



3 STEPS TO **SURVIVING** AN ACTIVE SHOOTER ATTACK





When seconds count and decisions can mean the difference between life and death, it's not the time to be questioning whether you're doing the right thing.

My name is Dave Young, and I am the director and founder of ARMA Training, a police training and certification company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, that provides professional training to law enforcement, corrections, military and security companies worldwide. I have recently expanded my training offerings to private citizens and am also the co-founder of Vistelar, a global consulting and training institute that addresses the entire spectrum of human conflict. I have more than 30 years of experience as a corrections and law enforcement officer and I am a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. I've served around the world, and I've survived my fair share of life-threatening encounters. Over those 30-plus years,

I've trained tens of thousands of professionals to identify, prepare for and respond to life-threatening attacks.

Several agencies and organizations have developed differing programs for responding to an Active Shooter Attack (ASA). While they all have the same goal of increasing survivability, they each go about it in a different way.

I believe it's most helpful to examine the true beginning of an attack — to talk about what will likely happen and tell you exactly what to do (and how to do it) to increase your chances of survival.

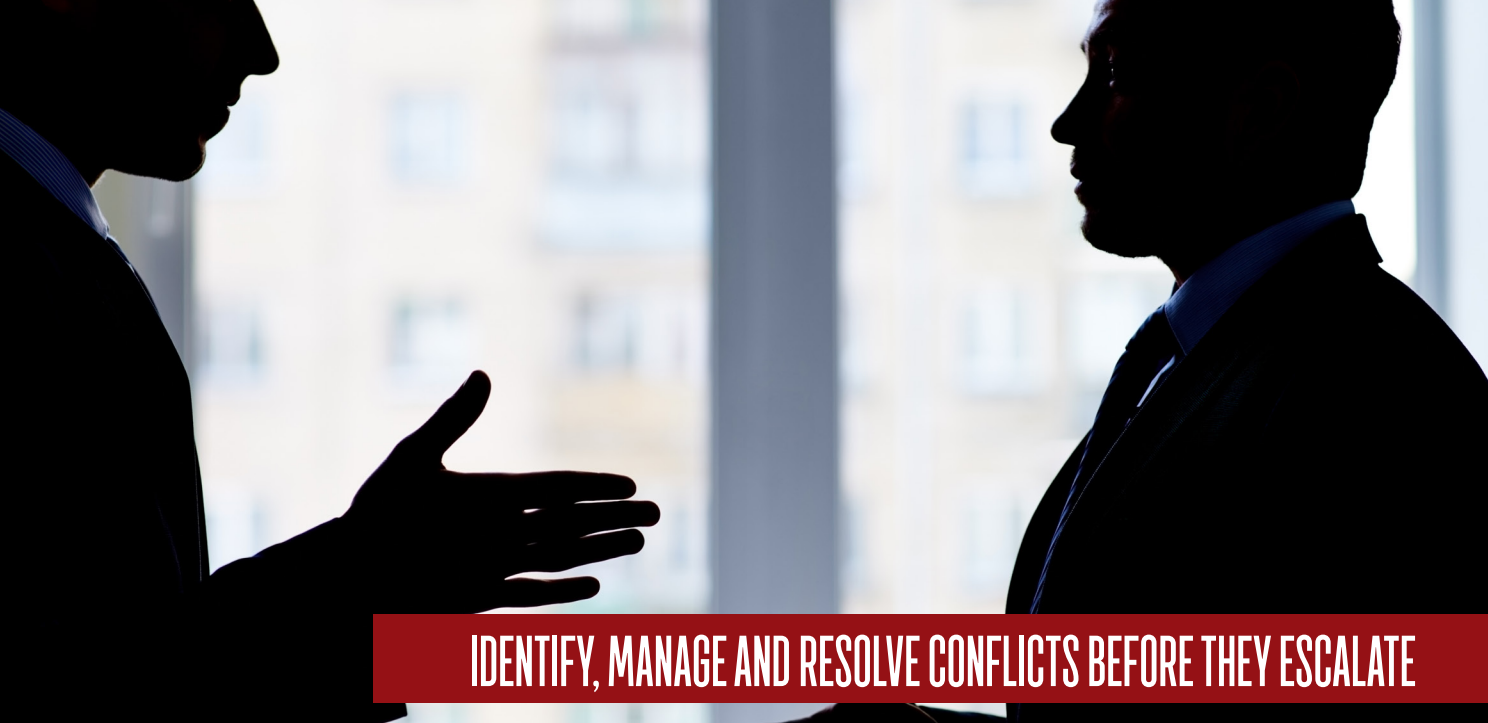
FROM THE TOP

Identifying an active shooter starts with understanding the dynamics of how such an attack occurs. What identifies an at-risk person? What common traits does a particular individual share with all of the

other active shooter perpetrators currently on file with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as listed in their Uniform Crime Report? Learning exactly how active shooter attacks occur is the first step in preparing to stop one.

We've found that almost all active shooter attacks start with a level of unresolved conflict. Even though spontaneous, unplanned rapid mass murders could happen at any time, if you have a plan in place to address and respond to a pre-planned ASA, you can use that same plan — making adjustments depending on the specific circumstances you observe or experience — to respond to a spontaneous ASA.

We have also identified a significant amount of misleading information on reported response times and actual on-scene times that were documented. Most statistics, for example, support the fact that



IDENTIFY, MANAGE AND RESOLVE CONFLICTS BEFORE THEY ESCALATE

attacks like these are over before law enforcement arrives, yet some programs instruct innocents to wait at their locations. This is problematic because hiding and waiting for help is contradictory to what every instinct and every available fact tell us to do. Still, some academics choose theory over reality; they feel more comfortable telling others to wait for help rather than step up and take action that is designed and field-proven to save lives.

DO SOMETHING!

Facts show that more ASAs have been stopped by the perpetrators taking their own lives or the physical intervention of non-law-enforcement individuals than by law enforcement showing up in time to end the attacks.

Five years ago, my wife — who is a teacher of K- through-12-aged children — shared a story with me. That story, along with a few

things my youngest son relayed to me while he was in middle school, forced me to look at what victims of these attacks are being told. All American cops, deputies, troopers and officers will drop everything in their hands to respond to an active shooter attack — even though they know it will more than likely be over before they arrive. As a lawman, I cannot tell you how terrifying that feeling is, knowing you are the help your citizens are waiting for but that the murderer will more than likely run his course before you arrive.

Taking immediate action when these attacks occur is the only way to increase your survivability and save the lives of those around you. There are so many unknown factors when you hear the first shot. You don't know what the attacker's plan is, how many attackers there are or what their locations are. You don't know whether there are any explosives

planted in the immediate area, and you don't know whether fires or other booby traps are set. That's just a few of the unknowns you're going to have to mitigate, and you'll have to do so quickly.

We want to assume there is only one shooter, and we certainly hope he's a bad shot. Regardless of how skilled a shooter he is, a moving target is harder to hit than one who's hiding under a desk or in a closet. An even harder target is one who hunts back. Keep in mind the following three "Ps" for dealing with an ASA:

STAGE 1: PREVENTION

The best way to prevent active shooter attacks is by teaching staff and co-workers to identify, manage and resolve conflicts before they escalate. They should institute protocols to assist in working through situations that — on the surface — might seem



CONDUCT A PHYSICAL, ON-SITE RISK AND THREAT ASSESSMENT

unimportant but, if not managed properly, could have life-altering results.

STAGE 2: PREPARATION

A Risk and Threat Assessment, conducted by qualified professionals, is essential for any school or business. This means a physical, on-site assessment from professionals who have survived, responded to and trained others to survive attacks like the kind you're working to prevent.

I spoke to one organization whose members were told to hide in various locations in their facility in hopes any attack would be over quickly. If that's the plan, you must consider what qualifies one place as better than another — and you must consider it before you're looking for a place to hide. If you cannot escape, any place you select to hide should allow you to see danger approaching, defend yourself and then escape. If a spot doesn't allow you to do all three of

these things, then the only thing you'll accomplish by hiding there is to select where you'll be killed. This is one of the main reasons why Risk and Threat Assessments are vital before you start initiating a plan.

STAGE 3: PRACTICE

With what you learn from your assessment, develop a field-proven, tactically sound plan. This means reality-based, not concept-based. If your plan is only a theory, the only reality you will experience is death.

After you have your plan, you need to practice your plan — “Fire Drills Over Fire Talks,” as my close friend and mentor Gary Klugwicz says. You need to break through the myth that preparing for danger will scare your employees and customers; it's quite the opposite actually. It will encourage them to choose you over others.

Picture this: There have been break-ins and a few home

invasions in your neighborhood during social gatherings, and there are two simultaneous dinner parties on your block to which you've been invited. Short of staying at home, and if you absolutely, positively must attend one of the functions, which is the smarter choice?

HOUSE NO. 1

The first house has a pool and a large yard and is serving steak of choice and sides of which you could only dream. However, the residents of this particular home do not prepare or practice a family action plan.

HOUSE NO. 2

The second house has a pool and the same-sized yard as House No. 1 and is serving the same food as House No. 1. The residents of this particular home, though, have prepared and practiced their family action plan and are ready to respond to an attack.

The logical choice is obviously



DEVELOP AND PRACTICE A FIELD-PROVEN, TACTICALLY SOUND PLAN

House No. 2. So why do so many people still pick House No. 1? This is because they are hopeful and praying ... but that is for people who are unprepared.

ACT NOW

There are plenty of other subsequent stages we could add later, but if you fail to properly implement the first three, there won't be any need to worry about more. The time to prepare is before disaster strikes.

If you find your location under attack, escape should be your primary concern. You must always know how to get out of wherever you are, and you must know exactly where to go after you've escaped. If you cannot escape the immediate area, you will need to barricade and defend — not barricade *or* defend. You have to train yourself to be your own first responder. You owe it to yourself to learn more about what we do and how

we do it. There are no guarantees in life, but one thing we know for sure is that if you hide during an active shooter attack, you are guaranteed to lower your survivability.

Remember, being safe means you're ready for action!

Dave Young

Dave Young is the founder and director of ARMA Training and is responsible for training thousands of police, corrections and military instructors around the world every year on surviving force-on-force attacks. Young is also the co-founder of Vistelar, having graduated from his first law enforcement academy in 1985, and has more than 30 years of combined civilian and military law enforcement experience and training. Young has served as a loss-prevention specialist, a shoplifting agent in the state of California, a sworn corrections and law enforcement officer in the state of Florida, a gate sentry, a patrol officer, a watch commander, a special investigator, a Special Reaction Team (SRT) member and a Leader and Commander in the United States Marine Corps with multiple deployments. Young has participated in and trained military and law enforcement personnel in crowd management, active

shooter response and the deployment of non-lethal and lethal weapons and is recognized as one of the nation's leading defensive tactics instructors, specializing in how to manage conflict throughout the entire spectrum of human interaction. Young is able to use this experience in real-world events to bring a level of training unmatched by others and prepares his students for real-world threats.

Young is a weapons designer, a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, Chairman of the Policeone.com Advisory Board, a member of the Police Magazine advisory board and a Technical Advisory Board member for the Force Science Research Center. Young has been featured in national publications and magazines for his innovation and dedication to officer survival and personal safety and awareness and has been a spokesperson and consultant with CNN and Fox World News on officer survival and equipment safety. Young is also the founder and director of US Fighting Systems, responsible for the training and certifications of Grandmasters, Masters and instructors for martial arts schools around the country. Young is an active member of several professional organizations, not limited to International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association (ILEETA) and the International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor (IALEFI).



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