

My Gunfight - "Thinking Outside Your Box"

"...Assumptions are awesome when they're actually right, but they sure can hurt when you're wrong....."

by Larry Correia

I've been a concealed carry instructor for five years, I hang out with a bunch of gun nuts, and I've been around self-defense buffs for most of my adult life. In that time I've seen a recurring theme, and unfortunately it can be a dangerous one. Many of us have something in common.

I call it My Gunfight. We've imagined a scene, a violent encounter, in our head. And in this scene, we take decisive action and we prevail and save the day. Many of us have a mental fabrication of what My Gunfight is going to be like.

Most people who chose to carry a gun have done this. I have myself. It isn't anything to be ashamed of. In fact, it really helps develop a proper mindset to be able to realistically assess what kind of terrible things can happen to you and start laying some groundwork about how we want to respond.

The problem comes in when we make assumptions about My Gunfight. Assumptions are awesome when they're actually right, but they sure can hurt when you're wrong.

I have had students tell me that they never practice at anything past conversational distance, because the average gunfight takes place at only seven feet. See, in Their Gunfight, the bad guy will be conveniently placed at a distance that they can actually hit stuff.

Sadly, there's no such thing as an average gunfight. The only thing they have in common is that they all suck. If you only prepare for a gunfight inside an elevator, it will be a bummer when the crazy guy starts shooting at you across the mall. I've had students tell me that if the assailant is that far away, then they wouldn't be justified in shooting. That's also a mistake. There are hundreds of reasons why you might need to shoot somebody out past conversational distance. And if you find yourself in a situation where you need to, you dang well better have practiced.

Another assumption I get from many students is that they will have plenty of time to draw their gun and get it into action. Oftentimes these folks want to carry with an empty chamber. There is a misconception that this is somehow safer, and besides in Their Gunfight, they'll have plenty of time, and both hands available, to get their pistol into action.

In real life, the bad guys may not be as compliant as the ones in Your Gunfight. In real life, the violence may occur so quickly that you do not have time to rack the slide. Or you may have one hand occupied holding the bad guy back from stabbing you in the head with a screwdriver. The point is, you won't know until it happens. Even best case scenario you've added a significant amount of time to your draw stroke (and if you've been in a fight to the death, you know that even a second is a significant amount of time), and one more chance to fumble and screw up.

During my regular class, I integrate a role-playing session. We go through several realistic scenarios with students and actors armed with rubber weapons. All of these scenarios are based on actual cases, and like real life, most of them tend to happen quickly.

Usually after going through the role-plays, nobody is tempted to carry chamber empty anymore. A fatal assumption was pointed out in *Their Gunfight*, and they adjust accordingly. If you're really worried about carrying with a loaded chamber, get a good, safe holster that keeps the gun secure and protects the trigger. If you still have a mental hang up, switch to a gun that has a heavier trigger or other safety devices. Anything is faster and safer than assuming you'll be in a position to rack a slide.

These are just a few examples of assumptions caused by *My Gunfight*.

One of my personal favorite students of all time was hung up, not only on carrying chamber empty, but he also had a belief that he would "easily" be able to neutralize the bad guy by shooting them in the leg. No, I kid you not. He brought this up repeatedly during class, even after I pointed out that it could be just as fatal only slower, the same lethal force in the eyes of the law, and with the added benefit of not being nearly as effective at incapacitating an actual threat. What did I know? I was only the guy he was paying to teach him this stuff.

During the role-play, he was lucky enough to get a scenario that I use to demonstrate the principles of a Tueller drill. Without going into too many details, I'm playing the part of an obviously dangerous threat, interrupted in the act of committing a forcible felony on a third person, with the ability and opportunity to cause him serious bodily harm, and I just happen to start twenty-one feet away with a rubber knife.

I charged. He went for his gun. Not only did he fail to rack the slide and shoot me in the leg like he had talked about, he managed to draw the gun, fumble, and actually tossed it across the room. I stabbed him a few times, and as a happy bonus, picked his gun up before I fled the scene.

His Gunfight had not taken into account things like speed, adrenalin, or confusion. Last I checked, he was carrying a chamber loaded Glock, in a good holster, and practicing a bunch.

That was an extreme example, but I think all of us need to watch out for the decisions we make based upon our assumptions. Be smart, be realistic, and don't be afraid to keep an open mind. Just because *My Gunfight* makes sense to me, doesn't mean that the world cares one bit.

- - *Larry Correia is an author, firearms instructor, and one of the owners of Fuzzy Bunny Movie Guns in Draper, Utah. FBMG is a gun store, specializing in self-defense needs, training, and full-line smithing. Their online store is at www.fbmgin.com. His first novel, [Monster Hunter International](#), will be released by Baen Books in June 2009. The author can be reached at larry@fbmgin.com*

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