

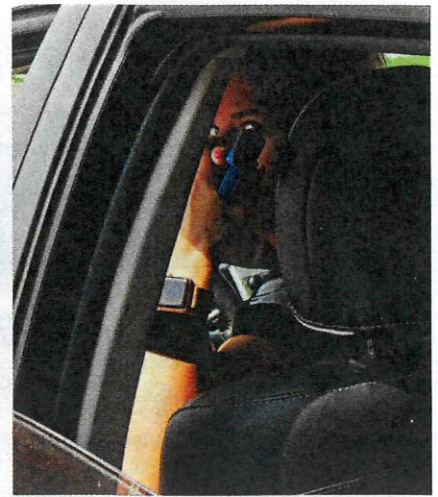
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SCAN TO SHOP



Natural Tactical Systems

By Barrett Tillman

Two nights before a defensive pistol class I dined with my attorney friend, shooting partner and sometime financial advisor. (Cue Warren Zevon: "Lawyers, Guns and Money.") He asked, "Why do we hold the gun way out at the end of our arm?"

I replied, "Because Jeff Cooper taught us that way 41 years ago."

If that was a snarky reply, it was accurate. When you consider the evolution of the handgun, the technique evolved from a one-handed dueling stance of the 18th century, arm raised from the side to present a narrow target to the aggrieved party, or manfully showing a full front with the gun hand above the feet.

Centuries passed before a two-handed "combat stance" emerged, still with variations on full front or inclined (bladed) torso.

Which brings us to the present.

Jeff Johnsgaard is a globe-trotting firearms and tactics instructor who founded Natural Tactical Systems. A former British soldier and current Canadian police instructor, he keeps extremely busy with classes around the world. This year alone he's been to Australia and Brazil, with multiple classes in the U.S.

Johnsgaard's path to Natural Tactical was evolutionary. Paul Castle, a UK firearms trainer, developed the "Center Axis Relock" technique in the 1990s and died in 2011. Johnsgaard was introduced to the concept in 2004 and added to the curriculum over the next several years. Now it's more accurately termed the 360 Close Quarter Defense (CQD), an all-aspect approach.

The basis of Close Quarter Defense arises from threat proximity. Studies from 1994 to 2016 noted that nearly half of police killed with firearms were shot at five feet or less. Two-thirds fell within 10 feet and over 80 per-

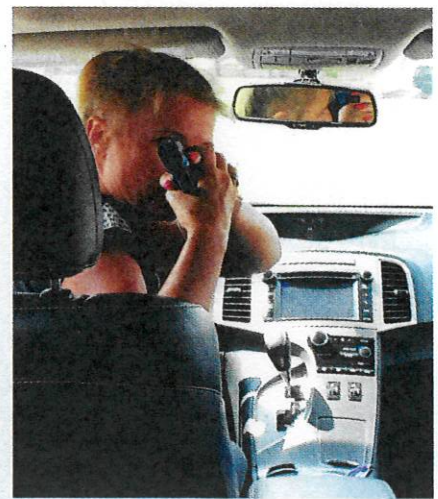
cent within 20 feet. Therefore, Johnsgaard believes that a critical gap exists in police training for deadly close-quarter encounters.

CQD integrates the Weaver and isosceles techniques, allowing students to adapt their current preference. In CQD, when standing the body is bladed toward the threat, regardless of whether shooting with the dominant or support hand. (The opposite foot is forward either way.) Unlike conventional techniques where the hands meet during the draw above belt level, with CQD the grip is obtained around shoulder height. The support arm is held upright, fingers extended vertically, and the gun hand, palm down, is driven into the support hand below the fingers, close to the face.

Contrary to conventional techniques, with CQD the gun is held close to the body, either at chest or eye level, canted toward the support side. The support hand wraps around the back of the dominant hand, partly cradling the bottom of the shooting hand. Thus, CQD can blend sighted and unsighted aiming.

Unlike the push-pull isometric of Weaver, and many isosceles variations, the CQD support hand exerts little pressure. In fact, the supporting grip is more toward the bottom of the gun hand, but allows the dominant hand's small finger to flex. As Johnsgaard explains, "Many shooters don't realize that the pinky can exert enough pressure to send your rounds down and away – low and left for right handers. If you learn to grip the gun with the thumb and three fingers, you can avoid that problem. Happy days!"

Johnsgaard does not suggest replacing Weaver or isosceles with CQD. Rather, he states that either remains applicable at suitable distances, but it makes sense to focus more attention on the deadly area where most combats occur. He summarizes, "I always talk about the



360 Close Quarter Defense Training

technique being reverse engineered from absolute zero inches out to where the traditional Weaver/Isosceles works." He adds that CQD works well for reloads and stoppage drills, with unmatched weapon retention.

In a typical isosceles stance the front sight is 25 to 27 inches from the shooter's eyes. CQD brings the front sight in close, 14 to 16 inches out, within most humans' focal distance. At frequent confrontational distances – within 10 feet – the sights and focus usually merge at the target.

A variation on CQD lowers the gun to a high chest level with the same grip, minus the cant, with the pistol's slide almost touching the shirt. For a right hander presenting his left side to the threat, extremely fast responses and accuracy are possible. Johnsgaard starts students at five feet, urging them to fire two to four-round "bursts" to center of mass, then raising the aim point to eye level. The results were astonishing: many of us shot multi-round, one-hole groups almost at will simply by looking at the desired impact point.

Both variations lend themselves to switching hands, and Johnsgaard allowed time to experiment with that option. I noted that in most cases the results were similar to dominant-hand results with little correction.

Vehicle Defense

With 38,000 to 49,000 carjackings reported annually, CQD is optimum for vehicle defense. The FBI Uniform Crime Report does not distinguish carjacking from theft or robbery but other sources, including insurance claims, offer some perspective.

A weapon was reported in three-quarters of the incidents, though "only" 45 percent are firearms. About 11 percent involve knives, undoubtedly wielded as the victim approaches the vehicle. Brandishing a blade to a driver behind the wheel would seem non career enhancing.

Available reports are not specific enough to conclude how many carjackings involve forcing a driver out of the vehicle. Certainly many of the crimes occur outside the car, often because the owner is distracted with a key ring, purse, or package.

Approximately two-thirds of carjackings occur at night, with nearly half of those being "successful." So reduced-light environments call for greater vigilance.

The mortality of carjacking is minuscule: about 15 per year. But if you're one of those, the ratio jumps to 100 percent.

It's difficult to impossible to find a range that permits shooting from a parked car in nearly 360 degrees, but CQD proves itself in dry runs.

Sitting behind the wheel in your vehicle, WITH A NONFIRING TRAINING GUN, try bringing your sights to bear with a left-handed, extended arm technique. Immediately you find that unless the driver's window is down, your muzzle goes "CLUNK" against the glass. You can get one-handed extension across the passenger seat, but if there's a rear-hemisphere threat you're blocked by the passenger headrest, and the coverage to your own six o'clock is approximately zero.

Switch to CQD. Your driver-side window is available with the high-chest hold, and most of the interior becomes available with the close-in eye-level grip, either left or right handed.

Other vehicle advantages to CQD are obvious: immediate accessibility to a sidearm and ability to cover nearly 360 degrees from almost any seat inside. Long guns are fine if you can poke them out a window, but a "War Wagon" scenario is as rare as political honesty. That's why 360 CQD is so promising.

naturaltactical.com



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