

While many say it is better to be lucky than good, no one is lucky every time. In this post I am going to attempt to provide some insight into street encounters. Other may have different viewpoints. I am not here to argue. I will say some of the comments I have seen posted in the threads about this sort of matter make me realize that while some ARFCOMMERS are clearly street veterans others are not. This is really for those who are not.

Background

First, my info. I worked in the street of one of America's most violent, dangerous cities for 15 years. I usually worked in the worst part of that city. I spent 15 years in patrol. I liked patrol. It was wild. Most of the time I worked in areas covered in ghetto. By that I mean large housing projects combined with run down slum housing. I have worked all shifts. Later I became an investigator including a robbery investigator. I have spent countless hours in interrogation rooms talking to hold up men. I know them. I am still an investigator but have quit playing the Robbery game because my family was starting to forget what I looked like.

The Enemy

Some may object to me calling hold up men "the enemy". You can call them whatever you like. I can assure you however they are as deadly an enemy as you will find anywhere but the battlefield. Even many soldiers probably lack the viciousness and utter disregard for life most hold up men possess.

No one wakes up in the morning one day and decides to become an armed robber. It is a gradual process that requires some experience and desensitizing. Before a man will pick up a gun and threaten to kill people who have done him no harm in order to get their usually meager possessions he has to get comfortable with some things.

He has to get used to seeing others as objects for him to exploit. He has to accept he may be killed while robbing. He has to accept the felony conviction for Robbery will haunt him all his life. He has to accept he may need to kill a completely innocent person to get away with his crime.

This is a process that starts with stealing candy at the corner store as a child. It progresses through bigger property crimes that may also involve violence. But one day G gets tired of selling his stolen property for nothing and decides it would be better to steal cash. Cut out all that tiresome sales stuff.

Keep in mind many petty thieves, auto burglars, residential and commercial burglars, paper thieves, and hustlers will get to that point and decide not to become armed robbers. Most will. It is a special group of outliers who decide threatening to kill people for a few dollars is the way to go.

Once a man starts armed robbing he has crossed a line most won't. Don't forget that when you are looking these bastards in the eye. Their decision to kill you is already made. Your life means nothing to him. Only his does. His sole motivation for not killing you is he doesn't want a murder case. He has already accepted he may pick one up though.

We hunt hold up men around the clock once they are identified. We send teams of fire breathing fence jumper/door kickers to find them. We will bring their mother to the office and convince her she is going to jail if we don't have Junior in our office in an hour. We have her call her son crying hysterically for him to turn himself in before she is arrested and held without bond as a material witness and her home seized for harboring him. Most of the time they won't. Fuck their own mamma.

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We will hit all Juniors friends and family's houses. We make it so no one will harbor him. He is so hot no one will let him in their house or even talk on the phone with him. We put money on him so he knows he is right to be betrayed and set up. We do this because of one thing.

That thing is they WILL kill someone if they keep robbing. That is why the city is willing to pay all the overtime. They don't want the murders. Think about that when you see Junior coming. The more robberies he does the closer he is to killing someone. Maybe you.

The guys who hit you on the street are gang members. They are Gangster Disciples, Vice Lords, Crips, Sureonos, many others. They do not see themselves as part of society. The street is all they know. They don't expect to live long or stay out of prison. They take a delight in your fear and suffering. They are warped individuals for the most part. They can be extremely dangerous.

One time we were locking up a hold up man and having a conversation about how they target their victims. I was saying they pick easy ones, another guy was saying they preferred easy ones but would take anybody.

I pointed out a uniform Officer there was an NFL size guy to that hold up man. Frankly the dude was a monster. I asked hold up man if he would rob him. He said "If I needed the money".

You

Chances are good you are a law abiding person except for maybe a little light weed smoking and maybe driving a little drunk every once in a while. Most of your life you have been taught to be nice and don't point guns at people. You are the exact opposite of your enemy who was taught just the opposite. Remember a lot of street life is like prison life. Who's the man is everything. Violence is the currency of the street.

You do not possess total disregard for the lives of others and do not want to kill anyone. You are concerned about the ramifications of shooting someone. Your family, your possessions and finances on the line. Your enemy has none of these concerns.

The laws that keep you from carrying your gun in bars or where ever mean nothing to your enemy. Your reluctance to shoot someone works to is advantage. His greater experience in street violence and the element of surprise is on his side.

Everyone should call their local FBI office and get a copy of Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted. When it first came out it was ground breaking because it demonstrated to academics and other elites what street police knew all along. What did it show in interviews with cop killers? Nice guys finish dead. That's right. Most of those offenders commented that the Officer they killed set himself up to be killed because of reluctance to use force early in the encounter.

You can probably find it on line now. A lot of the victim Officers were a lot like a lot of other people, normal people. They were the opposite of their enemy.

Am I advocating becoming the enemy? No. I am saying the person who is robbing you has certain traits, attitudes, and background. That is all.

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Dynamics of Encounters

Hold up men target victims on the street in an impulsive, opportunistic manner. They see someone and make a quick judgment call on whether to rob them. The time between when you are targeted and they are on you isn't long. Therefore, situational awareness is everything.

If you see G coming you are in good shape. If you don't you will be the victim who says "He came out of nowhere". No he didn't. There are many tricks to watching out but simply watching your back is the main thing. Watch your back. If you do it enough it becomes second nature and you won't even realize you are doing it.

Watching out is great but unfortunately many self-defense courses stop there. You have parked your car in a well-lit area, are aware of your surroundings, and looky here, here comes three guys across the parking lot and they start to kind of fan out.

When you lock eyes with G the very first thing you need to do it indicate you have a weapon. It doesn't matter if you do or not. If you are a woman put your gun hand in your purse and keep it there. If you are a man fan your shirt or coat tail with your gun hand. Make it clear to dude you are mentally prepared to draw and making sure your gun is clear. This will many times result in an about face by dude. It is the single best robbery avoidance tactic IMHO.

Not long ago I was walking down the sidewalk in my town to go get my car. I was holding a folding chair in my gun hand. A car slow rolled past me with 4 heads in it. The guys in the back seat turned around as they went by looking at me. They went a little farther and U turned in the street.

Here they come back. As they started to slow down I looked at them with as contemptuous a look as I could muster and switched the chair to my left hand and flicked my shirt tail with my right hand. They just drove on mad dogging me.

In another case I was at a Christmas party and walked a girl to her car about 3 am. As we said our good-byes two guys were walking across the parking lot. One went behind a dumpster. I thought he was peeing. He came out from behind the dumpster with a bottle.

As they got closer I stepped clear of that girl and unzipped my jacket at those two guys. When I did the guy threw down the bottle and they walked by cussing at me. If someone challenges you after you indicate you are armed say "I don't have a gun". Then they will know you do.

Here is an opposite story. A girl my brother knows was walking her dog when a guy approached her. She was polite. Mistake. He talked to her about the dog and said she had pretty hair and reached out and touched her hair. She did not slap his hand down or aggressively object. Mistake. He asked her if her dog bit and she said "No". At that time he slapped the shit out of her, drug her into a wooded area, and raped her.

The answer in the street is always "No". Can I ask you something? No. Do you have a cigarette? No. Can you tell me what time it is? No. The answer is always "No". Don't be nice. Stop the encounter as soon as it starts.

When to draw

Despite warnings I often see on the Net I have yet to encounter an instance in which a hold up man called the police to report his intended victim threatened to shoot him. Thugs do not want to come into contact with the police. They may already be wanted or realize chances are good they have been identified in a recent robbery. Or whatever. They are not going to call the police if you draw on them.

Supposed two guys are approaching you in a parking lot and do the classic fan out maneuver. You indicate you have a weapon by clearing your gun hand and fanning your jacket at them. They are not discouraged. DRAW!

I am not saying you should pull your gun out, assume a Weaver stance, and scream "That's close enough motherfuckers!" What I am saying is draw your gun and hold it beside your leg as you start to move to cover. I am very fond of telephone poles. Anything will do though. They will see this. They will remember they have to be somewhere else. They will not call the police.

Then you can just put your gun back in the holster and go back to whatever you were doing like nothing happened. Why? Because nothing did happen. A happening is when shots are fired.

Do not hesitate to draw. If you are somewhere you are supposed to be and someone appears who is not supposed to be there like a closed business show him the end of your gun. Could it be Mother Teresa looking for her lost cat behind your closed business? No it is some motherfucker up to no good. He won't call the police to report he was prowling a location when a guy ran him off.

When to shoot

The time to shoot is immediately upon seeing his weapon. You are not a police man who has to try to arrest the guy. No need to scream at him. No exposure while you yell for him to drop the gun.

In deer hunting the experienced hunter takes the first good shot. May not be the perfect shot but it never is. Novices pass up a doable shot waiting for a better shot and then the deer is gone. Take the first good shot you are offered. Hopefully your alertness and hostile cues will prevent you ever having to fire. But once you see his weapon, shoot.

If a guy is coming at you with a gun in his hand shoot him. Shoot him right then. If you don't shoot first you may not shoot at all. I have known more than one person who was shot and received life changing injuries and also shot their attacker. Their only regret was not shooting sooner. Like Bill Jordan said "Nothing disturbs your enemy's aim like a slug delivered to the belt buckle area".

Guns and weapons

The handgun is the best weapon you can carry easily. I understand it is not always possible to have one due to laws, restrictions, whatever. I am not telling anyone to disregard laws about carrying weapons. Each person has to decide for themselves what they are comfortable with. I will say there is no substitute for a pistol when you need one.

Also if you cannot be trusted with a pistol after a few drinks you can't be trusted with a pistol period. Booze is liquid bad judgment no doubt but it shouldn't make you into a damn moron. If you are a moron sober I don't know what to tell you.

Types of guns and ammo are always debated and probably always will be. I have seen people shot with all common calibers. My conclusion is if you hit someone between the collar bone and the tip of their ribs three times with anything, they are handled. Bigger is better but something is better than nothing. Get your front sight on his shirt and stay on him as long as he is standing with whatever gun you have.

Just have a gun with sure fire ammo. Draw early and fire immediately upon seeing his weapon. That course of action is about all you can do to up your odds of ending things favorably. Guns like the Ruger LC9, SIG 239, and Glock 26/27 are examples of guns small enough to carry but with enough power and capacity to be useful. Do not be afraid to use a French Lebel if that is the only gun you have. A gun is a gun. I like a Glock 19.

Training

We all want the best training. It can be expensive if you have to pay for it and it can be hard to find the time to do it. There is a whole lot of BS out there. What can you do? First, pistol handling is not rocket surgery. If you will learn the basics and practice on your own you can be fine. Smooth draw, quick pairs, reload. If you know those things well you can be OK.

I know a young man who shot down two hold up men in 2010 at very close range while he and his GF were walking home from the store. He in Wyatt Earp like fashion ignored the fire coming from the gunman and killed him and wounded his accomplice. Neither he nor his GF were injured. He like many was willing to give them the money until he picked up on nonverbal cues that because of his GF they were not quite satisfied with the money. He had a Glock 27.

He had only the most basic of training in gun handling but did do some draws and some dry fire a couple times a week and live fired maybe once a month. That basic skill combined with knowing what to do was enough. He shot at the first possible moment despite having let the guys get the drop on them. When the gunman turned his head because a car drove by that was the opening. A split second is a long time sometimes.

Work on some one hand shooting at close range. That is a skill not as popular as it once was and you want to use two hands when you can. Often you can find yourself doing something with your off hand though so be able to shoot with one hand out to 5 yards or so.

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After

If it comes to pass you are forced to shoot someone do not feel bad. When the police come just tell them a guy threatened you with deadly force and you were forced to fire. I know there are bad police out there in some parts of the country who don't support self-defense. I can't help you with that.

Do not talk to them until you have your attorney present. Now most young guys don't have an attorney on retainer and you may have no idea who to call. That is OK. You will figure it out but in the meantime don't talk about what happened other than to say you were forced to fire. You don't have to be an asshole just remember wait for your attorney.

Hopefully you will not give a statement for a couple days. Remember if you are put in jail that doesn't mean you are charged. Most places can hold you 48 or 72 hours on a felony before charging you or letting you go. Breathe deep and get an attorney.

Expect to never get your gun back. You may get it back one day but maybe not. Do not buy expensive guns for the street. Buy yourself a nice sporting gun if you want a nice gun. Keep your street guns basic. The factory Model 10 Smith and the GI 45 have done a lot of work over the years and aren't fancy.

Worlds

We all live in different worlds. My world is filled with felons and gang members. Violence is common place. No one would be surprised if one of their friends called and said they shot a hold up man at a place of business or parking lot. In the past when I made calls the fact that the guy who is beating his GF is also on parole for 2nd degree murder flavored my world.

You may live in a smaller, less violent place where shootings seldom occur and it would be a rare to shoot a hold up man. I envy you and will be moving to a place like your town as soon as I can.

But be advised no matter where you are a hold man is going to be about the same. Whether he is a home boy or a guy who just exited the interstate into your town and needs some quick money. He is going to have a vicious streak and no regard for your life. Treat him like he treats you.

Giving them the money, doing what they say, all that may work but there is no guarantee. If you have never read Jeff Cooper's book *The Principles of Personal Defense* I suggest you order a copy immediately. It is a short book but summarizes a lot of important things.

Last year we had a trial here regarding an armed robbery that occurred. Three or four guys took a young couple from a parking garage near a college out by some railroad tracks where they raped, shot, and beat them. Their lives will never be the same.

The lesser thugs all turned on the trigger man at trial. The trigger man's statement in the paper was after all that had happened he felt like he was a victim. Think about that. That is the mindset you are up against.

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