

Defending Against Empty-Hand Attacks Part II of an Interview with Robert A. Margulies, M.D.

Interview by Gila Hayes

In February's online journal we interviewed a semi-retired emergency room physician who, drawing upon his 50-year career in emergency medicine, identified the injuries, disability and lethality resulting from empty-hand attacks. This month, we continue our talk with him about how to thwart or preferably, prevent, an attack. If you missed our February edition, browse to <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/seriousness-of-empty-hand-attacks> then return to this edition where Dr. Robert A. Margulies explores issues related to identifying dangers and reacting justifiably but quickly enough. First, a correction to last month's interview. We introduced Dr. Margulies as "retired" when, indeed, he is semi-retired and still very active in his many pursuits. In addition to medical work, he volunteers with Doctors for Responsible Gun Ownership, furthering their mission to spread the truth about gun ownership through scientific facts and their own members' expertise about firearms, encouraging gun safety and injury prevention through responsible gun ownership and lawful self defense. His contributions to their website are at [this link](#).

We return now to our interview with Dr. Margulies about avoiding, countering and surviving empty hand attack.

eJournal: Last month, you gave us the sobering message that blunt force trauma, even strikes delivered by an open hand, can kill or cripple. How do you respond to the common reaction often heard at the range or gun store after the news reports a homicide by empty-handed means: "I'll just shoot someone who tries to grab or punch me"? I rarely say "never," but I'd like your thoughts on drawing a gun into a close-contact, physical struggle.

Dr. Margulies: First, if someone has already grabbed you, you are too far behind the curve to be able to get a firearm – especially one from concealment. We really do have to be prepared to use defensive tactics to make time and space. The average police officer needs 1.7 seconds to get a gun out of a triple retention holster and make a retention shot.

Handgun rounds, unlike rifles, are rarely stoppers. Handguns, which is what we're more likely to have in the situations we're talking about, aren't stoppers. We have lots of cases where people have been shot in the liver which is a pretty bad place, and who kept going for 15-20 minutes. We have people who were gut shot who went on for a long time. Maybe if you are lucky enough to get a hit that is high enough to take out the neck or hit the head, they'll stop.

The concept of terminal ballistics – what happens inside the body when the round hits – has to do with the kind of round, where it hits, obviously, and the motivation or drug intoxication of the attacker. A motivated attacker will take a chest hit, a gut hit, a liver hit, a spleen hit, and in the 60-90 seconds before they bleed out, do an awful lot of damage. If you hit the right spot, you can get a fast bleed out but that is less common.

If you have made some distance, how much time do you have before the individual is back on you, unless you have delivered a disabling blow? What we are really talking about is the ability, once grabbed – if awareness, avoidance and all the preliminaries have failed – to back that individual up and get them off you.

Without some training, most people cannot readily do that. We are not talking about needing to be highly trained and experienced martial artists; we are talking about five or six hours of training and of course, practice after training. You need to know how to get that grabbing hand off your coat, shirt, or throat instinctively. If you must think about what to do, it is too late because the second blow is already arriving. When somebody grabs you, they intend to hit you. How much time do you have? Not enough.

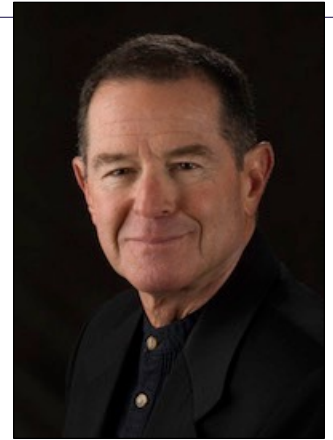
eJournal: In answer to "How much time do I have?" John Farnam famously said, "You have the rest of your life." Dynamic movement off the line of attack can buy time, but that requires recognizing the problem and getting our feet into motion.

Dr. Margulies: Can you back up safely? How much time do we have? John is absolutely right. You are either going to make it or you are not. Making it does require training.

eJournal: In February's journal you observed how we fail to take empty-handed attack seriously enough. Do we fool ourselves by ranking potential for physical harm by an attacker's possession of – or lack of – a weapon?

Dr. Margulies: We must eliminate the idea that one cannot be injured by an individual without a visible weapon in their hand. The danger is not the tool – the firearm, the knife, the club – the danger is the individual. The individual is the weapon; everything else is simply a tool. If the individual wishes to do harm, a kick or an open hand blow can certainly do that. That is why, personally, I study Marc MacYoung – and it is not just

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Marc, although he does do it so well! I also study Rory Miller and others. The keys to survive in a fight start with not being in a fight. I study awareness, avoidance, and when awareness and avoidance fail, I need to understand pre-attack indicators. [Readers, see <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/preview-recognizing-responding-to-pre-attack-indicators> for an introduction to MacYoung's work from our member education program. –Editor]

eJournal: What do we need to recognize?

Dr. Margulies: OK, let's say you and I are in a verbal altercation. If I do this [*takes off his eyeglasses*], what has that told you?

eJournal: You're getting ready to go physical, and you want your specs unbroken afterwards.

Dr. Margulies: Sometimes people just take their eyeglasses off and they put them in a pocket. That is not as concerning, but when somebody takes their glasses off, looks around and then puts them on the hood of a nearby car, that is not the same as taking their glasses off and putting them in a pocket; that is a pre-attack indicator.

eJournal: There is an intentionality, there is a meaningfulness to setting the glasses aside in a safe place; the action is out of the ordinary.

Dr. Margulies: Let's imagine the same situation and this is what I do [*rolls neck and shrugs shoulders*]. Did that make you feel comfortable? What about that shoulder shrug? That loosening up movement? Watch the individual who does this and then puts one foot forward. Look out for clenching fists at one's side.

That is why you must have a broad gaze. You cannot just look at their face. Somebody who is clenching their fists; somebody who hides one hand behind them; somebody who stares at a certain part of your body – stares at your jaw, stares at your neck – that's a target glance. They are ranging. They are computing, internally, how close must I be to hit that target. They are not consciously thinking that but that is what their brain is doing.

eJournal: To maintain the broader view, are you suggesting staying further away from unknown people to see what their hands are doing, how they have put their feet and other preparatory steps people take before they launch?

Dr. Margulies: The problem has happened because awareness has failed, avoidance has failed, and we are now inside interpersonal space: you are now within 3 feet. Can you safely increase the distance? What is behind you? Can you check without taking your eyes off the potential attacker?

If avoidance has worked, you are not going to get into my space. My space is 6 to 8 feet because you cannot reach me without moving; you cannot throw a quick punch at 8 feet.

We teach police officers that their interview distance is 6, 7, 8 feet. Close enough to be personal; not close enough to be hit. Classic instruction for police interview position is that distance, bladed so your gun is further out of their reach and easier to protect. That 6 to 8 feet gives you distance and time to react.

You must be looking for those pre-attack indicators. The pre-attack indicators are the target glance, the neck roll, the shoulder shrug, the clenching fist, the hidden hand, blading, weight shifting. If our members understand that these are not trivial, nervous movements, then expert witnesses can testify what these actions mean. These are pre-attack indicators.

The key when you are on the witness stand or are giving a deposition or talking with your attorney is knowing these indicators and being able to articulate them. You must be able to tell why you did what you did. "I know from my training that when somebody takes that half step forward and shrugs their shoulders, they are about to launch. I cannot get hit first because if I get hit first, I am behind the curve."

eJournal: At least explaining our actions, suggests we survived the attack. That is not always true, so returning to our February interview theme, causing blunt force trauma with empty hands doesn't require extensive martial arts training; the same damage can be inflicted by a simple thug just throwing blows without training and skills.

Dr. Margulies: Especially if you miss the pre-attack indicators and he gets the first shot in. Think about just a punch to the nose. If you're not a skilled martial artist, you are probably not going to block that very effectively. Your reflexes won't be to move off the mark and block fast enough because that takes practice. Focusing some of your training on something other than the gun is important. Recently, I read an article by Greg Ellifritz that it is not too tough to get 80% proficient with a handgun. 80-90% is a lot harder and your likelihood of getting past 90% proficient is low. Instead of devoting all of your time to the gun, hit the 80% proficiency mark, then spend time getting to the 80% proficiency mark in moving off the mark and blocking.

eJournal: Moving – and the bit of time it adds – is so important. In their famous book *Left of Bang*, Riley and Van Horn taught paying attention to anomalies to stay out of range of threats. That's so important for armed citizens because our decisions to use force balance precariously between reacting too slowly or with too little force to stop the threat weighed against peremptorily using force before it is justifiable and even when it is justifiable, the force used must be proportional to the threat. If we go to guns too early in an evolving situation, we risk being charged with a crime.

Dr. Margulies: [*chuckling*] The Marine Corps actually trains infantrymen to look past the end of their rifle. I put it that way because how many drivers are barely looking past the front

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of the hood? Unfortunately, many if not most drivers' point of evaluation is 50-75 feet in front of them. They do not match their speed to their attempt to evaluate. If you are on the highway, you really must be looking as far ahead as the next curve. Where is that next curve? Is it 2,000 yards away? Be out there because you are going to cover that distance quickly.

Bring that back to somebody on foot, and we find there are two aspects. One is the psychological aspect; the second is the physiological aspect. If you are walking down the street and glancing around, not searching, but glancing, internally you are looking for an anomaly. Anything out of place is the key. Psychologically, you must prepare. For example, in a doorway you must look both ways and up. Doing that has to become instinctive. You are doing that internally, but externally, you are telling an observer, "Oh, this is not an easy one." Predators – animal predators or human predators – look for easy targets. They do not want to get hurt themselves. That would impact their ability to survive. The cougar takes out the fawn because it is easier. It is safer. That is the impression we do not want to give. We do not want to be the fawn. We are the bull elk.

eJournal: ...with antlers.

Dr. Margulies: ...and hooves. That is the psychological part. A lot can be avoided if people don't want to interact with you. It requires some forced impoliteness.

Somebody asks, "Do you have a light?"

You say, "Sorry, I cannot help you." That is going to slow them down. If someone comes past that, they are telling you, "I have chosen you. Today is your day." You do not pick the day. The day picks you.

eJournal: At that exact moment, we only have a request for a light. We dare not under react for fear of attack, yet to preemptively bring out a gun too early in an evolving situation risks charges of assault with a deadly weapon. What is a poor, intended victim to do?

Dr. Margulies: That is where the second step comes in. *[Demonstrates extending hand, palm out]* "Stop, I can't help you. STOP!" Everybody sees, because they have heard this and now they are going to look. Hopefully, there are people around, although if you are walking down a dark street at "zero two" and there's nobody around, there are still surveillance cameras. You want to make it real clear and loud – loud enough to wake people up. Move into a balanced, forward stance. If that doesn't stop it, you are facing an attempted battery. You'll need to articulate, "This individual was told to stop. I said, 'I don't want to interact with you,' but they continue to come at me in a menacing manner."

"What is a menacing manner?"

"They kept coming after being told to stop." That is not a normal, polite response. That is evidence that they intended to

get into my interpersonal space against my wishes, wishes that were not implied, but loudly expressed. I presume people who want to get into your interpersonal space against your wishes, to have an evil intent.

You must be able to articulate that, but not to the officer who responds. There, you say, "Officer, I was attacked. I was forced to defend myself. I will be happy to assist in any way possible with my attorney present. No, sir, I do not want to answer any other questions. No, sir, I do not have any other information. No, sir. No, sir, No, sir."

"Turn around and put your hands behind your back."

"OK."

It is going to go that way. OK, now, you tell your attorney what you went through, and your attorney can go to the prosecutor and say, "Look, you have surveillance video. Was my client attacking this person? No! He was attacked."

eJournal: I would like to go back to the word picture you painted earlier using the tape loops of, "I'm sorry, sir, I cannot help you. Stop! Stop!" Recognizing the danger is critical so we can make some distance between ourselves and unusual behavior that may boil over into violence. What should we look for?

Dr. Margulies: "Hey, buddy, do you have a light?" *[Demonstrates a bladed stance with his right hand in his front trousers pocket. Then, adding "even worse," reveals a knife concealed in his hand behind his right hip.]* Right now, I am 3 ½ feet from the camera *[lunges forward, knife thrust forward]*.

Look for the hidden hand, the hand in the pocket, the set up, "Hey, buddy, do you have a light?" voiced while moving toward you. From where you stand, you cannot see the haymaker winding up, but with the next step, comes the blow.

Your articulation would be, "His hand looked as if he was holding a weapon or some other object that he did not want me to see." Not, "that I could not see," the phrase is "that he did not want me to see." It is very specific phrasing. It paints a very different picture.

That is the picture that we are trying to give the prosecutor, not the responding officer on the street. Officer Jones on the street is not interested. As an officer, if I have someone who has apparently committed a violent act, my first concern is to prevent them from committing a violent act upon me and so I am going to stabilize the situation. If you are not answering my questions, I'm going to say, "Turn around and put your hands behind your back." It is an easy thing and there is no downside for an officer who puts you in the car, takes you to the station, and let someone else deal with you. The less interaction, the shorter the report.

eJournal: Frankly, once you have given the bare details on the scene to support investigation and identification of the evi-

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dence, the less interaction, the better for you, too, so you don't stumble into saying something against your best interest.

Dr. Margulies: Use the tape loop. "I was attacked." If there is no one else around and you must make the 911 call, you say, "Operator, I am at the corner of Street A and Street B, and I need an ambulance and the police."

"What is the nature of your emergency?"

"I need an ambulance and the police." At this point, the call has already been pushed forward and operator two is already dispatching. Give the location again. Location is critical. If anything else happens, if the perpetrator starts to get up and I must go back to my gun and I drop the phone, they have got to know where I am.

The first thing is location, and you ask for the ambulance before the police. That recording will get played if it gets to court. Your lawyer can say, "Members of the jury, my client was attacked, he called 911 and his first response was to call for an ambulance." The reason is that you, the victim of the attack, want to look less violent, less felonious, more human. You can honestly say, "I told him to stop. He kept coming and it looked as if he was trying to hide something from me in his hand. He kept coming and I told him again to stop. I defended myself." Not, "I shot him," but "I defended myself."

That brings us back to the question, "How much time do you have?" You do not determine how long. The perpetrator and their level of aggressiveness determines how much time we have. The guy who starts at 7 feet and then bum rushes you, gives you 4/10 of a second to do something to stop that before you are on your back on the ground.

eJournal: Physiologically, how quickly can we get into response mode?

Dr. Margulies: For most people it takes 3/10 of a second to appreciate what is happening. In the remaining 1/10 of a second, what you do has got to be effective. That comes from training and practice.

eJournal: Is that 1/10 of a second enough time for the message to get from the brain to the feet? My feet need to react to the order, "Get moving! Get off the line of attack!"

Dr. Margulies: Yes, because with training, you can cut the 3/10 of a second into 27/100ths of a second and while that doesn't sound like a lot, it is a 3/100ths split. That is the difference with training. The difference is understanding that when someone is standing there and then they crouch, they are not crouching to say, "I hope you have a nice day."

If I recognize that crouch, I am already 1/10 of a second ahead, because now when he starts to move, I do not have to think, "What is he doing?" I know what he is doing! The thing to understand about Boyd's OODA loop is that it takes you to

the decision point faster. If you have trained, the orientation is already done, and the observation takes you to the decision. That is why training is crucial. Boyd trained pilots to recognize faster. Getting inside someone's decision process means our decision must be faster.

eJournal: If you can interrupt what the aggressor intended to do, he must make a new decision, putting you farther outside that 3/10 of a second range. Now you've regained some of the initiative.

Dr. Margulies: My sensei says, "Someone who attacks you has a priority. Change their priority." The aggressor's priority is to punch me. If I am prepared and block that punch and next thing, he is taking a ridge hand to the side of the neck. I have changed his priority. This does not take decades of training.

I don't want people to get the mis-impression that they have to become a seventh level black belt in four different disciplines to do this. They must only become 80% proficient. Being able to get out of the holster and get shots on target in 1.5 seconds is the 80% mark; practicing until you can do that in 1 second, is going to take a lot of time, money, effort, and ammunition. If you can get shots on target in 1.5 seconds – the 80%, now it's going to do more good to get to where you can block a punch and strike.

eJournal: Those time periods still do not line up in your favor! Compare the one-and-a-half second draw to the four tenths of a second in which time an aggressor can rush, bowl you over, onto your back on the ground. There's got to be a better plan against a surprise ambush that does not entail immediately drawing right into an aggressor who is on top of you.

Dr. Margulies: Oh, no, you are not going to draw into that. Deflection is the response to a bum rush. If I can make him go past me, he is now facing away from me and he is moving away from me. I can move into the direction from which he came, giving me more time and space.

Now I have time to set up and say, "Stop!" loud enough so that I wake people up. This is the time for the drill sergeant's voice. You want to rattle windows, because now if he keeps coming, he has demonstrated motivation. This is not a bad time to draw to low ready; you have already been attacked. "Stop!" becomes a very emphatic command.

eJournal: Meanwhile, your feet are still moving, and you are creating more distance to avoid being disarmed.

Dr. Margulies: Do not take a gun out when someone is already in your interpersonal space. No! Hard no. We really want to emphasize staying left of bang. We are back to looking for anomalies. Three guys are walking down the street. I cross the street. It is a good time to remember "plus one" and just check across the street before you start. If they cross the street, too, now we have an anomaly. Because I am not going to outrun

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three teenagers, in my opinion now is the time to say something like, "OK gentlemen, this is not going to work well. I am going to go that way, and I am strongly suggesting that you do not follow me." I have not drawn, I have not done anything except show open hands and as I move off-line, I am watching them and making it clear that I am not looking for engagement. "I am leaving. Don't follow me."

eJournal: The game is up; you will not be surprised. You have also notified anyone who might be watching that you disengaged.

Dr. Margulies: That is the point of the open hands, held up. People will see hands up. If the first thing they notice is a shot and they turn around and they see somebody with a gun, the brain will fill in the gap and the witness will say they saw me shoot. It won't make any difference if the aggressors were the three young men. That is where the expert witness comes in, especially if the gun is unfired.

Learn what the common anomalies are and then extend your knowledge to recognize the more subtle anomalies, like the guy who's leaning against the wall when it is the two guys coming down the street that you notice. Coincidence? Maybe, but maybe he is the plus one.

eJournal: The difficulty is that we cannot know in advance what the situation in which you, me, or our reader may get caught up. Maybe preemptive action means just keeping distance and a close eye on a person exhibiting worrisome behavior or demeanor. It certainly means knowing how to get to cover and how to leapfrog from there to an exit. In crowded conditions, that is no small accomplishment, and that's something that is very real for members who live in densely populated metropolises. They must use subways and wait on train platforms, queue up for buses and get jammed into elevators. What are they supposed to do?

Dr. Margulies: There is no good answer. In the subway station, the mall, the line in the supermarket there is no good way to turn around and tell the person behind you, "Back up 6 feet." I don't like crowds; I try to avoid them. But people have the problem of where they live and what they do. Your question about subway stations is probably the most pertinent because in our major cities people need to go to work, they need to shop, they need to live, and so they use that transportation. The same thing is true in a bus line, the same thing is true in an airport terminal. It is a difficult environment, and most people ignore it, sometimes because they do not know what to do or because, "it can't happen to me." That is wrong, but that is their personal choice. Once you are aware and you have made a choice that you are going to be an EDC (everyday carry) then you have not made the choice to ignore it; you have made the choice to operate on what you know.

eJournal: It is tempting, despite recognizing abnormal behavior, to risk of getting swept into a violent situation because we

really need to be on a flight or bus to fulfill a commitment. If I am queued up to get a cup of coffee or standing in the security check line at the airport, how should I react to anomalous behavior by others in the same line?

Dr. Margulies: A cup of coffee? No fuss! I am gone. At the airport? I am not alone. I have the TSA; I have police. *[Demonstrates looking around, lifting his hand and calling out]* "Officer?" That is going to get a lot of attention. There is going to be a crowd now. At least one TSA supervisor is going to be on the other side of the track. Officers are going to be coming directly toward you. Perfect! They will ask you what that was about. Now you must be able to articulate it. "Officer, I was just trying to get my stuff checked and through the x-ray machine, and this guy kept pushing me. I couldn't tell if he was pushing me so I would go faster, or whether he was trying to take something from my pocket. I don't know. All I know is that his behavior made me very concerned." Let him talk to the cop. If he has an innocent explanation you can say, "Officer, I apologize. I misunderstood. *[Demonstrates turning to address another person showing open hands]* saying, "Sir, I misunderstood. I apologize! I hope there are no hard feelings. I certainly didn't mean to cause any disruption."

"Officer, thank you for your help."

eJournal: People are so hesitant to speak out for fear of being wrong. We forget that we can always apologize.

Dr. Margulies: It should not be forgotten. An apology should be part of our tape loops. If we have done something that created an anomaly, we should know how we are going to resolve that situation without the officer saying to us, "Turn around and put your hands behind your back."

eJournal: Fear of a mistake makes us unsure how far ahead of a developing situation we should preemptively try to stop what we are afraid is about to happen. Expanding our scenario beyond an interpersonal scuffle, what is the rational and proportional response to seeing another person in the security line who exhibits furtive, nervous behavior or out-of-place clothing like a heavy parka in the summer?

Dr. Margulies: I am going to do the same thing. *[Raises his hand]* "Officer?" because that makes everything stop and if that person has some evil intent, he is either going to be prevented or he is going to have to act now, before we get past security. I am going to be prepared to hit the deck. I am going to be prepared to run as best I can, but I am not going to ignore an anomaly that puts me in danger. I must protect me. That is my first response. Is that harsh? I understand that. In the real world, if you think you are going to protect somebody else, you had better be prepared to protect yourself, so you are able to help the other person. I do not want to be standing there when a hand grenade goes off.

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While talking about crowds, we need to understand that there is evil in the world. If we figuratively and literally close our eyes to it, we will miss the danger. Think about this: We intellectually understand that the executive function in the brain does not develop until 20 to 25 years of age. Sometimes young people do things from simply the lack of the ability to process the risk. Now, who is responsible for at least 90% of the knockout games? Youth marauding through a mall, shoplifting en masse. If you try to stop them, they are not going to pay attention to your authoritative voice. They are running on adrenaline, serotonin, maybe a little methamphetamine. That is evil.

eJournal: I agree, but is it our job to interdict it? For me, I have to say, "No, not my duty!"

Dr. Margulies: It is our job to understand that evil can come to us. A crowd of children can be dangerous. I pay attention when I see a group that isn't standing around looking at their phones and talking to each other. If they do not have anything in their hands and they are looking around, I am changing locations. I am not walking through there. Their behavior is an anomaly. Think about it just in terms of what is ordinary. How often do you see boys, girls, or a mixed group under the age of 20, that do not have their phones out and their earphones in? If you see a group and none of them are doing what is normal, move "left of bang."

eJournal: That is an excellent illustration of clusters of anomalous behaviors. We resist reacting to one minor, out-of-place action. You have identified a cluster of three or four and chosen the smartest reaction. Just leave.

Dr. Margulies: It is not worth it. I may want something from the adjacent store, but I am willing to walk around the block first or go to that store another day. I do not need to fight my way to that store. I am not in combat and that is not a mission objective.

eJournal: That's a good example of prioritization. Trainers often urge people to be willing to act and use deadly force to save life. Nothing wrong with that, but I think the willingness to act starts long, long before the moment when bringing out a gun is appropriate. Willingness to act means choosing not to enter a risky situation at all.

Dr. Margulies: I can honestly say that I have not been involved in a physical altercation since I retired from the military in 1989

- 30-plus years - except for a couple of times in the emergency department at the hospital and when I was on police duty. I avoid altercations because I do not want to have to explain why I punched somebody. I would rather not be there.

Am I a chicken? Sure, I don't care; that doesn't bother me. Going to jail? That potential bothers me, so I will try to do the best I can to avoid that. Does that mean I have made up my mind that I am never going to shoot? Oh, no, but I am not going to willingly put myself into a situation that is going to force me to shoot. Sometimes the day chooses you. It is not that you did anything wrong. You just happen to be the person walking down the street or through the mall when these two kids decided you're the one they are going to knock over and take the watch and wallet. You must be prepared, but you do not have to go looking for it.

eJournal: Luckily, your preparation makes you more alert to the subliminal messages predators broadcast. There is an intentionality in the way the hunter eyes its prey and when you see it, you leave quickly because you recognize the hunt.

Dr. Margulies: This has two sides: We do have to be prepared and then train. There is not any question that the training is critical. In medicine, cardiac arrest or major trauma doesn't happen all the time, but when it does happen, I don't have time to scratch my head and ask, "Where is the book? What do I do with this?" An emergency response must come before the conscious thought happens. The training in open hands, firearms, or edged weapons must be done before you need it. The training on awareness must be done before you are surrounded by a group of 12-14-year-olds who don't care what you want. They want what they want.

That is how I try to live.

eJournal: Thank you for putting your attitudes and beliefs into words. We should all strive to follow your example.

Meet Dr. Margulies and his wife Sara Barron, RN through their private instruction opportunities at International Emergency Consultants in Richland, WA (<https://i-e-c.org/instructors/>) and be sure to follow Dr. Margulies work with [Doctors for Responsible Gun Ownership](#) along with the great work all the other doctors in that group are doing.



President's Message

Membership Dues to Increase

by Marty Hayes, J.D.

After considerable deliberation and weighing many comments from our members, we have decided that we must implement a modest membership dues increase beginning May 1. I am announcing this in March so that anyone wanting to renew ahead of time at current

prices has two full months to get it done. After May 1, renewal dues for current members will be \$105 per year or \$285 for three years. Dues for new memberships will be \$150 per year or \$340 for a new three-year membership, so if you have family or friends who are not yet members, joining now will save money.

At the beginning of 2023, we stopped offering our 10-year memberships out of concern over inflation. With the impending dues increase, we welcome your early renewal, while respectfully requesting that members only order one 3-year extension of their membership. "Stacking up" multiple renewals would create the same issues that led us to stop offering 10-year memberships. We ask your understanding.

This moderate dues increase still leaves the cost to be in the Network among the lowest in the industry. One reason we can remain so cost effective is that we don't pay insurance premiums. Many of the other programs do not have the cash reserves to pay for their promises to their clients, but instead pay premiums for an insurance company to ante up the money for their clients' legal defense costs. Nothing wrong with this, except that under that structure your future is ultimately guided by insurance underwriters, not your chosen attorney. Those insurance companies are making bank on this little industry.

Our May 1 dues increase does mean more money will be going into the Network's Legal Defense Fund, which is a good thing. As an aside, many people who are inquiring into the Network confuse what we do with non-profit organizations (like the American Civil Liberties Union, for example) and are very concerned that we do not put the biggest percentage of membership dues into the Legal Defense Fund. They do not appear to understand that Network pays its own way because unlike many non-profits, our operations are not funded by government handouts or big corporate contributions. We also pay taxes on every dollar we put into the Legal Defense Fund.

The May 1 dues increase will allow us to set aside funds for staff growth in the future as we are reaching the limit of our ability to handle the administrative work of the Network. Office staff wages need to remain competitive, so we don't lose staff to better paying jobs. Skilled staff is essential to answer phone calls, respond to emails and process the memberships. We have over 20,000 members, the majority of whom renew yearly.

That means we are processing each renewal and sending out around 15,000 membership cards per year. That breaks down into more than 1,000 per month or approximately 50 per day. We could pay lower wages, but that would reduce the quality of people doing the work and increase staffing turn over. Neither is acceptable.

In addition to employee costs, we also must cover postage, rent, utilities, taxes and all the other expenses of doing business. In recent years, we have paid over \$140,000 in legal fees to fight the illegal action taken against us by Washington State's anti-gun insurance commissioner, which makes the donations we have received from members and non-members even more meaningful. Thank-you for those donations to the fight.

Appellate Court Hearing Date Set

On March 13, 2023, a three-person panel of judges at the Washington State Court of Appeals (Div. II) will hear the case of *Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc. v. Washington State Insurance Commissioner*. I have written at length about our case in past journals including a history of our fight that I penned a year ago at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/april-2022-presidents-message>. Today, I will only recap our legal argument and what we hope to accomplish.

In an attempt to shut us down and prevent us from assisting WA state Network members (as had already been done to several other companies), the WA State Insurance Commissioner accused us of selling insurance without a license, issued a cease and desist letter and fined us \$200,000 (later reduced to \$50,000).

It took about a year to get a hearing from the Insurance Commissioner, but our argument was dismissed, with the presiding officer of the hearing (an employee of the Insurance Commission) asserting that while the act of self defense might be an intentional act, the situation leading up to the use of force was a contingent act. She stated that self defense was in fact a hybrid contingent act, and concluded that we were selling insurance. The Washington State definition of insurance is: "Insurance is a contract whereby one undertakes to indemnify another or pay a specific amount upon determinable contingencies."

We are countering that with a two-part argument. First, Network membership has no contract to indemnify or pay specific amounts. There is no guarantee that we will grant legal defense funds. Thus, there is no contract. Secondly, in a self-defense incident, there is no contingency, because self defense is an intentional act. We are hopeful that the WA State Court of Appeals (Div. II) will give thoughtful and honest consideration to our arguments. Although we have been allowed to serve our WA members and permitted to renew existing WA members, we would like to be able to enroll Washingtonians who have not previously been Network members, so we can educate them, many of whom are new armed citizens, about legal and responsible self defense, and be there to assist in their legal defense if they use force in self defense.



Attorney Question of the Month

In recent Network online journals, Robert Margulies, MD gave very convincing arguments to justify using deadly force against an empty-hand attack. At the same time, experience in court also shows that when a person uses deadly force against an unarmed attacker, they are routinely prosecuted for murder. We asked our affiliated attorneys –

In your state, if a citizen uses a gun to stop an empty-hand attack, is the armed citizen routinely charged?

Is there any established case law in your state clarifying the use of deadly force to stop an empty-hand attack?

We received a number of good, educational responses and will split them between this month and our April 2023 journal. Here are the first half of our attorneys' answers–

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Florida is a mixed bag on deadly force “use” of a firearm in response to physical attack by fist. Hands are usually considered non-deadly force, but in some cases the jury may be asked to determine the level of force. There is a recent Florida case where one punch resulted in death and the attacker was found guilty of manslaughter over his claim of self defense. See <https://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/pablo-lyle-sentenced-to-5-years-in-2019-miami-road-rage-manslaughter-case/2965441/> .

The discharge of a firearm is deadly force as a matter of law, even if it is an accidental or a “warning shot.” Gun pointing has been considered deadly force as a “threat” of deadly force by one appellate court. Before that ruling, uniform appellate caselaw dictated firearm display and all gunpointing were the use of non-deadly force as a matter of law. See p. 6, <https://www.8jcb.org/resources/Documents/Feb%202023%20News-letter.pdf>.

There is a recent St. Augustine case where a trial judge granted pretrial immunity under Fla. Stat. § 776.032 to a defendant who shot and killed an empty hands attacker. The defense present-

ed the kind of medical evidence Dr. Margulies discussed. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK3pj2-zoUE> .

The most recent appellate case which discusses firearm versus punch is *Edwards v. State*, 351 So.3d 1142 (Fla. 1st DCA 2022) (opinion by Rowe, C. J., Osterhaus, J., concurred, B. L. Thomas, J., dissented). Edwards was denied pretrial immunity. A discretionary review petition before the Florida Supreme Court has been filed. Edwards shot and killed at contact range someone who was punching (or about to punch) him in the head. The majority opinion questioned the use of deadly force to oppose punches, noting “not every blow to the head is deadly” and “not every fist fight justifies defending oneself with deadly force.” The dissent noted (citing cases) that a single punch to the head can kill and that under the concept of imminence, one does not have to wait until actually being beaten to death to respond with deadly force. I suspect the judge who wrote the majority opinion thought the use of “not every” was a prosecution friendly characterization. I see it as legal support for a deadly force response when it could reasonably be believed to be necessary.

I think it is more likely than not that without demonstrable concerns about age, stature and frailty, a person outside the home who has used deadly force against an attacker known to be empty-handed will be charged in Florida. I cannot say such defenders are “routinely” charged. There are controversial cases where an armed defender who killed was not charged. See, for example, <https://www.news-press.com/story/opinion/2021/03/20/stand-your-ground-florida-ryan-modell-case-state-attorney-lee-county-sheriff/4746152001/> , where in my opinion the State made the correct but unpleasant non-prosecution decision. Nobody in Florida who asserts justified threat or use of force should be “routinely” charged. The immunity statute clearly rejects that by requiring an “agency” probable cause determination. “Self-defense immunity” in Florida includes not being arrested or charged unless the State proves by clear and convincing evidence deadly force was not justified.

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Tennessee’s statutory scheme for self defense does not directly address the empty-hand issue. Under Tennessee’s civilian deadly force statute (Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-11-611), an individual is generally allowed to engage in conduct that is “threatening or using force intended or likely to cause death or serious bodily injury, if: ... The person has a reasonable belief that there

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is an imminent danger of death, serious bodily injury, or grave sexual abuse....” Thus, Tennessee’s statutory language is silent on the empty-hand factor.

However, other parts of the statute create an evidentiary issue of whether the individual’s perception or whether the belief by the individual was reasonable. Thus, the statute requires the jury to consider whether the “danger creating the belief of imminent death, serious bodily injury, or grave sexual abuse is real, or honestly believed to be real at the time; and

[also whether] “The belief of danger is founded upon reasonable grounds.” In handling these cases, we have seen arresting officers and district attorneys express personal opinions that there either was not a real threat of death or imminent serious bodily injury and/or that even if there was a belief that it was not founded on reasonable grounds. When this perspective arises, criminal charges are likely and the issue becomes a focus of the jury trial.

Factors to be considered on the reasonableness of the belief that there was an actual and reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury include considerations such as a) whether there is a size disparity in the victim and attacker, b) whether there is more than one attacker, c) whether the attacker / victim had any special training or skills, d) the relative physical health/capacity of the attacker and the victim, and e) whether the victim attempted to or had any reasonable opportunity to flee to avoid the injury. That is not an exhaustive list but just for illustration.

With that said, I have had cases and seen cases where the individual did use deadly force against an attacker who was otherwise unarmed. In some of those, law enforcement decided not to charge, the district attorney decided not to charge or continue prosecution and/or the jury acquitted the individual. Sadly, in almost all of those, the individual needed the assistance of a knowledgeable attorney to handle the investigation and matter.

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Question 1–In your state, if a citizen uses a gun to stop an empty-hand attack, is the armed citizen routinely charged?

No, citizens are not “routinely” prosecuted for defending themselves. Here is an example: Shooter who killed Lewiston man at Augusta tow yard will not be charged. Officials: Rob Drummond, owner of Ready Road Service, shot Tyler Morin, 36, on May 20. See <https://www.centralmaine.com/2022/07/14/>

[shooter-who-killed-a-man-in-augusta-tow-yard-wont-be-charged/](#)

On the other hand, as in the case of *State v. Cardilli*, where an unarmed black man was shot in the back while he was on the floor, sometimes prosecution is undertaken, and succeeds. https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=18277839268767784721&hl=en&as_sdt=6&as_vis=1&oi=scholar

Question 2–Is there any established case law in your state clarifying the use of deadly force to stop an empty-hand attack?

See the Cardilli case above. It fits the bill. There are a few others. Cardilli is the latest and most in-depth.

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“The delightful double standard!”

In Michigan, the prosecutors and the Attorney General, don’t like citizens using deadly force. So unless you’re an old woman, you’re in a wheelchair, or your attacker was absolutely off-the-chart outrageous in their attack, you are going to get charged with murder, or at the very least manslaughter. In my entire life, I’ve seen about four cases where they didn’t. Two of them, I was involved in. They listened to my lecture at the CPL class, they called me, then called 911 (in most places, once you dial 911, the operator will not let you hang up! Your phone becomes an open mic for any evidence they hear and it’s perfectly legal). And once they called 911, they were careful what they said, and they kept their mouth shut and demanded a lawyer.

However, if they are police officers, I have only heard of one case, where an on the job shooting was not declared justified, even when the defendant was shot multiple times in the back (14 rounds) and had no gun at all! I have seen cases where cops buried the muzzle of their gun into the person’s body and fired 14 or 15 times even though the person was not armed and was simply trying to run away! They justify these murders, and yes, I called them murders, because if we did it, it would be charged as murder, they escape murder charge, by citing “policy.” The policy basically says if you don’t know what they’re going to do next, and you feel in fear – shoot them! I have seen cases of people shot 2 to 34 times, yet they were not resisting, and it was shown at the civil trial that the person had their hands up. And yet, all the body cam footage magically malfunctioned, or was lost! Anybody ever wonder why the black community riots? I don’t! And to top it all off, the “state police officer involved, shooting investigations squad” (that’s

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the official name), moves in, and does everything they possibly can to protect the officers and whatever department the officer is from, from being sued. They go absolutely out of their way to testify for the officer and to coach the officer in saying things that will make them difficult to sue. The last thing on earth that they are ever going to do is prosecute a police officer for murder. To prosecute a police officer for murder is to admit that they cannot control their men. They would rather die than admit that.

The law in Michigan is relatively clear, though I do not have the caselaw at my fingertips. The attacker may be fired upon if he's within 21 feet and has anything that could even remotely be called a weapon in his hands. Further, if he has a firearm in his hands, because it is believed that even the most ridiculous tiny little palm pistol is lethal out to several hundred yards, the police may engage him with firearms at any distance they feel threatened. If you ever have to shoot somebody for God's sake get away from your gun, or the police will shoot you just for the fun of it. The police are given absolute immunity to shoot anyone who is holding a weapon of any kind within 21 feet of them, even if it's not a firearm.

Certain things, I'm willing to bet a lot of money on. These are: if you shoot somebody, even in good self defense, and you are

not old, crippled, blind, or helpless, a weak female, or you're shooting someone who is attacking the police, you are going to jail! You will be arrested, you will be charged, and you will be expected to plead to a crime so that you can't ever have a gun ever again. This is the mindset of prosecutors in the state of Michigan, or at least the vast majority of them that I have seen. Time, and time again, I see people with valid self-defense cases that are routinely charged with massive felonies. One of the biggest reasons is they don't want the dead person's next of kin to go on social media, or to the press and say "that dirty so-and-so, he killed my brother, father, son, whoever, and the prosecutor won't do anything about it!" The biggest thing the prosecutors worried about is getting reelected in the next election. And unfortunately, this seems to be the driving force on these charges. Someone is dead, therefore, somebody else has to go to prison for life, or justice is not served! These people are nuts! I am really glad I never became a prosecutor. I don't think I could live with myself.

Thank you, affiliated attorneys, for sharing your experience and knowledge. Members, please return next month when we have additional responses from our affiliated attorneys on this important topic.

Book Review

Spy Secrets That Can Save Your Life

By Jason Hanson

272 pages, paper-bound, \$19.95

ISBN-13: 978-0399175671

<https://spyscapeandevasion.com/spystore/product/spy-secrets-can-save-life/>

Reviewed by Gila Hayes

This month, I enjoyed an easy-to-read book about threat awareness that could just as well be titled *The Path to Self Sufficiency*, but I doubt that title would sell as well as *Spy Secrets*. I picked up some new tips and enjoyed the reminders former CIA officer Jason Hanson detailed, most of which he introduces with a news story or two about how people were victimized and how the harm could have been prevented.

Reading about real life examples prompts readers to think through possible ways to escape or defuse bad situations. Most problems have multiple solutions and Hanson advocates adaptability, writing, “While knowing what to do in emergency situations is important, ultimately it’s being adaptable that can save you.” Hanson gives readers possible solutions, all under the umbrella of the bigger lessons about the importance of self-reliance, quiet self-confidence, and determining what is normal so you can identify and move quickly away from dangers. “It’s our knowledge of situational awareness that allows us to act before a crisis occurs,” he writes.

Early on, Hanson establishes a theme that runs throughout the book: how to recognize when a bad situation is brewing. “Many victims will tell you they had no idea they were about to be attacked. The truth is, there are clear-cut signs most criminals exhibit before attacking someone,” he writes.

Risky situations won’t always include obvious hints of impending attack – a committed aggressor giving you the target stare or trailing along, matching your walking speed – so Hanson teaches determining the baseline to identify where the problem may come from. Start by establishing baselines at home, he writes, teaching readers to consistently follow a “preplanned security routine” of locked doors and windows. Consistently leave exterior lighting on or off, window blinds closed or open so finding blinds open or lights burning warns of the unusual. “People who are in tune with the baseline of their surroundings are able to pick up on the sometimes subtle (but not always) clues that something is wrong. These people not only understand what a baseline should look like but they’re also not letting normalcy bias get in the way,” Hanson writes.



Human behavior has a baseline, too, Hanson reminds readers. “While standard human behavior may change depending on where the behavior takes place, we all know in our gut if someone’s behavior is out of the ordinary and we need to proceed with caution.” Red flags can include:

- inappropriate clothing like a heavy coat worn in summer heat
- odd gestures
- a person where they should not be
- paying close attention to or trailing you or another person
- nervously looking around

Later chapters address surveillance, being followed, and the psychological manipulation criminals and predators use to make decent human beings do things they don’t want to do. Vulnerabilities that make people fall for scams are many. “Con artists know how to use a wide range of human emotions in their favor—greed, curiosity, generosity, and fear,” he writes.

Some use guilt, and demand reciprocity for an inconsequential favor or fake an emergency. Instead of telling readers not to help others, he writes, “Before agreeing to assist someone, make sure you’re not isolating yourself, don’t ever get in someone’s vehicle, and don’t be afraid to leave immediately or call for help if you’re uncomfortable.” Recognize ploys to create a false familiarity and don’t share too much information.

Good advice about gathering details about local conditions, hospitals and emergency escape routes continues the baseline theme. “When you’re abroad, make a point to note what’s typical and what’s not. What’s the baseline? What are locals wearing? How can you blend in?” Hanson asks. Continue this practice even where you feel you know the environment intimately. “If you’ve lived in the same place for a long period of time, it becomes very easy to stop paying attention to changes that are happening in your own area,” he observes.

Identify escape routes, exits and areas in which either foot traffic or vehicle traffic gets congested and grinds to a halt, Hanson advises. Where are the hospitals, pharmacies, police departments and airport? Whether vacationing or at home, know how you can get out of the area quickly because “movement saves lives,” Hanson reminds readers. I took a break from reading to study several back road routes from work to home and how to travel out of the area without going through the big cities.

Wide-ranging topics covered in *Spy Secrets* include disaster preparation, water, and food storage, what tools to carry on body and what to stage at home and in your car. I use about

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4/5 of the list Hanson recommends but had to smilingly admit that he is the ex-spy, so more likely to put to use lock picks or tools to steal cars to get moving out of a bad situation. Other useful topics include thwarting an abduction attempt, escapes from common restraints, and the danger of and defense against home invasions.

Hanson studies situations that attract burglars and low-cost deterrents, writing, "In addition to physical security such as motion-detector lights, deadbolts, and an alarm system, it is possible to secure your home using a powerful combination of physical and psychological tricks. These tricks are easy and inexpensive and will make burglars think twice..."

- Eliminate places intruders might hide around your home
- Add motion-activated floodlights
- Keep windows locked and blinds closed.

Other deterrents suggested include security system signage, extra-large dog food bowls, fake security cameras, door peep holes, deadbolts, and driveway alarms. He warns that air conditioners can be pulled out to break in and dog doors also give access. A determined or deranged intruder may overcome your precautions, so Hanson details responding to a home invasion. "A good home defense plan should be simple and quick." He recommends flashlights, weapons, a chokepoint behind which to shelter, and assigning roles for various family members, like who is to call 9-1-1.

An often-overlooked element in personal safety is related to all the time we spend driving, so I appreciated Hanson's chapter on "survival driving." My favorite car safety resource, Curt Rich's *Drive to Survive*, is now two dozen years old, so I was interested in new ideas. "What I'm about to tell you will sound like simple common sense, but you'd be surprised by how many people don't do these things. Everything I'm about to talk about should become second nature, like putting on your seat belt," Hanson writes.

Carjacking is the fastest growing crime in America, he continues. The first part of the solution, he comments, seems almost too easy: approach your car cautiously and once inside, lock your car doors and keep the windows up. Even then, don't relax as if there's no risk because you're locked in your car, he continues. In parking lots, at stop lights, leave enough room to drive away from surrounding traffic.

He gives examples of people who suffered bump and rob

attacks, people attacked when they stopped to give aid to motorists or pedestrians, people robbed while dozing in their car, getting children out of cars when under attack, and why driving away instead of engaging in an unknown situation is so desirable.

Watch approaching pedestrians, and if they're armed and threatening, quickly drive away. "Remember, movement saves lives, so get yourself out of the danger zone," Hanson urges. That's why you must not crowd the car ahead of you when traffic stops. The general rule, see the tires of the car ahead, applies. "Leaving this amount of space enables you to get around that vehicle should you need to get away in an emergency. You can't do anything to control the space behind your car, so be sure to take control of the space in front of you."

He adds a segment on parking lot safety, those transitional zones we must move through. Even in the car, don't drift into unawareness, he warns. No matter how much time you spend in it, your car is out in public where you are vulnerable to predators who watch for inattentive victims. Don't be lured into pulling over and getting out of your car, Hanson continues. If you suspect someone is following you, keep the car moving. He adds instruction on how to ram through a roadblock, make a J turn, and how to take over control from a disabled driver with the car in motion.

I'm a little put off by the frequency of "go to my website and buy" messaging mixed in with good information in *Spy Secrets*, that's just me. This approach is quite common; I've seen it in several of the books we've reviewed in the past year. Knife disarm video training is only one example, and in Hanson's defense, his chapters on self-defense techniques are not the reason to buy *Spy Secrets*. Learning a knife disarm or how to block requires in-person instruction and coaching, so written material serves better to raise awareness of need for such skills, not as actual instruction.

Hanson's chapter of self-defense tactics complimented Dr. Margulies interview this month. If escape isn't an option, Hanson recommends breaking free by attacking eyes, throat, groin, and shin, then running as fast as you can. If grabbed, fight the urge to get into a tug of war and step in to counterattack, he teaches. He addresses bear-hugs, hair grabs and choke-holds.

Spy Secrets is full of lessons and reminders about staying safe in an uncertain world.



NETWORKING

News from Our Affiliates

by Gila Hayes

Greg Block and Julie Schupak affiliated their school, Self-Defense Firearms Training, with the Network early in our history. Greg operated a law enforcement firearms instructor listserve for police firearms instructors, so acquainted

through that forum, Network President Marty Hayes naturally invited Greg to share the Network and its educational outreach with his students. He has shared thousands of our Educational Foundation's complimentary booklet with his students.

Greg has been teaching firearms for 40 years. As a reserve law enforcement officer, he completed numerous instructor certifications from resources including the FBI, all the major manufacturers, as well as from the State of California. Julie, also a use of force law enforcement trainer, holds numerous armorer certifications from major gun manufacturers, as well.



Julie Schupak and Greg Block

A lot has changed over Greg's four decade teaching career. A big demographic shift brings more women and more minorities into classes now, and students' concerns have changed from wanting to learn to shoot for recreation or competition into a serious concern about self defense. "Crime has gone through the roof," Greg exclaims, and "people need training now more than ever."

While Julie and Greg teach pistol, rifle, shotgun, tactics at the Burro Canyon Shooting Park, Azusa, California (26 miles north-east of Los Angeles), their weekly CCW courses are offered at an indoor range on the edge of LA and Orange Counties. They also offer the exceptional opportunity to participate in interactive training experiences in their PRISim immersive "shoot-back" firearms training simulator. Greg is the only civilian with an AIS PRISim system and offers training for law enforcement as well as students who have already completed his firearms courses.

If you're in Southern California, you may already know Greg and Julie. Self-Defense Firearms Training has referred a lot of our members. If you have not yet met them, they're a great resource about which you'll want to take note. Learn more at <http://www.firearmstraining.com> or call 714-893-8676.

I observe with some amusement the interesting cross over between self defense instructors who become attorneys and attorneys who teach armed self defense. Twelve years ago, we first met attorney Robert Keating when he and his wife joined the Network as rank and file members. Later, he started his own firearms instruction enterprise and became an affiliated instructor, encouraging his students to join the Network. Rob went on to graduate from law school and hung out his shingle in Fort Worth, TX and naturally, he became a Network affiliated attorney, available to assist our members in that area who lawfully use force in self defense. Two years ago, Rob contributed an interview for



Robert Keating

this journal about how case law is created and its influence on trial verdicts. If you're new to the Network or missed the interview in 2021, read it [here](#) and browse to Rob's website at <https://www.dfw.law/faq/self-defense/> to learn more from him.

For many years, our Network affiliated attorney Terrence Rudes and his family have taught gun safety and shooting skills courses at their local gun club, the Oak Harbor Conservation Club in Northern Ohio. Terry is an influencer, who in addition to introducing us to his students, and serving the legal needs of our members around the greater Toledo area, reached out to a professional association email list on which he participates and invited the criminal defense attorneys sharing information there to contact the Network to explore becoming affiliated attorneys themselves. He introduced us to attorneys who affiliated with the Network and are now available to assist our members in Michigan, Missouri, Texas and Ohio.

In Memoriam

In closing, I must share sad news about the passing of our Network team member Art Joslin, J.D., D.M.A. who, from late 2021 through 2022 was training to become our Director of Legal Services. Art began his association with the Network as an affiliated instructor, telling students at Critical Defense Training in the Ann Arbor, Michigan area about the Armed Citizens' Network's assistance to members. Art had recently completed law school and it had been our wish to bring him on board as understudy to Network President Marty Hayes' and shoulder some of Marty's burden of assuring that Network members have our help after use of force in lawful self defense. Sadly, the illness that Art was battling has claimed him. We enjoyed our time with Art and we will miss him. See our Advisory Board member Massad Ayoob's tribute at <https://www.backwoodshome.com/blogs/MassadAyoob/a-great-friend-of-armed-citizens-has-passed/>.



Editor's Notebook

by Gila Hayes

Change is really difficult! At least we do not have it as bad as the Old Testament character Job, who is said to have lamented, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me." For the past several years, I have been working so hard to hold off the need for a mem-

bership dues increase. I've laid off staff and, along with Amie and Will picked up the extra work load to trim staffing costs. I am sure everyone is tired of hearing me ask, "How much will that cost? Do we really need it?" With our last dues increase announced in the fourth quarter of 2015 and implemented January 1st, 2016, I feel a little like Job, bewailing the arrival of an eventuality I've long worked to avoid.

Nonetheless, wiser minds have prevailed and we do have to face a moderate dues increase on May 1. Some in our Network family will find the \$10 per year increase on renewal dues a hardship. I would like to remind you of the opportunity during 2023 to earn a \$10 off renewal dues coupon by recruiting one new Network member and making sure the new member gives your full name (and if possible your member ID number) to identify you as the person referring them to the Network. When the January accounts were all settled, I emailed a note of thanks and a \$10 discount renewal coupon to 20 Network family members who were named by new members as the reason they joined the Network. February is still winding down as I write this message, but a rough estimate shows 25 Network members will be getting a coupon to take \$10 off the cost of their next renewal.

I would love to see your name on my "send a coupon" list when I work the monthly tally (usually done over the first weekend of each new month)! Tell your friends at the shooting range, the gun store or family members and other associates who are also armed citizens why you have chosen to be a part of the Network (you may find some useful details to talk about at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/13-years-and-growing>) or email me for talking points, although nothing is stronger than your heart-felt recommendation, which can come only from you.

One element you will want to recommend to your friends is the Network's member education program. The video lessons we used to send out on multiple DVD discs are now available for online streaming when members log in to <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/members/lectures-on-video> but you can point your non-member friends to extensive previews at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/learn/member-education-commitment> or if they are guests in your home and time allows, offer to watch one of our video lessons like the very timely title *Recognizing and Responding to Pre-Attack Indicators* at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/pre-attack-indicators> as a way to introduce your visitors to the Network as well as exposing them to life-saving knowledge about the ways that predators behave before they strike.

Now that I think about it, not all change is bad. Long-time members will share my memory of the bulky packages of fragile crystal-cased DVD discs that we used to have to send out in order to distribute the video lectures to members. Online streaming has changed all that, and provides the additions we've made beyond that original set of discs in a very accessible way. The world keeps changing; we have to, too.

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About the Network's Online Journal

The *eJournal* of the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc. is published monthly on the Network's website at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/our-journal>. Content is copyrighted by the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc.

Do not mistake information presented in this online publication for legal advice; it is not. The Network strives to assure that information published in this journal is both accurate and useful. Reader, it is your responsibility to consult your own attorney to receive professional assurance that this information and your interpretation or understanding of it is accurate, complete and appropriate with respect to your particular situation.

In addition, material presented in our opinion columns is entirely the opinion of the bylined author and is intended to provoke thought and discussion among readers.

To submit letters and comments about content in the eJournal, please contact editor Gila Hayes by e-mail sent to editor@armedcitizensnetwork.org.

The Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc. receives its direction from these corporate officers:

Marty Hayes, President

J. Vincent Shuck, Vice President

Gila Hayes, Operations Manager

We welcome your questions and comments about the Network.

Please write to us at info@armedcitizensnetwork.org or PO Box 400, Onalaska, WA 98570 or call us at 888-508-3404.