

Senior Gunfighters... *Continued from Page 43*

alert. While it's not codified in law, it has been used in court.

However, if you're fast, accurate, and agile enough to defend yourself against an edged weapon at seven yards when you're 45, does that apply at 60? You should try it several times to find out. If so, that's great. If not, add one more program change to your mental computer.

Nobody said that getting older is easy. (But it beats the s#!+ out of the alternative.)

One more thing. If you're a senior citizen subjected to a physical assault, you're going to get hurt. Sociopaths in their teens and 20s are stronger than you, and they usually hunt in packs. If you hesitate, you're probably going to find yourself on the ground, surrounded by urban savages who enjoy the process of injuring and humiliating you.

Ever try drawing your pistol while lying on your back or stomach with somebody on top of you? Maybe somebody who discovers that you're armed and wants to "examine" your weapon? (Hint: in some years, as many as 20 percent of slain cops are shot with their own guns.)

So...you need to rewind the mental tape to the point that the situation approaches the irretrievable. For seniors, that means giving themselves a bit more room – and time – to evaluate the situation, make a decision, and respond.

Awareness = Avoidance

Learn and live by the Color Code. It works for everybody who cares enough to become aware of his environment. (Condition White is obliviousness; Yellow is general awareness; Orange is focused on a specific subject. Condition Red is the trigger decision – fight.)

The importance of awareness increases as we age, for all the reasons cited above. But in the information era, senior gunfighters can enhance their situational awareness by learning about threat levels in areas we may travel. If planning a trip, learn which jurisdictions honor your CCW; which areas are known for high crime and which types of threats (carjackings, armed robberies, drive-bys, etc.). Personally, I'd gladly go miles and miles out of my way to avoid having to call my lawyer at an outrageous hour.

The same applies to lesser distances. If you see or sense trouble coming down the block, cross to the other side of the street. En route, assess the tactical geography for potential cover and concealment. Crossing also provides a reality check. If the potential troublemakers keep going, you were slightly paranoid, and no harm done. If they pursue you, then you're prescient. In either case, you're better off.

Deception

There's a mantra that goes, "Age and craftiness will overcome youth and enthusiasm." A little deception might go a long way.

Imagine that you're cornered in a blind alley, back against the wall. The gang of urban "yutes" is closing in. Lean against the wall, but do not drop to the ground. Grasp your chest (left side preferred). Inhale audibly, mouth open, eyes wide. "I...can't...breathe. My pills..." (Fumble in pocket for 9mm prescription.) "HELP! Ambulance! Police! Firemen! Anybody!"

At the very least you can buy yourself a few seconds to think or to draw. Nobody's going to accuse you of over-emoting, but it could literally be the performance of a lifetime.

If you've never read Jeff Cooper's *Principles of Personal Defense*, please do so. The seventh principle is Surprise. One of the few advantages of geezerhood is that you get a boost in your Surprise factor. If you're 25 years old with Brad Pitt abs, the punks are likely to key on you and take you out first. But once your inverted triangle physique

reverses, you look less threatening. Goblins don't expect a grayhead to foil their plans.

One more thing. You're a senior citizen who's survived a violent attack. Juries in Free America will likely be sympathetic. The cops probably will be too, but don't trust them. I'm sorry; that's the reality. Don't trust them. They may be good guys and gals, but even if they would like to replace the ammo you just used, their report starts the legal process. The DA may not share their perspective. So request an ambulance, then suck on the oxygen for all it's worth. Usually you don't have to talk to the authorities for as much as 72 hours. Do your talking to your velocolawyer.

After all, you're an old geezer and entitled to some respect.

The Ultimate Option

I am reminded by my youngest brother (himself now 56) that a family friend solved the senior-shooter quandary in his late 50s. A retired Air Force general often visited us, and in those pre-1968 years, the erstwhile fighter ace found a technical compensation for ageing. He traveled with some constant companions: a .357 in his Eldorado's glove compartment and a select-fire AR-15 in his golf bag. His home defense weapon was a *belt-fed* M16, apparently courtesy of Curt LeMay, though I never laid eyes on that rare jewel.

Hey, if you can't arrange for six M2 Brownings and a 1,200-hp engine in your mode of transportation, something with a selector might seem the next best thing!

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