

6 Rules For Keeping A Low Profile

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Public outrage over [Ferguson and then the Eric Garner Grand Jury decision](#) resulted in violence and destruction of property. This combination of issues affects all Americans and has us concerned about the excessive use of deadly force by our law enforcement officers, the persistence of racism and attendant social unrest should concern us all.

During the course of daily life, any one of us could come into contact with a [rioting mob](#) as it swarms and blocks an intersection we are traveling through, á la the attack on Reginald Denny after the 1992 Rodney King verdict. We could lose life or property to arson such as happened to business owners during the Ferguson and LA Riots.

Many of us could be put in harm's way in the course of our work-related duties like the law enforcement officers injured by the Garner Grand Jury protest which turned violent in Berkley or we could be targeted for revenge as angry protesters have threatened.

Independent of which side of these issues you find yourself, keeping a low profile is one of the best ways to avoid becoming a victim, whether it is a victim of the use of excessive force by law enforcement, of racially motivated violence, of mob violence or of a targeted act of revenge.

There are rules to live by that can help you keep a low profile and thereby mitigate these and a whole host of other risks. I can only list so many in an article format, but I will attempt to do so without oversimplifying rules pertaining to a subject of life and death importance to the point of trivializing them.

1 -Don't Be There

Many times, people are attacked simply because they are in the wrong place, at the wrong time. Avoiding potentially dangerous combinations of place and time is often all that is necessary to avoid a violent confrontation.

Do you really need to buy fuel or groceries at 1:30am? Could they wait until tomorrow? Do you need to stop at the convenience store? Would a larger, safer store have what you need? It could possibly even save you some money?

Another application of this rule is to not let your sensitive information "be there" either. I imagine Darren Wilson wishes that the unscrupulous members of the media who convicted him in the court of public opinion long before the Grand Jury decision had not been able to look up his home address so they could punish him by putting his family in danger of thugs who swore they kill and rape them.

Anyone can be attacked, forced to defend themselves, and then be sued for doing so. If this happens, you will end up having to defend yourself again in court, and yet again in the media in addition to the initial attack which occurred on the street.

Do yourself a favor and shore up your privacy. Buy a course that explains how to reclaim a significant measure of privacy, even in our connected world.

2 - Know What You Are Laying Low From

There are three factors which, when manifest together at the same instant, trigger the legally justified use of deadly force in self-defense. These factors together are also a reliable indicator of danger.

If you are forced to use or even to threaten to use deadly force, you will likely be judged by these three criterion, so it is in your best interest to learn them and use them to govern your application of the use of force continuum. The three criterion are: intent, ability and opportunity.

Opportunity is when an attacker could likely get away with a violent crime against you, such as when you find yourself in a dark or deserted area or in the middle of a chaotic event such as a protest. You are less likely to be attacked in a crowded place with a clear police presence. Violent crimes can, and occasionally do still happen in such places, but far less frequently.

Ability is the attacker having the tools to get the job done. To pose a threat of death or grievous bodily harm, an attacker must be armed or a disparity of force must exist. A disparity of force exists in an attack when an attacker is substantially larger or more physically capable than the victim.

Disparity of force often exists in situations where the victim is significantly less physically mature, elderly, has a physical or mental handicap or is a female fighting off a male attacker of her size or larger. Under any of these circumstances, a disparity of force will likely be determined to exist, barring some unseen disadvantage or advantage.

Contrary to what some martial arts instructors teach, if someone succeeds in killing you, it will almost certainly be with their hands or a weapon held in their hands, so get in the habit of scanning people's belts and hands for weapons as an indicator of ability.

Lastly, for use of deadly force to be justified, the attack it seeks to prevent or stop must be intentional.

If the other two criterion are present and positive, it is time to abandon your low profile and show your attackers your teeth and claws. Force potential attackers to manifest intent by issuing a verbal challenge before they get too close for you to draw your weapon and deliver aimed fire.

In my opinion, this is best accomplished by shouting, "Stop! Let me see your hands!" in command voice. If the person throws up their hands and backs away saying that they wanted to know what time it is, tell them that they don't need to get that close to ask you what time it is. Whatever their reaction, it is far better to blow your low profile and risk causing a scene than to lose your life for the sake of proper etiquette or for fear of offending a creepy stranger.

If opportunity exists and an attacker manifests intent, but lacks ability, (i.e. the attacker is unarmed, is an equal match to you or weaker than you) the use of deadly force is not justified and you would only be justified in meeting the attack with equal force.

Be sure to research the laws that govern the use of force for every jurisdiction you travel to because they often vary substantially by jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions have castle laws and others have "duty to retreat" laws.

3 - "Shoot Me First" Status

Self-defense circles have long referred to clothing with overtly tactical features as “shoot me first” clothing, and the moniker illustrates an important principle.

People make a dozen decisions about you the moment they set eyes on you ... your age, income level, education, health, sex and many other factors ... and how much of a threat you pose. Yes, overtly tactical clothing will get you noticed, but many guys overlook the fact that being a physically fit military age male with his hair cut high and tight will also get you “shoot me first” status.

If this description could be describing you, your task becomes something that does not come natural to physically fit military age males: cover up the masterpiece of male perfection you’ve spent your life escaping & evading carbs and pumping iron to chisel.

No more muscle-mapping Under Armour compression T-shirts to show off your hard-earned physique. Baggy hoodies with Velcro-lined pass-through pockets, loose-fitting checked or patterned shirts to keep weapons from printing, snaps instead of buttons and trousers without noticeable cargo pockets are the order of the day.

Stay away from combat boots, military-style sunglasses and accessories, and tactical packs and messenger bags covered in PALS webbing for MOLLE pouches.

4 - Carry Concealed

If you carry, keep in mind that the moment you reveal that you are carrying a firearm, you earn priority “shoot me first” status. I am sure this will seem so basic to many of us, but I still see people arguing in favor of open carry over concealed carry all the time, so it must not be sinking in for many.

Wearing a firearm openly, while legal in many areas, is a surefire way to get noticed, and to keep a low profile, you do not want to do anything that will get you noticed. Wearing tactical clothing, expensive clothing, sunglasses or “loud” clothing gets noticed. Body odor, cologne, unusual hair or facial hair style, length or coloration get noticed.

Openly carrying a firearm will not only get you noticed by everyone, it is enough to get hoplophobes to dial law enforcement in a panic and give them your location, physical description and tell them anything they think might get them to respond to the threat that they imagine you represent to them. Legal does not necessarily equate to low profile and many officers do not understand the law.

Others are so vehemently opposed to civilian carry that they will stop you and question you anyway, under the guise of a consensual contact, hoping you do not know the law, that they will be able to spot or invent a violation or that you will give them an excuse to “teach you a lesson”.

I am not arguing the legality and I believe that an armed society is a polite society. I am arguing that if your goal is to not be noticed, then I would not carry openly because even if you do not see people taking notice, they will still be taking notice.

Whether you carry openly or concealed, be aware that merely gesturing toward your weapon can get you charged with brandishing in some jurisdictions.

Also keep in mind that as soon as you draw your firearm, you become a bullet magnet, so be sure that you step well away from anyone you care about before you reveal your ace in the hole. Put some distance and degrees of angle between you and your loved ones before you draw your weapon. Be

sure to [familiarize yourself with firearms laws](#) for any jurisdiction you travel to as well.

5 - Overt vs Covert Camouflage

Overt camouflage is primarily used in rural and wilderness areas. Camouflage pattern clothing augmented with natural material from your area of operations and combat counter-tracking are powerful tools to keep your presence concealed.

Covert camouflage can be useful anywhere, but it is most effective in urban areas where people are everywhere and for the most part, go overlooked by nearly everyone. Sometimes referred to as "going gray" or "assuming a gray man persona," covert camouflage is the art of hiding in plain sight.

Learn both overt and covert camouflage. Prepare for both and train when to employ each. Take the time to create or acquire gear that will help you transition from one to the other quickly such as reversible clothing, more than one color/style of crushable hat or two ultralight packable packs, one carried inside the other so you can switch from camouflage pattern to a subdued solid color in an instant.

6 - You Will Reap What You Sow, But Only After You Sow

The simple, yet oft overlooked truth of The Law Of The Harvest applies to self-defense & self-reliance in spades. Technology is a powerful tool, but it has come with the unfortunate side effects of shortened attention span and a strong tendency to place far too great a value on convenience.

Man lived for millennia and numerous civilizations rose and fell without ever progressing to the point of the industrial revolution. Yet as soon as we overcame that obstacle, we quickly lost touch with the fundamental principles of independent living so thoroughly that if you learn a few basic skills that anyone who lived to see their teens would have known before the industrial revolution, you will be seen as an incredible survival genius and producers will hunt you down to offer you your own reality TV show. Survival is largely a DIY proposition.

Despite the endless parade of claims to the contrary, there is no one thing that you can simply buy and display in a case labeled "In Case Of Emergency, Break Glass" that will save your life in the event of a catastrophe. You have to put in the "dirt time" and learn the skills involved in sustaining life.

The fundamental concepts of survival are not difficult to comprehend, but you do have to invest a little time in repetitive skill training. Like so many other self-reliant disciplines, keeping a low profile is all about putting in the time to repeatedly train in the fundamentals and make the necessary preparations.

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