

'Shooter Ready?' ⁶⁹

Now on DVD!

By Duane Thomas

An ongoing project for many of us is upgrading our video libraries from VHS to DVD. Whenever an old favorite is released on the superior technology, it's out with the old, in with the new. For years I've been waiting for Dillon Precision to begin producing Rob Leatham's IPSC primer, "Shooter Ready?" on DVD. It's finally happened.

The video's title is the question asked of every "combat" pistol shooter before starting a stage. "Shooter Ready?" was actually produced by Dillon Precision, the first-ever shooting video with fully professional production values. It begins with a shot of a helicopter coming in over a rise of land at night, toward the camera, as a voice-over discourses on the American love affair with firearms – especially handguns – and respect for those men who've demonstrated excellence in their use. The chopper lands, and from it steps...Rob Leatham!

From that intro we proceed to instruction by Leatham on some of the skills required of the superior combat pistol shooter. Since this comes from a man arguably the best in the world at what he does, it behooves us to pay attention. To start, Rob demonstrates the classic *El Presidente* at full speed. Then we see it again slo-mo, after which he breaks the drill down into its components, giving us advice on things like:

- A proper two-handed firing grip.
- The motions necessary to perform a quick, safe, accurate, consistent draw. Leatham makes this process very easy to understand by breaking it down into steps, five in all, then stringing them together to construct the technique.
- The speed reload.

Once we're through that, Rob demos training drills such as: draw, fire a single shot, reload, and fire another shot. Then things become a bit more complex, the same draw/reload sequence but with two shots before and after the load. There's advice on one-handed shooting, both right- and left-hand only. Shooting around cover. Kneeling. Going to prone.

One very nice thing about "Shooter Ready?" is that it has a sense of humor. In-between the shooting tips are bits thrown in just to keep things loose and interesting, such as when Rob says of IPSC, "One of the things I like about this style of shooting is the fantasy that goes along with it. The sce-

narios let you become the good guy for a moment, the hero, who saves the day with the power and skill in his hand."

Segue to a heroic shot of Leatham, shot from a low camera angle; smoke swirls in the background; music thrums dramatically as he stuffs a magazine into his comp gun, then stares nobly into the distance with the look of eagles. Cut to a dream/fantasy sequence, shot largely in slo-mo, in which Rob-as-bodyguard saves his client from an assassination attempt by heavily armed thugs. The distinguished gent playing the "client" is Rob's dad, Nyle Leatham. After Rob scoops a 1911 .45

from under his jacket to deal with the miscreants, he makes it very clear he knows none of this was very realistic, then comments mischievously, "But, since it was MY dream..." This is all gently self-parodic. It's impressive that a man of Leatham's rarefied talent and accomplishments is also emotionally secure enough to poke fun at himself.

Much has been made of Leatham's technique of firing at night using tracers during this video. Frankly, all the hoopla is justified. On most gun videos, when the instructor demos a technique live fire, it's visually boring. All you see is shell casings spitting out of the gun, maybe a little muzzle flash. You

can't see where the bullets are hitting to verify the technique actually works. He might as well be shooting blanks. In "Shooter Ready?" you can SEE the bullets leave the gun, and exactly where they hit. It's a brilliant teaching trick.

At the end of the tape Rob Leatham says to us, "This is just a taste of some of the many aspects of competition shooting. To master any of the basics you must practice over and over again. Who knows, maybe some day we'll compete against each other." Then the world's best shooter grins at us and says, "But you better practice a LOT... because I love a good challenge!"

"Shooter Ready?" is fairly short, about 50 minutes. This is good for its intended purpose, to be a basic introduction to the action shooting sports. There's enough fun and skill level on display here to be entertaining, not enough length and esoterica to bore. If I had to recommend one basic "combat" pistol shooting video the interested practitioner could show to someone to make them understand just why we find these sports so compelling, it would be "Shooter Ready?"

