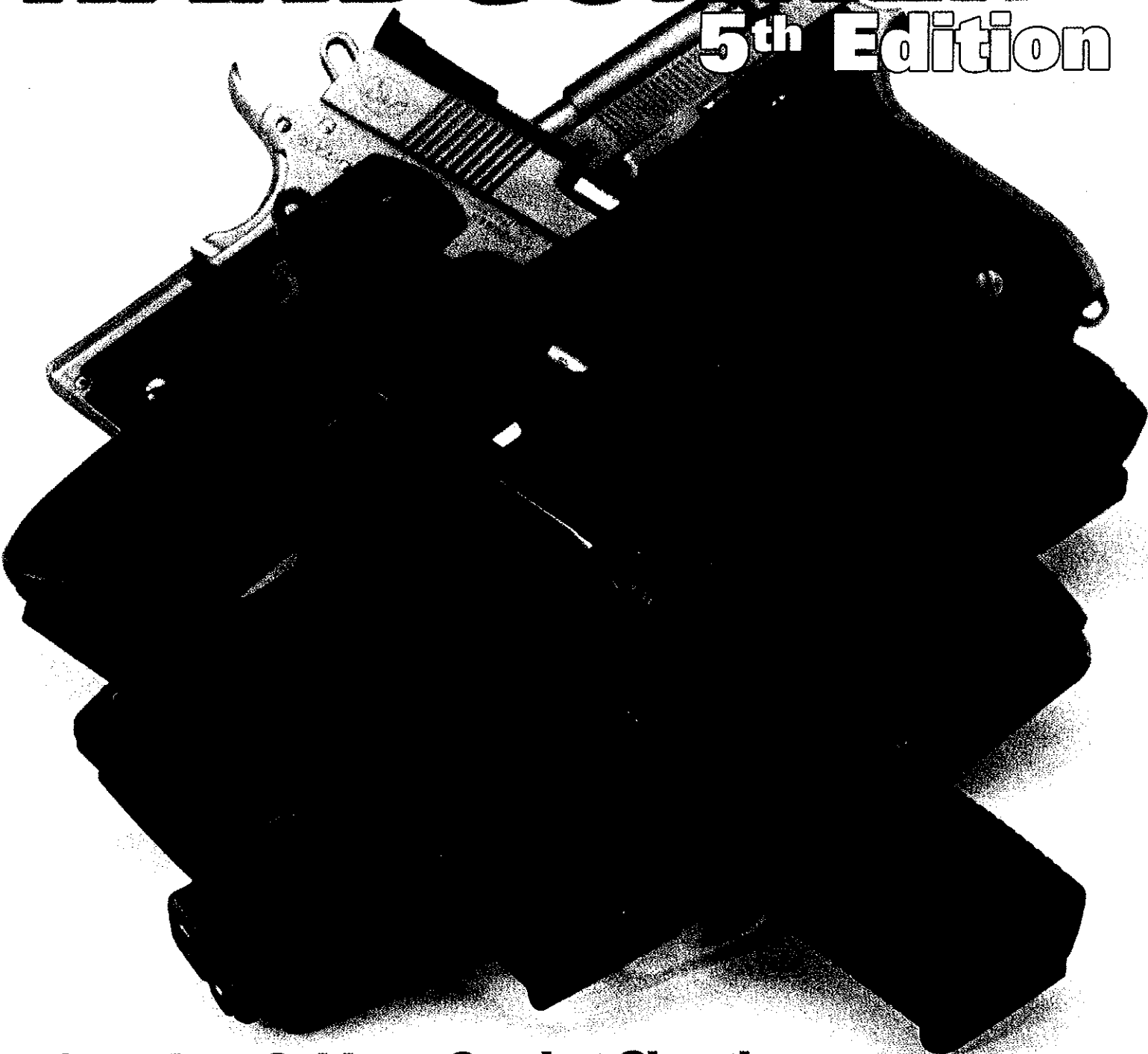


THE GUN DIGEST®
BOOK OF

COMBAT HANDGUNNERY

5th Edition



Complete Guide to Combat Shooting

- **Training • Gun Leather**
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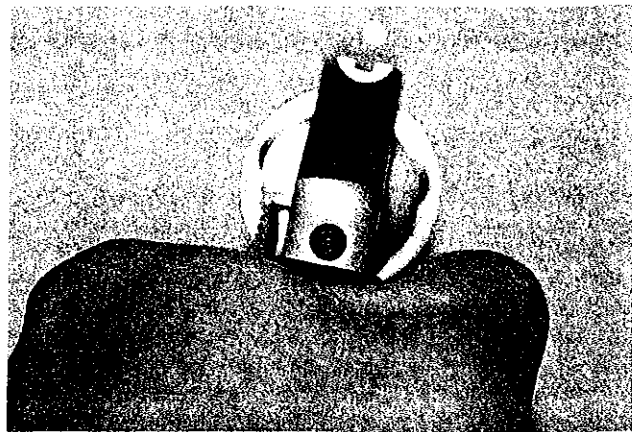
Massad Ayoob

A double-action auto would be secured the same way, holding the hammer in the down position.

I don't see any way to effectively lock up the Glock pistol with handcuffs. What the Glock does lend itself to better than most other guns, is a home safety concept I first heard suggested by Peter Tarley, the world-class instructor who used to work for Glock. Simply unload the pistol, and field strip it. The Glock's barrel/slide assembly comes off *en bloc* as with many other guns, but unlike most others, there is no takedown lever that has to be manipulated a certain way during reassembly. When danger threatens, grab the barrel/slide assembly with your non-dominant hand, your frame assembly with your dominant hand, and put the two back together. Then holding the gun in the dominant hand, seize the loaded magazine, insert it, rack the slide, and you're holding a loaded Glock pistol. It's surprising how quickly this can be done. The old HK P9S, no longer produced, was one of the few other guns with which this trick works as well.

Remember, it's our gun. Power and responsibility must always be commensurate. When we need the power, we must accept – and live up to – the responsibility. In the end,

most of the time, you never needed the power, but you feel good about having fulfilled the responsibility.



On Taurus' "hammerless" CIA revolver, the integral key lock is high on the backstrap of the grip-frame, just above the web of this shooter's hand.

Deadly Force Decision Errors

A book could be written about when private citizens may use lethal force in defense of self and others. In fact, it has been. I wrote it some time ago. The title is, *In the Gravest Extreme: The Role of the Firearm in Personal Protection*. Some kind people have called it the authoritative text on the topic, and it is available from Police Bookshelf, P.O. Box 122, Concord, NH 03302 or online at www.ayooob.com. There, I've done my part and warned you what you need to study.

With only a chapter for this, let's talk about avoiding some of the common mistakes typically made by well-intentioned good guys or gals when they righteously draw in self-defense. Until Lethal Force Institute was founded in 1981, there just wasn't any place a private citizen could go to be trained to the depth police are trained in the discipline the law calls judicious use of deadly force. For decades, there was nothing but either law school on the one end or macho talk around the cracker barrel at the gun shop on the other, and some pretty scary myths were widely distributed that some people take as gospel.

Stop shooting when the threat stops. He drew. You fired. He dropped his gun, turned, and staggered away. If you shoot him again now, it's no longer self-defense. You're looking at hard prison time. When the threat stops, the right to use deadly force stops with it.

Never plant a weapon on a man you've shot, or otherwise alter evidence. Trust me, it will be found. When it is, you lose the critical shield that the law calls the "mantle of innocence." If you altered the evidence, you're prima facie guilty of obstruction of justice. You've also showed the jury you're a lying SOB who covers your tracks to hide anything you figure might make you look bad. Do you think they're going to believe anything else you have to say if they found you planted fake evidence or otherwise misled them? Not hardly. Besides, some judges will allow the prosecutor to argue the theory that alteration of evidence can be seen as an indication of prior planning of a crime. Congratulations, you just turned justifiable homicide into premeditated murder.



Here the American Law Institute is filming a CLE-TV continuing legal education training film for attorneys. From left the panel includes the author, prosecutor Andy Yurick, defense lawyer Jeff Weiner, and Dick Nassberg of ALI, the moderator. The topic is defense of the justifiable shooting case.

Do not leave the scene of the shooting. There is a common law principle that says, "flight equals guilt." The argument is that a person who did the right thing would have stood his ground to explain himself to the authorities and the community, and only a guilty man would flee, to escape what he knew to be righteously deserved punishment. You don't want to fit the latter profile. But, there are times when it would make sense to leave the scene of a self-defense shooting. Perhaps there was no hope of getting emergency medical help there and you had to rush a wounded victim of the criminal to a hospital. Perhaps angry accomplices of the downed criminal were closing in to attack you. If the latter happens, as you leave you should shout at the top of your lungs, "Someone call the police and an ambulance! I'm

going for the police and an ambulance!" History shows that some decent person who has heard you say that is likely to come forth and testify that it is true.

Then, head straight for police, ambulance, telephone, etc. If responding police interdict you en route, you want to be able to show that you were indeed heading for the PD, the hospital, or the nearest point of communication.

Carry a cell phone. This technology is to the private, armed citizen what the portable radio is to the police officer, a lifeline to survival and emergency assistance.

Be the first to call in. If you were a mugging victim who had to shoot an armed robber, ear-witnesses might have heard shouts and a pistol shot. They rush to their windows and see you with the smoking gun standing over the body of the deceased. They call in and say, "A man has murdered someone outside my home," and the stage is set. It's not a pretty stage. The criminal justice system is geared to the concept that the person who calls in and reports a crime, the complainant, is the victim, and the person they call to report is the perpetrator. If you don't win "the race to the telephone," you can end up being seen as the perpetrator who was reported in a criminal act of violence.

Most armed encounters don't end with shooting. Usually, when a criminal realizes he has attacked someone who has the power to kill him if his attack continues, he flees. This is the single most common pattern. The problem is, most citizens don't know what to do after they've driven off the mugger or attempted rapist. They just holster their gun and head for home.

But the mugger or rapist knows what to do. He doesn't appreciate this role reversal. He's going to ditch his weapon, make a phone call, and say, "A crazy person with a gun just tried to murder me! Here's his description..." And he describes you.

The cops catch up with you. You admit that you pulled the gun on the guy. "But he was going to rob/rape/murder me," you tell the responding officers. "He was going to hurt you so badly you had to pull a deadly weapon on him...and you didn't call us? Who do you think you're kidding? You're under arrest."

Remember: whoever calls in first is the victim/complainant. Whoever calls in second or doesn't call in at all becomes the criminal suspect by default. This happens with particular frequency these days in road rage situations. Why would the guy who tried to run you off the road call in and lie about what happened? For the same reason he tried to run you off the road! He's an out-of-control scumbag! Face it, they exist. That's why we have cops, and that's why you carry a gun.

Don't be standing there holding a gun when the police arrive. They've been called to the scene by a report describing "an armed man, there now." You do not want to look like "an armed man, there now." This is another reason that it is best to carry a holster of good quality and design that allows quick, one-handed re-holstering by feel.

If at all possible, have the gun already holstered before police arrive. Setting the gun down is not the best idea, for a number of reasons, some tactical and some evidentiary.

If you have to keep the suspect at gunpoint, and officers arrive and yell at you to drop the gun, do exactly what they say. *Drop the gun!* Make sure you're far enough away from the downed suspect that he can't reach it. Now you know yet another reason why professionals carry guns that are

"drop safe" and cannot discharge from impact when they hit the concrete.

Don't take it personally. The cops aren't mind readers. If it's any comfort to you, they'll do the same to me, even if I have my gun in one hand and badge in the other. If they don't know who I am, or even if they're local and can't recognize me in the dark, they don't know the badge is real. I'll be ordered to drop the gun too. Believe me, I will. I don't want to be killed in a mistaken identity shooting caused by my failure to comply with the lawful command of a police officer, and neither do you.

Don't become indignant with the police. They may treat you like a murder suspect. Well, guess what, you are one. The officers won't know different until this is all sorted out. If you start yelling and showing off or in any way resist, you "fit the profile" of the kind of out-of-control, violent person that juries like to see put away in prison where they won't harm innocent people.

Don't lie! At the scene you should establish that this man attacked you (or your family), and that you will sign a complaint against him. Point out witnesses and evidence that you know about before they disappear. Then, politely refuse to discuss the matter further until you have spoken with an attorney.

The time may come when you need to speak. A good lawyer who knows that the prosecutor is honest and reasonable may well advise you, some days after the shooting, that it is in your best interests to speak to investigators and DA's office personnel. If you choose to do so – and it often is a good idea – make sure the attorney is there with you, make sure you have the discussion videotaped by a professional court reporting service...*and don't lie about anything.*

If you don't know the answer to a question, say "I don't know." People feel during an interrogation that they're on the child side of a parent/child thing, and feel a compelling need to say something that will satisfy the questioner. Don't fall victim to that. If you don't know the answer, say, "I don't know."

Be completely honest with your attorney. He can't help you if he gets blindsided by something the other side knows that he or she doesn't.

If you think you fouled up in some small way, tell the attorney privately before police or prosecutors question you. You can't treat gangrenous tissue. If you ignore it and hope it will go away, it will spread and destroy a healthy limb or the entire organism. Gangrenous tissue must be amputated to save the rest. If you've done something wrong in some small detail, it's survivable. The jury may not like it that in a fear-filled moment you called the attacker a filthy name as you pulled the trigger, but they will understand. However, if you say you didn't and they later find out that you did, they won't believe anything else you have to say, and you're sunk. The jury can accept your not being perfect, but they'll never accept your lying to them.

Avoid discussing the shooting until it has been adjudicated. You drop into the neighborhood tavern for an after-work beer, a week subsequent to having been involved in a justifiable shooting. A friend asks you about it. You begin to speak, and some drunk says, "If I'd been you, I woulda' emptied the whole damn clip into that f---in' S.O.B.!" What do you want to bet that down at the end of the bar, there's a second drunk, who is going to remember this conversation as *you* saying, "I shoulda' emptied the whole damn clip into that f---in' SOB"?

It would be better if every person in the tavern could testify that they heard you say clearly, "Thanks for caring, but it was a very unpleasant experience and I would really rather not discuss it."

There is a possibility that you will be arrested after a self-defense shooting, and held in custody until things are sorted out. Overnight stays or all-weekend stays are not infrequent, and you might wind up in a common holding tank. Assorted unsavory people, some of whom will seem like decent folks, will approach you. You don't need me to tell you about the ones who will want things from you that you don't want to give. What we're concerned with at the moment is the friendly guy who asks you, "What happened, Buddy?"

Don't let the conversation start. There is an excellent chance that you've just been hit up by the resident snitch. He's worried about doing time and he'd sell his own mother for a good plea bargain. He has already snitched off all his criminal friends and has nothing left to bargain with. Tomorrow morning he's going to quietly ask to have a chat with a senior detective, somewhere private. He'll say, "You know that straight citizen type you brought in last night, who's gonna tell you he killed that guy in self-defense? Well, he told me he killed the guy 'cause he stiffed him on a dope deal. I'll testify to that, if you can just cut me a good deal on my little problem..."

It's his word against yours. If everyone else in the holding cell will testify, "Yeah, those guys were talkin' off in a corner by themselves for half, three-quarters of an hour," it will look as if his lies are the truth. It would be better if all those other people could remember you saying the same thing you would have said in the tavern: "Thanks for caring, but it was a very painful experience and I'd really rather not discuss it." Then step away and keep your distance. Stay solitary.

Having to use deadly force against another human being is never pleasant for a normal person. Even for law enforcement officers, whose training prepares them for it, it can be one of the most shattering line-of-duty events in a career that is constantly exposed to human tragedy.

But going through a trial and being wrongly accused will be a more soul-wrenching experience yet, and even more destructive (and far more expensive) to your loved ones. By avoiding the common mistakes mentioned above, you can save yourself and your family a great deal of grief.

I know this better than most people. I've been doing peer counseling with cops and armed citizens who've had to shoot people since 1981, when the famous post-shooting trauma psychologist, Dr. Walter Gorski, taught me in the discipline. Dr. Gorski and I have both seen people who gave up police work or gave up carrying a gun rather than face it.

If they couldn't face it, it's probably good that they got out in time, because the possession of a power you aren't fully prepared to command will get you into more trouble than it will get you out of. And not being able to face the aftermath could make you hesitate in a moment when only your immediate and decisive action could save innocent life.

But let me close by reminding you of one thing. Most of the people who know all these ramifications to their ugliest depths – Dr. Gorski, myself, and a great many others – still carry guns. It is a conscious and well-informed decision.

We would rather face the psychological trauma of killing a criminal, than the trauma of standing by helpless as he murdered an innocent victim. And we know enough not to make the above mistakes that would create unnecessary grief for ourselves, our loved ones, and others.

And so do you.