

Shootin' and Huntin', Fightin' and Killin'

By Fermin '2 Dogs' Garza

I started out with a 22 like most of you, but my first really handy dandy powerful sixgun was a 357. Sure I had a 44, but the 38/357 was the platform from which I learned to reload, control and shoot the bigger guns. It's always been a favorite of mine. One day sometime back I did an impromptu inventory of my magazine and located a significant amount of loaded 357 ammunition of all types I had loaded over the years.

I was an old enough beat pounder that I was initially issued a revolver in 38 special to start. It didn't take my agency long to transition to the 357 magnum. I immediately got mine and set out to master it. At the time I was knee high to Bill Jordan and worked hard to be fast out of his holster design until one day I happened to be chasing a burglar who had a pretty good headstart on me. The guys who know me will tell you I am not one to be detoured and was hot on his trail with a fury. Besides, I wasn't about to be scorned by the older hands for letting one get away if I still drew breath no matter how ragged.

Anyway, this turd went over the back fence on me in a neighborhood that backed up to the freeway and when I made it out the back door of the house he was burglarizing and over the back fence I could see he was already crossing the freeway. I was young at the time and lit a trail after him. Keep in mind, that in those days no one but supervisors and training officers had portable radios. Once out of your car, you were on your own. He jumped the concrete center median about the time I made it to the freeway shoulder and I could see the briefest of openings in the traffic and made for the concrete center median as fast as I could. It was at the moment I leaped over that concrete median that I learned that my Jordan style holster offered little or no sixgun retention without the strap engaged because my brand new stainless 357 flew out of my holster and went skidding across the 3 lanes of traffic ahead of me. There was a moment of horror when I realized I had lost my sixgun and the bad guy was now actually closer to it than I was!!

I was pissed now. In retrospect I realize how lucky I was. He never looked back and saw what happened. He was quite a bit bigger than me and slower and shortly after I recovered my now badly scuffed sixgun I caught up to him. He was determined not to go to jail and I was equally determined not to lose my sixgun again so I now had it in my hand in a death grip. I certainly had no intention of getting into a fight with a sixgun in my hand so I cracked him across his hard head. He dropped like a sack of wet phone books splat and all.

At that time there was really no such thing as a security holster like we have today. After a brother officer was shot in the thigh with his own 357 while it was in his holster I knew I had to get rid of that rig I had. It seems a little kid at a park managed to grip his magnum and pull the trigger with him unawares! It was a pretty good crease in his leg too! I called Gordan Davis and ordered his thumb break holster that both covered the trigger guard and had a retention device.

It has always amazed me that people have such considerable misconceptions as to what guns will and won't do. In my own opinion, TV has had a great deal to do with it. I once saw a guy who had been shot with an AR15 in a manner I was sure only intended to wound. He had gotten into an argument with his roommate and fellow drug dealer over a gallon size baggie of marijuana. Again, back in those days, that was a considerable stash and carried a substantial penalty under the law. The roommates lived on the edge of town near some fields overgrown with marsh grass. When I arrived, our hapless victim had

bled out from a thigh would that evidently cut his femoral. It was an ugly sight. He was pale as only the dead become in that ashen sort of way. He was surrounded by a pool of thick blood that looked as though it had been poured from a 5 gallon bucket.

From passerbys we learned that the suspect had just fled into the six foot tall marsh grass, was armed with a AR15, and that he took a large dog that later turned out to be a Pitt Bull/Mastiff cross complete with a spiked collar. Now, every cop in the area is arriving. The field is quickly surrounded and several brave souls entered the tall grass to give chase. Now, I knew even then a sixgun against a Rifle was a bad option. Few guys had shotguns and I certainly did not have one. Im going to change a few names here to protect the ignorant. My beat partner was a guy I will call Jug. Jug went to follow suit and I stopped him at the trails entrance and we took cover behind a rusty John Deere tractor to see if the bad guy could be driven to us. Shots ring out in the field. CRAP. Now I gotta go in there as a brother officer whom I was sworn to stand by may be in a tight. There were alot of shouts but no one could really hear anyone for the wind. Remember, comms were non existent out of your car. As it turns out the shots I heard were fired by a fellow rookie cop who I will call Joe. I approached the grass and as I neared the tall reeds parted and a set of teeth and claws exploded out of it with a mauling in his heart. That spiked collared bastard had found me and was after me like I had a pork chop in my pocket. I managed to sidestep him and he rushed by snapping like a enraged croc. Another rush another sidestep and again like a matador I avert being ravaged. But he is gaining on me at every turn and at the moment his anvil sized head is level with my reproductive parts fully intent on sinking his considerable teeth into me I let him have a 158 grain HP double action into the top of his skull. Thankfully he went out like he had a light switch. There was no exit. The bullet had traveled down his thick neck and saved me by a hair. Turns out the shots fired by Joe earlier were to ward off the same dog.

Meanwhile, the bad guy had been apprehended by an older grizzled veteran I will call Red. He was the type we all admired. Hard as steel. Mean as a snake. He apparently was a TV western fan too as he had cocked his own 357 when making the arrest but failed to let the hammer down before reholstering his sixgun. Red marched the bad guy out of the tall grass right past where I was standing over the now dead dog trying to catch my breath with Jug nearby. Upon seeing his animal in a dead heap the bad guy began to kick and struggle and demanded to know who had killed his dog!! I looked at him as innocently as I could and pointed at my partner and said, "Jug did!" I can still remember the way Jug looked at me....

So, Red takes the guy all the way to jail with his 357 cocked and ready to rock in his holster. He gets there where he meets up with the station duty officer, Captain Rock at the duty desk. Red goes to hand the Captain his duty weapon before entering the jail but the Captain seeing that it is cocked is horrified and tried to avoid the exchange. Another shot is fired. The duty desk suffers a through and though wound. I heard the Captain burned out the transmission gears on his swivel chair backing that sucker up.

In those innocent days, what a cop said was gospel. There were no video cameras in wide use, no internet, and certainly no U Tube to the contrary. Imagine my surprise, arriving home just in time for a ice cold silver bullet to turn on the TV news where there I was on TV watching myself narrowly avoiding being eaten by Cujo!!!!