigger control, I discovered I could use my natural ability to see my target, snap the rifle up on target, see the target and my visual reference point in my peripheral vision, and looking over the gun, hit my target. The reference point remains the same at almost all distances in rifle QK. The idea is not to over-think it, but let your mind and muscle memories do their thing.

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(4) The elbow straightens as you drive your gun to the target.

"Hawk" demonstrated how fast he could draw his single action six-shooter from a cowboy hip holster and put lead on his target. Brownie demonstrated all of his considerable skills as well while in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona.

You must assume in a fight that you are up against a very dangerous man. You cannot afford to underestimate someone who is trying to kill you. You need these skills to survive and stay alive. Threat focused handgunning is all about fighting with a gun, not about

competition shooting. The competition is for your life. Brownie opened my eyes to reality. This is real world survival.

Draw from concealment holster:

The draw from a concealment holster is as simple as shaking hands with someone. It is one fluid motion once you move your concealment garments out of the way. (1) Scoop the gun from its resting place with your hand as it passes by. (2) Drive the gun to the target in a straight line using the wrists as fine tuners.

So, why make it complicated? How many steps does it take to reach for a glass of water or point to something? Let your mind naturally do what it knows how to do to direct your body. Don't clutter it.

Draw from a pocket holster:

Pocket carry is a very convenient way to carry a concealed handgun. The principles of the draw from the pocket are the same. However, you need to train to shoot one-handed close in (12 feet or less). The draw from the pocket is a simple as: (1) Grip handgun in pocket. (2) Your elbow comes up as you lift the gun out of the pocket. (3) The elbow comes down as you point the gun at the target. (4) The elbow straightens as you drive your gun to the target.

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