

The USCCA 'Members Only Forum'

-Sneak Peek-

-Volume 3-

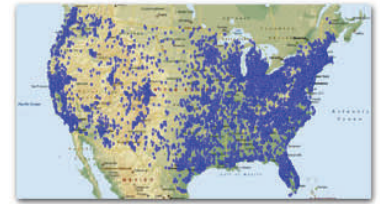
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Founder - USCCA



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USCCA 'Members Only Forum' Sneak Peek
April 2008

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My first time drawing a gun in real defense...?

Original Post by darkenedsun827

05-15-2008, 01:18 AM

"I'm still really shaken up by the events of this past Tuesday morning...

First off, I'll need to back track to four days ago, Sunday morning around 9AM, I walked out to my Nissan Xterra to get ready to drive to Church. Immediately I noticed my door was slightly opened and both my center console and glove compartment were left wide open. My sunglasses, CD's, and jacket were thrown around the inside cabin. Now, the sinking-gut feeling soaks in... MY CAR JUST GOT ROBBED! After inspection of the damage, two things were found missing, my Taurus m617.357 snub-nose (glove box) and my Polish P-64 Makarov (center console) nothing else was taken [including a \$150 stash in a seat pocket and two expensive pocket knives]. I called the police right away, they took possible suspect fingerprints, filed stolen firearms reports and I attempted to deal with my significant losses.

For the past several days, out of paranoia, I have been randomly scanning my condominium parking lot in the middle of the night through my bedroom window, just to see if there was anything out of the ordinary. Without a garage, both me and my wife's motorcycles are, apprehensively, parked out in the open next to our vehicles.

Now to the meat of the topic:

You won't believe what I saw Tuesday morning @ 2AM. (yes I randomly woke up and looked out my window). There, between my Xterra and my Honda VTX 1800 cruiser motorcycle, stood a black figure lifting the door handles of my SUV and then turning and hunching over, feeling throughout the engine compartment of my bike. Immediately I woke my wife up, told her to get her cell phone ready and to watch me through the window as I approached the dark figure. The closest firearm to me, which I grabbed, was my .50 caliber Beowulf AR-15; clearly I was in a hurry to get outside and find out what this guy was doing. Of course my wife quickly motioned for me to leave the rifle and take my compact .45.

I threw on my pants, shoved the Taurus PT145 behind my belt buckle, and grabbed my wallet and flashlight on the way out. As I approached my motorcycle I realized now that the dark figure was now on his side lying down along my bike's engine, with his back to me as he was tinkering with my bike. When I got within 25 feet from him I turned on my flash light and yelled in a loud voice "WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THAT BIKE!!!" I can see that I scared him as he slowly turned around to face me. As he mumbled some incoherent excuses, he stood up, and let me tell you, I don't know if it was just my adrenaline pumping or the lack of sleep but he seemed almost 7 feet tall and formidably built. What was even scarier was the fact that once he stood up he was quickly walking towards me with a very strange look on his face. I noticed in his left hand he held a few a wrenches and a screw driver, but in his left hand was a fully extended box cutter-type blade.

"Is this really happening"..... That's the only thought I had as my body started to move on its own. In one motion my right foot back-peddled into a defensive stance, my left arm lifted my shirt, and my right hand's thumb depressed the safety and the pistol was pulled to aim at my waist... as I yelled, "STAND BACK!!!". At this point he stopped maybe 5 ft away. All I wanted to do is squeeze the trigger, but a part of me couldn't justify taking his life.... right then he immediately faced his side and mumbled something as he slowly walked away. How weird is that?

During the whole time my wife had already called the cops and had a car enroute. As I watched his retreat into the woods, my wife met me outside also equipped with firearm and flashlight. A second later, me and my wife noticed some movement in the opposite side of my building that looked like someone running their way through the buildings and parking lot. Then all of a sudden he jumps into an SUV, it turns on and pops in reverse to exit its parking spot. Not a moment too late, I could see a cop's squad car make its way from the front gate of my subdivision. I flag the cop down and let them know my wife was the one to call, and the we think the SUV, that was now about to pass the cop, may have the guy inside. The lights turn on and the SUV gets pulled over at the front gate.

To shorten this story, this is the rest of the events... the SUV gets searched, the perp's girlfriend (the driver) cried innocence like a maniac and was ordered to go home, the perp's 17 yr old brother is driven home, and the perp is arrested for a pathetic charge of Criminal Mischief... somehow there wasn't enough evidence to charge for Attempted Robbery (even with the freshly stripped ignition wires on my bike, the perp's flashlight left by my bike and my positive ID!) Deep in my gut, I know this is the guy that took my guns several days before, and he was just stupid and greedy enough to come back for more. I doubt this guy is going to get anything more than a small fee and be set free to victimize either me or someone else! Should I have just shot him and not live in fear of a future incident from the same guy, or would that have caused for harm than good? I'm so frustrated at the situation!... How am I supposed to feel when this guy obviously has the nerve to return to my neighborhood, with the possession of at least two guns. This guy knows where me and my wife park? He might even know which condo I live in.

Are the police that indifferent about me and my wife's safety, that they're willing to ignore this criminal's blatant acts? Which is fine as long as they understand that the next time this happens, I will be sure to not hesitate to end this Idiot's career of crime; the guy is not going to be able to walk away. What do you think I should do? Any advice would help me cope with this eye-opening experience. Regards and Appreciation."

And in moments...

mosseater Replied...**05-15-2008, 02:07 AM**

"I think the fact that you pointed a gun directly at him and he wasn't shaken up at all tells us everything we need to know. Sounds like you did fine, though I'm no one to judge. Glad you're all ok.

Biggest thing that jumps out at me is 5' is way too close. He could have cut you to ribbons before expiring from a handgun wound, especially if he was a "big`ole boy". Also, I'm pretty big on not confronting if I don't have to. He was after your stuff and only was directed to you by your own actions. I know it would be tough to stand there and wait for the cops while he messes with your bike, and I won't tell you I would either. Hindsight is 20/20 and quarterbacking is much easier from the arm chair. But, it IS only stuff. I think I may have waited for the cops. A cop told me to use a camera whenever possible. Preferably from a reasonable distance. The gun makes an excellent back up and the camera speaks louder in court. I also like the rifle idea. Some say a pistol should be used to fight your way back to the rifle you never should have put down in the first place.

Sounds like you best be on your toes for a while, you interrupted his work and he may not like it. Stay sharp."

tenthmountain Replied...**05-15-2008, 07:02 AM**

"Glad you're OK!

Please see this thread about your responsibility for keeping your guns secure - your stolen guns are out in the criminal element now, being used to victimize people. Leaving guns in a car routinely is NOT a good idea, as you found out the hard way.

Link: <http://www.uscca.us/forum/showthread.php?t=5510>

I agree with the above - if all that is at risk is your property, stay inside and call the police. They might have caught him red-handed!

If I nevertheless found myself in your situation (big guy advancing toward me with a screwdriver, wrench, and a razor knife - all deadly weapons), then I believe I would have pulled the trigger, several times in fact. Glad your wife was backing you up!

Let us know how this turns out in court."

Youngda9 Replied... **05-15-2008, 07:59 AM**

"At 5', facing a guy with two weapons, coming at me in the dark, after obviously trying to steal my goodies....I don't know. Well, actually I think I do.

You did well. 5' is way too close to let him get to you though. You should have tried to keep him on the ground. And the second he came in your direction, draw and order to stop. Any more steps should have been his last.

At what distance did you draw and order him to stop. Was it at 5'? Or 10' and he stopped at 5'....please clarify.

You're alive and safe, so it was successful for you. Learn from it, and try not to dwell on it too much."

bigdeel Replied... **05-15-2008, 10:09 AM**

"All you can do is assume this is the same BG that stole from you before. With three weapons in hand and coming towards me.....the next vehicle pulling up behind the police car would be the meat wagon. Glad you are safe."

jwoodsher Replied... **05-15-2008, 10:59 AM**

"I wish ALL the members would ID their location - at least the State of residence. Texas ?.... Should be one less BG on the next census count. Ditto on the "no guns left behind" in parked vehicle - but you already know that. You were well within lawful condition for firing that .45.(a FRIGHTENING incident). Warm weather is upon us and the " Cock-roaches" are coming out at night."

Grizzly Replied...

05-15-2008, 11:10 AM

“Since coming away from a critical deadly encounter unscathed is always the goal, you were *victorious*. Glad you weren't hurt or had to take the life of another, even if he was a low-life.

Nonetheless, I agree with the other responses here. Five feet is *way* inside your safety zone. The best tactic, as already stated, would have been to command the perp remain on the ground until law enforcement arrived. If he advanced on you with deadly weapons or even just the intent to inflict open-handed harm, you would have been legally and morally justified to take him down. And regardless of justification, at that point, it would have been your optimal reaction to *insure your survival*.

Before you even **got yourself** into that situation, however, is the better approach to avoid the critical deadly encounter altogether. The perp was only threatening your *stuff, not your person*. In that case, the better option would be to call 9-1-1 and let the cops do their job. If they didn't arrive in time, and the BG got away with your bike...*that's what they make insurance for*.

Thanks for sharing your experience. This is how we learn vicariously.”

rikard Replied...

05-15-2008, 11:42 AM

“At this point, I think it's critical to closely monitor the events that follow. Don't rely on the police to make this a high priority if you don't stay on top of it. Did the guy get bailed out? What about his past record? Has he served time? Surely this wasn't his first rodeo. I would want to know about what type of investigation the detectives would be starting on him, and when he goes to court; an event you definitely have to attend.

You said they fingerprinted the Xterra after you lost your pistols. What about matching up the prints? I'd be talking to the Chief of Police about why the girlfriend and brother, obvious accomplices, were cut loose at the scene without at least being checked for warrants and correct I.D.'s and addresses. My gosh, they were helping this thief in the middle of the night at your residence.

I would be getting this guy's name and doing as much online background checking on him as I possibly could. You'd be surprised what you might dig up. If he's got a violent history, you need to know that. The longer you wait to become proactive, the colder this dangerous event will become in the eyes of the police. He could very well pay a fifty dollar fine and go right back to his chosen trade of master dirt-bag.

Please keep us posted.”

Costie Replied...**05-15-2008, 02:24 PM**

“Five feet away is simply too close! Sure you couldn’t justify taking his life, but you even let him walk away even with him under your gun, and now you know the consequences! He will probably walk away with a slap on the hand unless there is a good judge trying him, but then there’s the 17 year old brother and wife who can always return to cause you grief! I would hope that the police would get a warrant and search this thief’s home to look for a couple of stolen firearms, but doubt your police will do that, too much real criminal tactics for those ‘indifferent’ cops.

Yeah the thief wanted your cycle. First the one he was working on and then on another day, the other one, unless you do something now to secure them where you park them! When I had an expensive Harley in a carport at a place I rented, I secured it with a heavy chain through the spokes wrapped around a steel column and that kept it secure then!

What will you do the next time you catch him around your property? Draw and let him get away again? Or that time will he have one of your pistols loaded and give you the what for then, for your scaring the sh*t out of him with your gun?

What would I have done? When he was walking towards me with his weapons, I would probably would have shot him, aimed at his lower body – legs, abdomen and told him to stand still. You would have been in your right to do that since he was armed!

Thanks for sharing your experience! Now we can continue to learn....”

Darkenedsun827 Replied...**05-15-2008, 04:08 PM**

“I want to thank everybody for their advice. These past few days have been a little overwhelming. I have been received a plethora reactions to my experience, from family and friends (F&F), spanning the entire spectrum of possible "you should of..." and "why did or didn't you...". I know a lot of my F&F don't agree with my lifestyle choice of owning and carrying firearms, so that's a struggle in itself to justify.

It seems that the critical event was the decision to approach the thief while waiting for the police. I already had to make peace with the fact that I lost 2 firearms that meant little more to me than owning any other tool or piece of equipment. I knew then and know now that I will probably never see those 2 guns again. With that said, I don't think I would be able to feel and treat that motorcycle in the same respect. As materialistic as that sounds, with that bike being my father's most prized possession, and my father passing away, at the age of 48, a little over a year ago... I have to say that I would not be able to stand aside and accept never seeing it again. That's stubborn, I know. Other than that bike, there are only two other things I would put myself in danger for, to protect and defend.. F & F.”

Darkenedsun827 Replied...**05-15-2008, 04:08 PM****Continued from last page...**

“Do I think that 5' is way too close... your damn right!!! I get goosebumps just thinking at how fast it escalated from a 25' buffer to 5'. Its scary how it took me about 5' for him to stand up and approach me mumbling some half-assed excuse for being there, and 10' to realize what was in his hands and to see his intentions on his face. At 10' away was when my shirt went up, the order to "stay back" was given, and the gun was positioned to shoot, and there he stopped 5' away. Way too close and no, it was not my intention to allow him to get that close. I know now that it was my inexperience that allowed for that to happen. Having gone through what I did, I believe in the future I would act with more of a defensive mentality, and pay less mind to whether or not what I was doing was illegal. It's a shame isn't it, I am in the dark with a large man approaching me with a knife and I'm worried about the legalities!

I spoke to the officers before they left the scene and they did their best to convince me that since the thief knows now that criminal acts in my parking lot will no longer be "easy pickin's" and will probably result in a gun in his face, he will probably not be seen around here anymore. But trust me, I'll be in high alert a long time to come. As far as the pending consequences for the perp, I could use some advice on how to be proactive and be taken seriously. I have been told that the more personal I make it to punish the jerk, the more personal he may make it to repay his trouble. So how do I get justice without putting me and mine in more trouble...
Thanks again guys. It means a lot to me to know I'm not alone in my choice of lifestyle.”

Black1 Replied...**05-15-2008, 04:40 PM**

“Thanks for the story (and resulting food-for-thought)... One lesson you can keep in mind is this: KNOW YOUR SURROUNDINGS (and everything/everyONE in them). There were two other assailants waiting within close proximity to the event going down. You had NO IDEA they were there (possibly with those two stolen guns), until the police found them. What ever you choose to do next time (hopefully there WONT be a next time), always be sure to TOTALLY survey the area before you jump into it.

God Bless.”

RangerVet75 Replied...**05-15-2008, 05:20 PM**

"Ok, I've finished the story and have a few comments.

The facts are:

You left the security of your home, at 2am, to confront an unknown man/Bad Guy (BG). I'm not going to try and be funny here or intentionally hurt your feelings, but I am going to "shoot straight", and I hope a lot of people listen/read my critique:

- You did not prepare yourself to face more than one man
- You had no idea if the BG was armed, or what with, yet you still decided to leave a secure area (in doors) to challenge him
- You decided to take a pistol in favor of a rifle, although the pistol is a poor tool to stop a man and the rifle is most excellent
- You focused only on the man (tunnel vision)
- You failed to pick up (locate) his backup, who no doubt picked YOU up right away
- Your hands were empty when you challenged the BG
- Your original challenge to the BG was in the form of a question
- You slipped the safety off your Taurus before you cleared your pants
- You never told the BG that you had him at gunpoint... ie., "Freeze, I have a Gun" or "Stop or I'll Shoot!"
- You allow the BG to close within striking distance

So, to recap:

You intentionally put your life, and your wife's life, in danger as you confronted at least 3 people at 2am while doing almost everything wrong that I can see... but you didn't get hurt. You didn't shoot anyone. Your wife is fine. Whatever mistakes you made, it seems to have worked, and that is the bottom line. Nobody got hurt. You have (thankfully) another chance at planning for the next event.

I gotta tell you man, your post freaked me out. You CANNOT get away with stuff like that. Dude, you are lucky to be alive.

If that guy was a member of a crew, instead of trying to impress his girlfriend and brother, you would have probably been engaged by the lookout while you were walking across the grass, trying to get into position.

Continued on the next page...

RangerVet75 Replied...**05-15-2008, 05:20 PM**

"You don't understand that the real bad guys do not play like that "kid" you met the other night. Real true bad guys, nowadays, kill anyone who tries to make them stop doing what they want to do.

Sometimes we may be forced to "go stop the BG from stealing x,y,z", but you have to have a plan on how you'll do it. You must never again do what you did here. Please, please, please, for the love of God... look into getting some training. Even if it is only one of those NRA "Valhalla DVD" training packages (with names like "Combat Focused Shooting").

Realise that today's BG may very well be smarter than you. He is, in fact, more experienced in performing criminal acts. He very well might be more experienced in shooting (God help us). If you are really unlucky, he might be a real gangbanger with 2 or more kills in his past.

And you had no idea who you were walking out to challenge. I'm sorry man, but your post is a good example for all of us.

I don't mean to sound like I'm Chuck Norris and know it all. This is a good thing, and I'm glad you posted it in such detail. This is how we all can learn. If everyone who reads this picks out a lesson from this thread, then we are all learning.

I only hope some more advanced people help us out here. That is why I paid the \$69... to learn how NOT to make these mistakes. I'll keep an eye on this thread with hopes that the old guys hit it."

Boats36 Replied...**05-15-2008, 07:57 PM**

"Notes....Notes.....must take notes.....Get trained.....don't confront...long guns 1st.....have a plan.....look for other BG's.....learn what to say....not too close now... call the cops....wait....let'em take your stuff.....pictures.....etc, etc, etc.

Man, I hope I never get involved in something like this. Even with training, how can you know your ready? How can you be confident with so many variables? Shoot the BG..but think about the liabilities before you do (or not?). Where's the line? What separates between alive, dead or behind bars? 20 years Marine Corps + 20 years LEO + 20 years NRA instructor?

Stories like this scare the hell out of me, because I can see myself making mistakes too.

Remember that guy in the movie "Hamburger Hill", the one that was always worried that he wouldn't remember the warnings for incoming or out going rounds, which flare color meant what and the like?

I feel like that guy sometimes. Pulling your weapon, for whatever reason, is like a deep pass in football.....only 1 thing can go right....and there's a lot working against it."

NorCal Chuck Replied...**05-15-2008, 08:36 PM**

"The best thing that I see within this experience is that we all need to Get training, Get more training.

What you want is your training to take over when you need it.

I can't thank you enough for this post . . . There is so much to be learned from your experience. I suggest that you look up and read about the 21 foot rule. What this shows you is that a BG can close the distance of 21 feet faster than you can draw and fire. 1.5 seconds is all it takes to close 21 feet and be in your face.

Thank You again and please keep us posted if anything more comes of this.

I am so glad you and your wife are safe . . . Get some training . . . anything will help."

Varduga Replied...**05-15-2008, 09:15 PM**

"My God... what a story, and what amazing replies.

RangerVet- great words of wisdom there... I'm getting to the point where if I see that you have replied to a thread, I know that it is a must-read.

I can't wait to see where this goes, and I hope that the original poster doesn't feel bad about people underscoring his mistakes- it is the only way people like us can learn!

Do not be ashamed, you are alive.

Pat"

Boats36 Replied...**05-15-2008, 10:54 PM**

"Darkendedsun has nothing to feel bad about. If it were me, I would absorb everything, even if you flamed me like kindling.

But the bottom line for me would be to do nothing but analyze every step I took and develop 3 different ways of dealing with what happened. Then I'd play them over in my head. Then I would project....change things....mix it up and do it all again...forever....while I trained professionally.

Dark has had an experience that not every LEO has had..... He had to pull on someone!

Maybe it's just me....but that's BIG!

I know I'll be thinking about it for quite a while."

38spesheel Replied...**05-15-2008, 11:00 PM**

"Ditto Varduga.... Thank you Ranger for the honest evaluation. This wasn't a Grand Theft Auto game people, where you can start the game over if you get killed. It's easy to get a puffed chest (not that this is what you did Darkened) because you can carry. We're law abiding citizens and not criminals, so we don't think like scum. So we really need to think before we draw. As pissed as I would have been, I think I would have chosen to wait for the cops. Property isn't worth my life or getting sued for removing some scum from the DNA pool.

GREAT feedback that really makes one think. Darkened, I'm glad you are alright and shared your experience. I'd definitely be on orange or red alert for awhile. Change where you park if possible. Survey your surroundings and have your hand on your firearm. Hopefully, your stand was enough to discourage the dirt bag from working your neighborhood."

DesertLion Replied...**05-16-2008, 01:18 AM**

"I'm going to philosophize here for a bit. RangerVet's excellent and accurate post notwithstanding, I disagree with something posted earlier, and I think it's at least worth exploring.

Now, just to be clear, I agree that it's totally unwise to leave safety and confront a thief who is already a safe distance away. That's not my point of disagreement. It's the implication that stuff isn't worth defending that bothers me.

I work hard. I make a pretty decent living at it, but I have others in the house who make a large dent in it. Every minute I spend at work is a part of my life I didn't get to spend with my family. I traded that minute for a part of a dollar (of which the Government took about a quarter). When I purchase something, I have now traded those precious minutes to the vendor who sells the item. That stuff represents part of my life, and no disgusting dirtbag has the right to take even a part of my life. Why should I let him get away with it so that an insurance company (to whom I also pay part of my life in order to cover the other parts and who will also increase size of the portion of my life they extract) can give me back only a portion of what was stolen, if anything at all? If it were my motorcycle, it would be nothing at all...it's not covered by insurance against theft--over 20 years old.

Life is precious - I value it above pretty much everything. But truth be told, I value my life - all of it - above almost all others. I'm more than willing to give part of it away and do so regularly, but it's my choice when and where that happens. Giving part of it away to someone who really appreciates it is one of life's incomparable joys. If you ask, chances are I'd do almost anything for you if I have the capability. Nobody takes my life without either permission or a fight. If it happens when I'm not around, I have been violated...I take it very personally.

Given this approach to life, and stuff exchanged for life, I have no qualms whatsoever using deadly force to stop someone from taking my life, or any part of it. In some states, the law agrees with me. In my state, it doesn't."

Continued on the next page...

DesertLion Replied...**05-16-2008, 01:18 AM**

"So as I mentioned when starting this, I'm philosophizing. I'm not suggesting opening the window and leveling the .50 Beowulf AR-15 at the thief and letting the first round get his attention, although if it were a safe shot, it would be my personal preference. Puts you at very little direct risk from the thief or the rest of the thief's team (if any), ends the threat on a portion of your life, and reduces the chance of a repeat performance. Anyone with so little regard for my life as to steal part of it, and so little regard for what he is stealing that he is unwilling to voluntarily trade part of his life for it, is most likely willing to take other actions that disregard others' lives as well. If he's not willing to trade voluntarily, involuntarily works for me.

If more thieves paid for their actions this way, others would have to re-evaluate the cost/benefit ratio. It's already working with violent criminals in areas where concealed carry is passed - violent crime routinely drops, faster in high crime areas than in already "safe" areas, but it drops pretty much everywhere. There's no reason we can't return society to the state of affairs many of us grew up with - nobody locked their doors, and you could start your car without a key if you didn't lock the ignition - by helping everyone understand the value of life...and helping them realize they could lose theirs if they try to take someone else's. If an armed society is a polite society, and theft isn't polite, well, you connect the dots.

Unfortunately, I don't see a wave of legislation cresting on the horizon to make Texas' law regarding use of deadly force to protect property as concealed carry did and the Castle Doctrine is rolling now. Until that happens, or I move, my philosophy will probably remain only that because I'm not willing to trade any future portion my life to the legal system to defend a portion already spent.

End philosophizing."

xichlo Replied...**05-16-2008, 01:22 AM**

"They suspend TPD officers for being over aggressive with catching bad guys but ignore a Lieutenant recently promoted and on probation making porn tapes of him and a girl in his patrol car. Here if you went out and shot the dirt bag, you'd go to jail, "You should have called 911 and watched him steal your stuff". Word of advice, you should not go out but just call 911. But if you do go out, have you stuff together, be dressed, CCW ID, firearm and holster, "Officer, I just couldn't sleep, got up to go to the Quick Mart and get a soda and chip's just jumped out of nowhere, I thought he was gonna kill me with that box-cutter" . Now you have a reason for being there, your not in your PJ's, your dressed to go somewhere with permit and gun. Even in Tucson they would have a hard time hassling you too much.

Good philosophy. I agree, you'll always have hardcore dirt bags, but not many and they would be eliminated by attrition. It's a shame you have to create justification to protect yourself. Our system has made it a crime to stop a criminal. I only place a value on good people's lives, if a BG values his don't mess with me, my wife, my friends or property. People always say you wouldn't take a life over property, its replaceable. I say its the dirt bags choice, not mine, he messed with my stuff, he didn't value my life so why should I value his. I think society will wake up after our next 9/11 and start readjusting its attitude about a lot of things.

Desert Lion Replied...**05-16-2008, 08:09 AM**

"I'd like to agree, but society did wake up after the first 9/11. They didn't stay up very long. How many similar assaults will it take before attitudes are permanently adjusted? We can't wait for some external event to be the magic bullet to restore justice. I don't have the answer, but waiting for another 3000 people to be killed in an attack on our country doesn't seem like the best possible alternative."

rikard Replied...**05-16-2008, 09:00 AM**

"This has indeed been one of the best threads I've followed since joining. I suppose that's because it's based on real life experience. The comments are solid and clearly represent years of priceless wisdom as well as some very deep thought. I say thanks!

A couple things that really struck me were:

1. The horrible outcome this could have produced if the girlfriend and/or the brother waiting in the getaway vehicle had joined in as backup for the bad guy. That's three against one, and they had the full advantage of ambush and surprise since their presence was not known at the start. That scares me half to death.

2. Even though the guy was laying along side the motorcycle in the middle of the night, and had some tools, and was "tampering" with the bike; what if he had been the local slow kid, gentle giant, village idiot, who was out riding his bicycle late at night and got interested in the big chrome scooter? At the first, "Hey you!!" he might have jumped up with his Boy Scout knife in hand and jogged directly at the good guy, which could have been the last thing he'd ever done.

I guess that's another reason you can't legally shoot to stop the loss or destruction of your property. I understand this event was tainted by the vehicle burglary from the week before, but it could have been an entirely different incident with the motorcycle.

Several years back, there was a big thing that made 60 Minutes or Primetime about the repo man with a tow truck, hooking up a guy's pickup in front of his home. The truck owner opened his front door and put two rounds in the tow truck driver's chest and he died. The cops filed murder charges against him, and I believe he did some time in prison. The civil suit awarded the tow truck driver's family some figure in the multi-millions as well. A totally different situation, of course, but the shooter claimed that he wasn't behind on his payments and thought the tow guy was stealing his fancy truck. Who knows?"

AZ-Neanderthal Replied...**05-16-2008, 11:23 AM**

"You have received some very good replies, all of them good for the people making them at this time and good points to ponder. For many years I would not have approached the punk. Having small children in the house I would want to make sure we were all secure, call the police. But situations change. The children are gone and I feel I have a freer hand.

And that is why I believe my training never ends. Technical competence with the firearm is good, but I do feel training also elevates mental/situational awareness.

I carry for political reasons as much as for self defense. We have to protect our rights and our STUFF. "It is only stuff" got us into this thieves have rights mess. Would I have let the punk get within five feet? I would hope not; I can not say for certain of course but it is my training and goal to stop the punk on his first move. But that is me.

So Darkendedsun you came out unhurt, so it went well. As far as leaving a gun unattended in the car--we all know it is a bad idea, but I have done it at times. Live and learn good sir."

Grizzly Replied...**05-16-2008, 11:57 AM**

"DL, I appreciate your philosophy. Your argument that your material goods represent parts of your life spent working is certainly something worth thinking about. I see where you're coming from, but not so much where you are going.

*Originally Posted by **Desert Lion**: It's the implication that stuff isn't worth defending that bothers me.*

I think I was misquoted. I didn't say your stuff isn't worth defending. My point was that your stuff isn't worth **risking your life over**. Your presumption is that you will prevail with the use of deadly force in the defense of your property. Personally, I think that is a reckless and dangerous presumption. If you lose -- and that is a real possibility -- your stuff certainly will no longer be of any use to you.

*Originally Posted by **Desert Lion**: Life is precious - I value it above pretty much everything. But truth be told, I value my life - all of it - above almost all others.*

Here we agree. Life IS precious...**it is also short**. Why would you want to risk shortening it even further over stuff you can do without or replace? Yes, I realize you will never get back the time you spent working to buy that stuff, but that is spent time or "sunk costs." I believe you should value the time you have left over the time you don't.

How's that for philosophizing?

*Originally Posted by **Desert Lion**: End philosophizing.*

Come on, DL, do you really expect us to believe you are done philosophizing? After all, you're so good at it.

guzziguy Replied...**05-16-2008, 12:02 PM**

"I have just one comment here. There were several lives potentially put on the line here for STUFF. Life does not equal STUFF. The only reason to put your(or any) life on the line is to protect life. By not shooting you saved yourself from certain jail time.

And, Never, never, never leave your guns in your car."

tijonyc Replied...**05-16-2008, 12:03 PM**

"Consider the experience a relatively safe lesson, which now leaves you a bit wiser and more prepared in the future. No shots fired, nobody injured, only some personal property damage and the theft.

If a similar event happens in the future you'll hopefully be a little less distressed and a little more thoughtful. As was mentioned earlier, calling 911 and then remaining silent would not alert the thief and he would probably have still been trying to work quietly while the police arrived.

After having the car broken into, the urge to run out to protect other property is perfectly understandable.

The event has certainly given you lots of feedback, and that should give you more confidence and strategy to deal with any future incident. I am using your experience to educate myself so that if (the dreaded IF) a similar incident were to happen to me I'd know my options to deal with the event.

It's a valuable lesson for us all and thanks for sharing it with us."

PGowing Replied...**05-16-2008, 03:00 PM**

"First, let me say I'm glad you and your wife are ok. Second, I'm sorry your stuff stolen, even it is just stuff, the vulnerable feeling you are now left with sucks. I've been there.

I have an observation that I think you should think about, long and hard. As others have said, 5 feet is way too close. I think the reason he got within 5 feet is this; You said" All I wanted to do is squeeze the trigger, but a part of me couldn't justify taking his life..." If you are not willing to pull the trigger, DON'T PULL THE GUN! Now he knows you are armed and unwilling to pull the trigger. At 5 feet he can grab the gun, shoot you, shoot your wife and have whatever he wants. If you aren't willing to use lethal force, retreat to a more defensible site. If you are worried about the legalities of shooting him in your driveway, retreat to your house and shoot him if he comes in. Before you continue carrying lethal force, you need to think about your willingness to take a human life. You current indecision actually INCREASES your risk. Had you not been armed, you probably have stayed inside the house and waited for LE to arrive. No shame at all in that, after all it is just stuff.

I'm sorry if I come across as a hard ass but I think this really cuts to the crux of concealed carry and justifiable shooting. Now having read your post, I will spend the rest of the day wondering what would I have done? Would I have stayed in and call LE? Would I have gone out shotgun in hand? How close would I have let him get before shooting? What if he wasn't armed, what if he was some scrawny teenage punk? I guess you never know till you are there."

rikard Replied...**05-16-2008, 03:12 PM**

"Darkenedsun wrote:

"As far as the pending consequences for the perp, I could use some advice on how to be proactive and be taken seriously. I have been told that the more personal I make it to punish the jerk, the more personal he may make it to repay his trouble. So how do I get justice without putting me and mine in more trouble..."

I don't think you have to raise any of the perp's radar to be proactive about following this case. He wouldn't have any way to know that you are quietly staying posted on the progress of the investigation and prosecution unless you make it known through your own efforts. But you do want to become an expert on this guy and his crew to whatever extent you can glean info about them. In this day of internet and computers, the sky's the limit if you really put your mind to it.

Everybody is entitled to their own opinions, of course, but if it were me, I would make an appointment to speak in person with the Chief of Police for your town. If it's such a large town or city, you will probably get an appointment with a fairly high-ranking officer instead.

Most of the high-ranking people and the Chief are very political, and are thinking ahead at all times about promotions, their image, and any publicity a bumble on their part might generate. Don't let on that you know the above facts and don't bring any type of "attitude" along with you; just be friendly and lean forward in your chair.

Simply tell him that you are very concerned and interested in the outcome of this incident, and that you would like to be kept informed in as much detail as the law permits as the case moves along. Hopefully, he will assign a contact person farther down the line for you to communicate with; and if you start up a nice relationship with that guy, you might be surprised at what you can find out and learn about your perp; and he'll probably have lots more time to talk to you and explain things. He'll be working to get that pat on the head from Chief.

That's where I would start if it were me."

Darkenedsun827 Replied...**05-16-2008, 03:35 PM**

"Guys, I can't thank you enough for all the great and constructive advice. I admit that in retrospect, I should never have left those guns in the car. THAT WAS STUPID! Never again... I can't express how guilty I feel about providing firepower to the criminal element in my community. What kills me more is the fact that, after reading the police report, I know where the perp lives, which is very likely the hiding place for my guns. And I can't do a damn thing about it. I spoke to the LEO at the desk to inquire further about any investigation or trial, and the only response is that "they will get back to me as soon as they can." So I guess that's their way of saying, "Buddy your S.O.L.!". Hmmm..."

Continued on the next page...

Darkenedsun827 Replied...**05-16-2008, 03:35 PM**

“Correct me if I am wrong, but I can't help but think that this is a damned if you do, damned if you don't scenario. If I stayed inside, and waited the 10-15 min for the cops to arrive the perp MIGHT have gotten caught in the act, but I can't see him taking that long to hot wire my bike. The SUV, with the GF and the younger brother, that was parked in the parking lot a couple buildings down, would start their car and drive off with no tie or accessory to the bike theft. Once the cops arrive I would be left to give a description of "a tall dark figure driving my bike away". Later I would discover the half-assed attempt to recover the stolen guns would also apply to my stolen bike. Instead I called the cops, then...(see the first post)....., and was able to ensure the perp was positively identified and charged (even though with only Criminal Mischief), was able to identify the perp's vehicle (light teal, late model, Ford Explorer with, get this, Jesus fish on the rear door). Which I have now informed the Board of my Condo to keep an eye out for, neighborhood watch in the future?... I hope so.

I do not in any way recommend that what I did was right or the safest option, but it was what I chose to do. I'll be the first to admit my inexperience and given the consequences, I have no regrets. I have no problem being criticized for my personal choice, and I thank God no one got hurt!

Proper training and research is now a priority. Regarding such, how does one justify bringing a rifle out instead of a concealed handgun into a condo parking lot? Also, what would be the best way to determine that a criminal is alone? Should I have noticed the perp's parked car amongst the other parked cars two buildings down?

If I'm honest, I would like to say that this forum is Top Notch! This has been my first thread with my first post on this forum, but the other 6 forums I belong to barely compare to the amount of experience and awesome advice I have received here. Thanks again guys... Here's to the USCCA.”

alex Replied...**05-16-2008, 07:05 PM**

“Pardon my being blunt. This a very serious matter and you are lucky to be alive. Your 1st, mistake is leaving the safety of your house not knowing if he was alone and how he was armed. 2nd. you let him get within 5 feet of you. You might have hit him but he would surely have sliced you up with that box cutter. You see you were reacting by drawing your pistol to his moving towards you all he had to do was side step left or right and you would have missed him. Try this scenario with your wife or friend. Have him or her stand in front of you at 5 feet distance with their finger pointed at your chest simulating a hand gun. Tell her to say bang as soon as she sees you move. You move one step side ways left or right I assure you she will miss.(Reacting is always slower than Acting)
Please take this in the in the spirit in which it is intended.”

Popajones Replied...**05-16-2008, 07:48 PM**

“Thank you Darkendsun for sharing your experience. The price of this years membership has been worth the money with the knowledge gained from this thread alone. Great experience shared, fantastic input by members and lots of hind sights to think about. The 21 ft rule and I don't want to kill or die over STUFF certainly jump out at me. I assume the long gun tactic over the hand gun applies more so to this particular incident than as a general rule overall in self defense ?”

tenthmountain Replied...**05-16-2008, 08:34 PM**

“.50 Caliber rifle in condo parking lot? No, I have to disagree on that point. I don't know the layout of your condo complex, but I'm willing to bet that if you had to fire your .50 rifle, the bullet would have gone through the bad guy, through the nearest wall, and would probably still be flying downrange mad as the dickens!

Between the two, the handgun was probably the better choice. But, you may want to get thyself a shotgun...”

Grizzly Replied...**05-16-2008, 09:32 PM**

“darkenedsun, Thanks for starting this thread by posting your frightening encounter. We have ALL learned something here, not just you. It isn't easy to admit mistakes, especially so publicly. But in doing so, and becoming better for it, you have shown great strength of character. Glad you're part of this association and thank God you were unharmed. Always Be Armed AND Always Be Safe.”

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If you feel the same way I do about family, responsibility, and self-defense, I'd be honored to have you as a new member.

Sincerely,

Tim Schmidt
Founder - USCCA