



# Armed & Female Returns!

## Exclusive Book Excerpt of Paxton Quigley's New Book

### Chapter 1: WOMEN WITH GUNS

#### By Paxton Quigley

"All the time I was locked in the trunk, I could hear him yelling from the driver's seat about what he was going to do to me."

Kate Petit's car sputtered to a stop on the interstate highway between Lake Kissimmee and Tampa, where she lives alone in a nicely groomed but older condominium development on the established side of town.

"You know, I have never made that drive to the lake without worrying somewhere along the way about the risk of having a flat tire or breaking down and being stranded on the side of the road, alone."

Kate was stranded, all right. What looked to her like a mixture of smoke and steam was pouring out the top, bottom, and sides of the engine compartment. She knew it was safer to stay in the car with the windows and doors secured, but sitting in a burning car, to her thinking, was by far the most dangerous thing she could do, so she grabbed her purse and took up a position at the side of the road at a conservative distance from the car's gas tank.

"I didn't know what to expect next. You just hear so many stranded women-on-the-highway stories that I became short of breath and nervous as soon as the car took its final gasp and I pulled to a stop on the shoulder of the

road. Just being stopped on the highway after going sixty miles an hour for the last half-hour is unnerving enough, but with the car burning and all those cars whizzing by shaking the ground, I just hoped—well, maybe prayed—that a state highway-patrol car would pull up and some yes-ma'am-type trooper would tell me not to worry and take me home."

The car that stopped was not a highway-patrol car, and Kate tried to reason with herself that anyone stopping, short of an actual policeman, could be more of a problem than her stalled car, but she knew she couldn't stand there all day. So she greeted the well-dressed, middle-aged good Samaritan with enthusiasm for his assistance, and grinned a big hello with an audible sigh of relief.

"I had to size up the situation in a hurry," said Kate. "Here was this respectable-looking gentleman who stopped an expensive-looking car on the highway and backed all the way up in front of me and my burning car. I didn't have much choice except to ask him for help."

Kate was right. She had no choice. After being polite and sympathetic, the man took a knife from the inside pocket of his suit coat and pressed it sharply into Kate's ribs, telling her that if she didn't cooperate he would push the knife into her heart. "He slit a tear in my blouse and I felt the knife cut me. I was absolutely numb. All of a sud-

den there was no more traffic noise, or even a fear of being stuck on the highway, or any concern for my car," explained Kate. "I was this man's prisoner."

Kate was ordered into the trunk of the man's car. She had no choice. She got in the trunk. The man drove with Kate in the trunk for what Kate guessed to be a half-hour. The last few minutes were on an unpaved road; then the car stopped and the engine was turned off. During the entire time, the man yelled back obscenities to Kate in the trunk. She wouldn't respond when he demanded to know if she could hear him, so he yelled louder and got more obscene. When the car stopped, Kate recalls vividly the sound of the key in the trunk lock.

By the time she heard that sound, Kate had repositioned herself so that she was lying on her back, her feet tucked up under her, and her knees pushing hard up against the inside of the license-plate wall. Kate's head was jammed up against the back seat, and she hoped the overhang wouldn't obstruct a clear view of him when he opened the trunk. She knew he would have his knife out—that was the only thing she was really sure of.

Kate doesn't remember when the man stopped yelling at her in the trunk, and doesn't remember what he said as he opened the trunk. All she remembers is the flood of daylight momentarily blinding her when the trunk lid popped open

and an almost slow-motion sight of the bullet holes being made in the man's chest by the .38-caliber revolver she took out of her purse.

She had planned to shoot every bullet in her gun at the man when the trunk opened, but after three shots he slumped into the trunk on top of her, dead.

"The nightmare was over, but when he fell on me, bleeding, I became so frightened I thought I was suffocating. I gashed my head on the lid as I got out of the trunk. It was so horrible having him on top of me, dead like that. When I got out of the trunk, I forced his legs in beside him and slammed the lid. I went over to a tree and threw up.

"You know, I have carried that gun for years in my purse when I drive alone or have to go into areas of town I think are unsafe. It's funny, but all those years I never really thought about actually shooting someone, much less killing anyone. But I frequently recognized a feeling of being safe or being less vulnerable when I had my gun with me. And when this horrible thing happened, my only fear was about not having the opportunity to get to it. You're not going to believe this, but when he put me in the trunk with my purse I was very relieved," Kate firmly said.

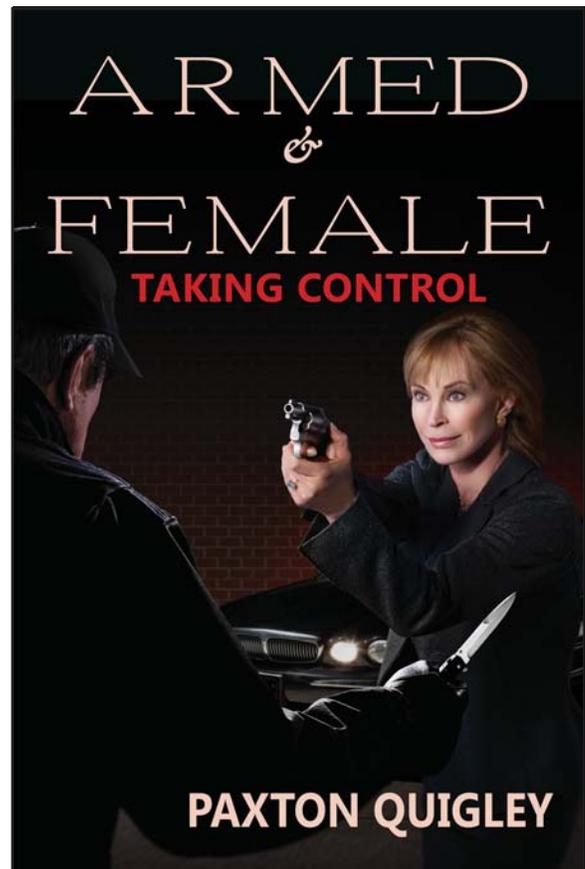
The police investigation revealed that the dead man was a twice-convicted felon who had previously been found guilty of eleven counts of sexual assault, including sodomy, child molestation, and rape. He had served prison sentences in another state at various times for a number of convictions. At the time he picked up Kate on the highway, he was out on parole for good prison behavior after having served only twenty-two months for raping a woman and her twelve-year-old daughter.

In 2007, according to the US De-

partment of Justice's National Crime Victimization, there were 248,300 sexual assaults—far fewer than the prior ten years. But still, the Department of Justice reports a woman is raped in the US every two minutes. Further, the FBI estimates that 60% of all crimes are not even reported. It is time for women to be less fearful of reporting these heinous crimes.

If you are over the age of twelve and female, be prepared to be criminally assaulted some time in your life. If you are about thirty years old now, there's a fifty-fifty chance of you being raped, robbed, or attacked. "Women ages 12-34 are most at risk," says retired police sergeant Steve Kardian, who runs a women's safety and self defense program called "Defend University" in Westchester, NY. Young women think they are invulnerable to attacks and have a "It could never happen to me" attitude.

The odds are reduced as you get older, and are different in various parts of our country. Chances of being raped at any age in New York are one in eight; Los Angeles, one in seven; Atlanta, one in five; Detroit, one in four. One out of every 12 women, and one out of every 20 men, will be stalked sometime in their life, according to the National Institute of Justice. Across our nation, one out of every four families will be victims of serious crimes like burglary, rape, robbery, or murder. Our cities are fortresses of



Cover of Paxton Quigley's *Armed & Female, Taking Control*, the updated version of her seminal 1989 book.

crime. And there is no such thing "as safe rural America."

The statistics are more than frightening. Only four criminals go to prison for every hundred reported crimes.

For every hundred prisoners with life sentences, 25 are freed before their third year; 42 are out by their seventh year; and people acquitted of murder by reason of insanity spend an average of only 500 days in mental hospitals before being released. The nation's prison population increases at a breathtaking pace each year. There are now more than 2 million prisoners behind bars. Nearly six out of ten have been there before, and more than half have been there four or more times according to the justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics.

If you are concerned, fearful

# Breaking New Ground

By Peggy Tartaro,  
Executive Editor

Twenty-one years may not seem like a lot, but the changes that have occurred in that time are amazing.

For women gunowners, 1989 could well be our 1776—it's the year a lot of things changed for us, and those changes were largely accomplished by women themselves.

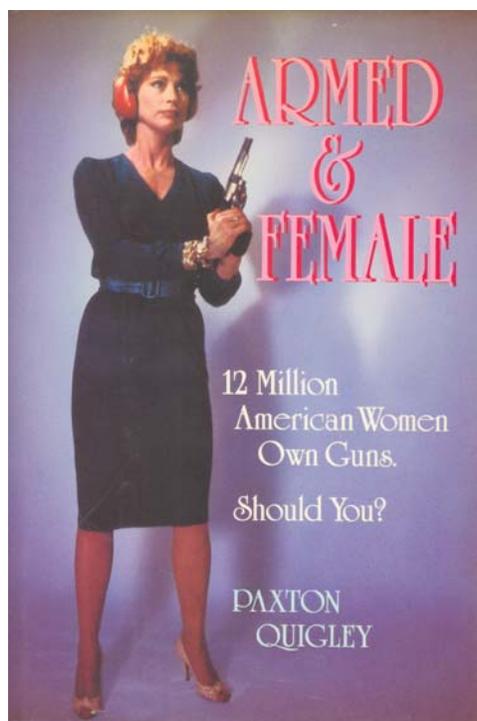
Although it had been in planning stages for some time before, 1989 was when Smith & Wesson debuted the modern LadySmith, recognizing their strong base of women customers and making a unique product exclusively for them. S&W's innovation—and,

to be honest, daring—in introducing the LadySmith opened the door to hundreds of new products for women gunowners—some more successful than others.

Also in the planning stages in 1989? *Women & Guns* magazine. For a detailed (some might say, exhaustive) look at our history, I refer you to [womenandguns.com](http://womenandguns.com).

And 1989 is also the publication date of *Armed & Female*, and the debut on the public stage of its author, Paxton Quigley.

The subtitle of the first edition is "12 million American Women Own



Guns. Should You?" And the book, a mix of first-person insights, strong interviews with survivors of crime and practical advice on gunownership was an instant success. Quigley has probably forgotten how many television and radio interviews she did following the publication, but she was everywhere during the heyday of the afternoon interview show.

She taught classes, she had her own radio show, she helped several companies develop and promote firearms-related products, she wrote and lectured.

And now, 21 years later, the new edition of *Armed & Female*, this time subtitled "Taking Control," is out from Merril Press (Trade Paperback, 232 pages, \$19.95).

Some things have changed in the new edition, but not Quigley's commitment to her subject, now enhanced with two decades more of experience.

about your safety, you are not alone. A Gallup poll finds that six out of ten women in this country are afraid to walk at night in their own neighborhoods.

When crime happens, however, know beforehand that in almost every instance no one will be there to protect you but yourself. Police will not be there unless officers are accidentally nearby, and witnesses can be counted on not to interfere.

One example among thousands occurred on a warm Thursday evening. A woman was severely beaten and raped in the parking lot of her apartment in suburban Los Angeles. Not an uncommon event these days certainly, but the story illustrates how the war on women has escalated, and how the victimized are beginning to try to change the odds.

Suzanne MacDonnell is a young attractive professional woman. She works out four times a week and takes a karate class on Tuesday nights. On July 22 Suzanne was walking from her car to her apartment when she heard moaning coming from the garbage bin in her parking lot.

"It was dark, and at first I couldn't see who was there." She approached the container cautiously and suddenly noticed a woman lying on the ground, crying and pleading for help. "Please, someone, help me, I've been raped, I'm hurt," the woman's voice whispered.

Instinctively Suzanne went to the woman's aid, kneeling beside her, trying to comfort her as best she could. Then the woman smashed her in the face.

"I saw a flash and felt a burning sensation across my nose and eyes. I fell backward and my head hit the pavement. It wasn't a woman at all, it was a man who had set a trap. He hit me again." Her eyes blazing with anger, she continued, "I must have been out for a few seconds,

because the next thing I remember was my skirt over my head and his hand pushed against my blood-filled mouth. I never really got a good look at his face.”

All Suzanne remembers is that the man wore a red dress and had long blond hair, probably a wig. He raped her and then dumped her in the trash bin. In the darkness, Suzanne cried for help. No one came. She didn't have the strength to lift the lid, so she waited, and moaned for help with the little energy she had. Found almost unconscious six hours later, Suzanne was taken to the hospital and treated for injuries that would heal in time. Treatment of her anger, fear, and distrust of men is ongoing, and to counter her fright and to feel safe again, Suzanne now owns a gun.

“What happened to me is bizarre, there is no question about that. But even though it is not an ordinary kind of crime, it made me extremely aware of my vulnerability. If this could happen to me—to me!—then I have to be on guard about the everyday dangers that we all know exist but ignore as happening to someone else. Now I fasten my seat belt in the car, replace batteries in my smoke detectors, have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, and carry a handgun. I may be dumb, but I'm not stupid.”

Another incident that was told to me involved two young women who avoided assault and rape. Meg Stoddard and Gretchen Winters met during their first week of residency at a hospital in Boston. They quickly discovered many coincidences: both were born in neighboring states in the Northwest, were raised on a farm, played tennis and golf, and each attended a medical school that the other had been rejected from. And so they decided to share a small flat in the Brookline section of Boston.

One cold snowy night in Decem-

ber, after a long and arduous shift at the hospital, they decided to call out for a pizza delivery and spend the evening watching television. As Gretchen was putting on her “couch potato” clothes, the outer door bell rang. Meg buzzed the front door and yelled to Gretchen that the pizza had arrived.

The young delivery man greeted Meg with an affable smile, but as she paid him something about him

disturbed her, and she deliberately kept him from entering the apartment. When she started to shut the door, he suddenly seized her arm and pressed a six-inch hunting knife to her throat. He slapped his hand over her mouth when she attempted to cry out. He forced her into the

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## Armed & Female

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apartment and kicked the door shut. In the kitchen, Gretchen was listening to the seven o'clock news and putting the final touches on the salad. Impatient for the pizza, she walked into the living room and saw the attacker holding Meg at knife point. She screamed.

"Shut up, bitch. You want me to cut her throat?" he growled. "Sit down."

The crazed look in his eyes warned Gretchen that he was on drugs and clearly capable of hurting them. She purposely sat down on the left side of the sofa. The attacker rambled on, threatening to have "real fun" with both of them. Meg and Gretchen looked at each other for a moment, aware that a woman in the neighborhood had recently been murdered under similar circumstances.

Breathing hard, the man grabbed Meg's long blond hair and sliced open her nightgown. Gretchen nervously slid her shaking hand toward a hollowed-out book that sat on an end table. The book contained her loaded gun.

"Stop, you bitch!" She froze. "Watch what I'm doing because you're next," he said, laughing.

Gripping Meg's hair with his left hand, he pulled the knife away from her throat and began unzipping his fly. He turned away briefly, and Gretchen reached for the revolver, stood up, and said firmly, "Let go of her." The man swirled and faced a .357 Magnum revolver aimed at the center of his chest.

"He was absolutely paralyzed," Gretchen recounted, "just like a deer caught in the beam of headlights. Meg was screaming and crying as I cursed at him to drop the knife. He obeyed and I kicked the knife out of his reach. He pleaded

with me not to shoot him."

She ordered the assailant to lie flat on his stomach with his hands behind his back and told Meg to call the police. As she stood over him, he shouted obscenities at her and an odd thought struck her. If she had to shoot him, would she doctor him?

Although it seemed like an eternity, eight minutes later the police arrived, took the attacker away, spent some time taking a report, and left.

Meg and Gretchen's story was told to me years after it occurred. Each is now married and living in separate cities, but both women own handguns and, needless to say, they hope they will never have to use them. They lived through a nightmare, but Gretchen is proud that she was able to defend her friend and herself against an incident that she never thought would happen.

There are many other women who, like Meg and Gretchen, are armed. They represent a growing movement. In fact, it is a quiet drive that began in the late 1960s, with more women living alone and working outside of the home and having more disposable income. In turn, women have become accessible targets, not only for rape, but for robbery and assault, and the need for personal protection has become more acute.

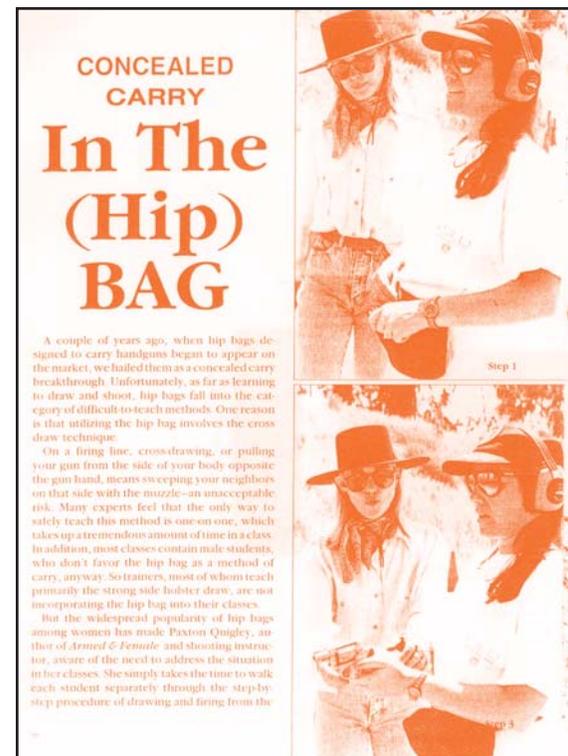
The inner cities have always been rife with violence, and black women were one of the first groups of females to purchase guns for self-defense. As crime extended to the suburbs and small towns, white middle-class women began owning guns, and now a large cross section of women are learning to shoot.

No one really knows how many women own guns, or have access to guns and know how to shoot them. According to the US Department of Justice (1998), 27% of American women keep a gun in the house

and 37.6 million females "either own or have rapid access to guns." Peggy Tartaro, editor of *Women & Guns* magazine, estimates that of the 80 million gun owners, 10 to 15 million are women.

Owning a gun for self-defense is the focus of this book. The pros and cons of using lethal force will be thoroughly discussed. Choosing the proper weapon will be explored. And the training necessary to make that gun useful will be stressed.

Gun defense in the home is the primary focus, not gun defense outside. Although a large percentage of violent crimes do occur in the streets and, as you will read, some women carry guns out of fear of



being attacked in the streets, I do not recommend it—not unless you have acquired a license to carry a concealed weapon in those states that require it, are very well trained in street defense, and practice frequently on a combat course. There are too many women (as well as men) who carry guns without knowing combat shooting. Compe-

tency with a gun is extremely important and especially crucial in a public place where bystanders may be present.

A woman who carries a gun on the street should not think that its mere possession will dispel the dangers that made her buy it. She may feel less fearful and more confident, but just because she carries a gun doesn't mean it is safer for her to walk the streets.

If a woman chooses to carry a gun after being thoroughly trained in shooting, she should carry it discreetly, neither displaying nor mentioning it to friends or associates. As gun-defense expert Massad Ayoob says in his book *In the Grav-*

Owning a weapon is a private matter; before beginning research on this subject, I thought I knew no women gun owners. To my surprise, I learned that some of my associates and acquaintances have guns and practice shooting regularly.

One such woman was Judy Miller, who was seated next to me at a university alumni luncheon. After the introductions and the fund-raising appeals were over, we naturally talked to each other. It's funny that after a few minutes you can learn so much about a person. Judy is divorced, lives with her sixteen-year-old son, and is a professor of business management at a Chicago-area university. When I told her I was doing research on women and crime, this mild-mannered, very attractive, slight woman who looks far younger than her forty-nine years astounded me by saying that she owned not one but two guns, and has for the last twenty years.

She then confided in me that she keeps a loaded pistol by her bedside and always carries a gun in her briefcase. Moreover, she will take out the pistol and hold it if she walks alone in a subterranean parking lot or unaccompanied at night on a deserted street. She knows it is against the law in Chicago to carry a concealed weapon without a permit, but she chooses to disobey the law. She spoke seriously and with a firmness and confidence I have not heard from many women.

For Judy, the immediate concern in everyday existence is being prepared to face a city that is filled with so much danger. Questioned whether she is overly distrustful, she replied that she feels neither paranoid not especially fearful.

Rather, at an early age Judy developed a philosophy of what she calls self-sufficiency. A very thoughtful woman, Judy explained that, when she was young, her father always enjoyed going to the

lake and walking on the beach. Then one day he was threatened by a couple of kids, and some months later he was mugged. The police came to the house to ask her father questions about his assailants, but the family never knew if the boys were apprehended. Although her father continued walking on the beach, he became suspicious and untrusting. "He really didn't enjoy himself anymore, because he became fearful. From then on, when my sister and I wanted to go to the beach, he insisted that he come with us. I grew angrier and angrier at what they had done to him."

It was in her early twenties that Judy worked through the concept of protecting herself and taking charge of her life, and not relying on anyone else, like the police, a boyfriend, or friends of the family. Her solution was a gun. When she was twenty-five, she went by herself to a gun range, tried a number of different handguns, and learned how to shoot. To this day, Judy practices once or twice a month.

"For me, the concept of self-sufficiency comes from within, and physically protecting myself is part of it," Judy explained. "Am I willing to commit myself totally? Yes—a hundred percent, absolutely. In other words, the issue of carrying a weapon, be it a knitting needle, a hat pin, a concealed knife, a gun, or even a hand grenade—I would rather go to jail than have to see my loved ones, including myself, killed or injured unnecessarily."

Judy does not like carrying a gun illegally, but it is almost impossible to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon of any kind in Chicago. She, like so many other women I spoke to, realizes that the police cannot be expected to protect everyone. "So, you use your head and work out the problem of doing something that's illegal," she quietly said. "Then you work



**A September 1991 W&G feature with Paxton Quigley discussing concealed carry.**

est Extreme, "The license to carry concealed deadly weapons in public is not a right but a privilege. To be worthy of this privilege, one must be both discreet and competent with the weapon."

through your head, as well as your stomach, the fact that you may hurt or kill someone. I have worked this all through. I am willing to use my weapon, ready to kill, rather than be a victim. There is no argument. This is how I feel, and I have felt this way for more than twenty years. I don't care what anybody thinks of it."

Unlike many other women, Judy has never been victimized, although she has been in a situation where she was prepared to use her gun. It was ten o'clock one cold winter evening, when she and her son, Mark, were watching television in the living room and heard someone trying to force open a locked kitchen window. The window wouldn't open, and the person quickly moved to pry open the lock on a side door.

Judy and her son didn't say a word to each other; they each knew what to do. Judy went to get her gun, Mark to call the police. Judy stood on the side of the door and yelled, "Go away, don't try and get in." They didn't hear a thing, but whoever it was went away. The police arrived twenty minutes later, asked them some questions, and left, presumably to scour the neighborhood.

Would she have shot? She quickly answered yes. "The gun was loaded, but I didn't say that I had a loaded gun, for the simple reason that I'm afraid of the person who is crazy enough to take that as a challenge. I tried to sound very forceful and I felt confident, but my adrenaline was pumping a mile a minute!" She laughed for an instant to ease the tension, but then was serious again. "He wasn't going to hurt us. I don't intend for that to ever happen," she said adamantly.

Judy cannot understand why it has taken women so long to turn to guns for self-defense.

"Speculation tells me that the clas-

sic reason is that too many women think that an assault would not happen to them. They're dependent upon a man to lead them or to protect them, or they haven't thought through the risks thoroughly," she said. "There are a lot of women who think that, if they don't think about the possibility of being attacked, they won't be attacked. That's statistically ignorant, and I believe that attitude is changing."

"Again," Judy reiterated to me, "the base issue goes back to self-worth, and whether or not you're totally committed to leading a good strong life and taking charge of your own destiny" Is a gun a good deterrent against a crime? Judy thinks so. Deterrence refers not to the actual firing of guns in stopping crimes, but to the nonoccurrence of crimes when those who contemplate them are deterred by the potential victims' actual or assumed possession of arms.

Another story of deterrence that hit the national news in the summer of 2008 centered around 85-year-old, great grandmother Leda Smith from Lake Lynn, PA, who returned home from church one Sunday and immediately realized someone was in her home. "I saw him move by my keyboard near the wall but I just walked right on past him to the bedroom and got my .22 caliber revolver." She confronted the 17-year-old burglar and told the teen that she would shoot him if he moved. "I had the gun on him before he turned around and said, 'you've had it.'" Smith ordered the boy to dial 911 and then gave him some advice. "Dial 911 and don't attempt to throw the phone at me, or do anything bad or I'll just shoot you," Smith recalled, mentioning that she started keeping the gun by her bed after a burglary at a neighboring home several weeks before.

Statistics indicate that a gun is a formidable deterrent. Gary Kleck, a

distinguished scholar of criminology and a professor at Florida State University, produced a study based exclusively on surveys by anti-gun groups that concluded that guns are used in defending against 645,000 crimes every year, with only one-third of the guns actually being fired.

Don B. Kates, Jr., a leading constitutional attorney and criminologist, studied 150 cases of armed resistance by citizens against criminal attackers. His findings are similar to Kleck's overall results. Criminals were captured or driven off without a shot's being fired in 50 percent of the instances, and wounded or killed in 43% of the instances. In the remaining 7%, assailants, wounded or not, escaped.

FBI statistics for 2007 show that, nationwide, citizens justifiably killed 254 criminals and the police justifiably killed 391 criminals. Northeastern University criminal justice professor James Alan Fox explained in a *USA Today* interview, "There's an emerging 'shoot-first' mentality by police and private citizens. For several years, police departments have armed their officers with higher-powered weapons to keep pace with criminal gangs. Clearly there is a message out there that citizens may be able to defend themselves" as well, he says."

Carnegie Mellon University criminologist, Alfred Bluestein says, "the 'gun legalization movement' also may have helped create a 'greater willingness' among citizens to act in self-defense."

Based on US Department of Justice national victims' surveys and Gary Kleck's research, victims who resisted with guns were not only much less likely to lose their possessions to robbers than those who resisted with any other kind of weapons, but were also less likely to be injured than victims who did not resist at all. In contrast, knife-armed resisters were six times

more likely to be injured than gun-armed resisters, and about twice as likely to suffer injury as victims who did nothing.

The notion of deterrence must also be viewed from the criminal's point of view. Professors James D. Wright and Peter H. Rossi, sociologists from the University of Massachusetts, conducted an extensive gun-issue study commissioned by the National Institute of Justice that involved in-depth interviews with 1,874 imprisoned felons in ten states. The Wright/Rossi work provides us with detailed information for the first time about the behavior patterns and criminal thinking of professional bad guys.

More than half of the felons in the Wright/Rossi study agreed that "a criminal is not going to mess around with a victim he knows is armed with a gun," and "most criminals are more worried about meeting an armed victim than they are about running into the police." Nearly 40% responded that there had been at least one time when they decided not to commit a crime because they knew or believed that the victim was armed.

Clearly, armed citizens are a real threat to criminals. One of the most convincing cases illustrating the deterrent effect of gun ownership comes from a highly publicized effort to train women in firearms use, cosponsored by the Orlando, Florida, Police Department and *The Orlando Sentinel Star*.

There had been a series of very brutal rapes in Orlando in 1966, and during that time, according to police Captain Jack Stacey, residents, mostly women, were buying two hundred to three hundred guns per week. Most had no idea of basic gun safety or operation, or how and when to use a gun for protection. The Orlando Sentinel Star had an anti-gun editorial policy and vehemently disapproved of these

gun purchases. Martin Andersen, publisher of the newspaper, and Emily Bavar, editor of the newspaper's magazine supplement, went to the chief of police, Carlisle "Stoney" Johnstone, and insisted that he do something to stop the sale of handguns to women. Chief Johnstone said that he could not stop the sale of guns, because the law permitted the purchase of handguns in Orlando. As discussion continued, it was decided that, since it wasn't possible to prevent handgun sales, the only alternative was to make sure that the women buying guns knew how to use them. The paper and the police department would cosponsor a gun-training program for women. The newspaper ran a front-page story announcing that the gun-training course would take place in a city park the following Sunday.

A *Gun Week* writer told me that the first class of "Emily Bavar's Pistol Packin' Posse," as it was termed, was scheduled, and newspaper personnel and police made preparations for as many as four to five hundred women. To everyone's utter amazement, more than twenty-five hundred women showed up, carrying every type of firearm under the sun, some loaded and some unloaded. The writer talked to one officer who was there who said he was never so scared in his life. Apparently the cars were parked blocks away from the park, and women were walking all over the place armed to their teeth. Some had their guns holstered, others had them in their purses or pockets, and the rest had them in their hands. It must have been some sight!

Not wanting to be known for a massacre at Lake Eola Park, the police department and the newspaper decided to fall back, take cover, and regroup. They obviously weren't set up for those numbers, and they told everybody to go home. They quickly

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organized a three-class-per-week program, with women clipping application forms from the newspaper and the Orlando Sentinel Star staff arranging appointments. Five months later, they had trained more than six thousand women.

Charley Wadsworth, who administered the newspaper's portion of the program, insisted at the time that they were not trying to play upon anyone's fears, but they felt that if a woman has a pistol in the house she shouldn't be afraid of it.

Even Emily Bavar learned how to shoot, and she said that one of their big problems was that many women would show up every week just to practice. She also said that Chief Johnstone had told her that, although the policemen were putting in their own time for the program, it would lighten their work in the long run, thanks to the tremendous deterrent effect on crime.

As a result, the rape rate in Orlando, Florida, fell from a 1966 level of thirty-six to only four in 1967. Before the training, rape had been increasing in Orlando, as it was nationwide.

Five years later, rape was still significantly below the pre-program level, even though, during the five years after the training, rape climbed 308% in the surrounding Orlando metropolitan area, the Florida rate escalated 96%, and the national rape rate increased by 64%.

Another result of the Orlando training, is that, while most other crimes escalated or remained steady in Orlando in 1967, violent assault and burglary decreased by 25% each, making Orlando the only American city of more than a hundred thousand in population in which crime declined in 1967.

The *Gun Week* writer contacted Police Chief Stoney Johnstone a year later and asked him if any of the women had used a firearm to defend herself. Stoney said no, not

to his knowledge. The writer asked if any of his women had turned a gun on her husband or boyfriend. Stoney replied no, and added that there also hadn't been a single accidental shooting. And believe me," Stoney said, "we looked closely at that—I had dreams of my pension disappearing."

Experts who have analyzed the Orlando phenomenon, contend that the rape rate decreased because of the media publicity, and because the women were armed and trained. No one ever fired a gun or even pulled a gun to protect herself. What brought about the results was that the women knew how to use a gun and the newspaper was continuously telling the would-be rapists that they were trained.

Another woman who is outspoken about her gun ownership is Randi McGinn, a former violent-crimes prosecutor in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, district attorney's office. Randi has prosecuted more than two hundred criminal cases, most of them dealing with violent crimes such as murder, rape, armed robbery, child molestation, aggravated battery, and arson. More than half of the victims she saw were women who had been sexually assaulted.

Randi began legally carrying a gun before becoming a prosecutor and seeing the damaged women who came through her office. She got a gun after a series of rapes in her neighborhood. She was never fearful until the woman who lived next to her was raped, and during the next four months that woman's assailant sexually assaulted twelve other women within six blocks of her house, always in their homes.

For the first time, Randi was afraid. Her father sent her a canister of pepper spray. Her girlfriend gave her a whistle. Neither item eased her apprehension when she came home to an empty house at

night. Before opening the door, she would put the whistle between her lips and ready the pepper spray—all the while thinking how ridiculous she looked and wondering whether this would do any good if there was someone in the house.

"So I tried the whistle. I blew and blew one evening, and no one came. My neighbors could not hear me. I tried the pepper spray on a dog that snapped at me while I was jogging. He shook his head and looked madder than before. My self-defense methods were not working.

"I would never have purchased a gun of my own volition," she explained. "Guns were things men used, something fathers and sons shared as part of a deer-hunting manhood ritual. They had a secret code of calibers and bullet types unfathomable to women.

"Soldiers, policemen, men in uniform . . . those were the people who carried guns," she continued. "Guns were used for violence and death. I had been raised to believe that I was not capable of violence."

It was a man, a close friend, who told her to buy a gun. He could not stay at Randi's house during the rapist's rampage and was worried about her when she was alone at night. He suggested a gun. She was horrified by the idea. "He literally had to take me to a gun store and buy me a small semi-automatic pistol," Randi said, laughing. He showed her how to use it and practiced with her many times. "Then, finally, I took a gun course."

Years have gone by since then. Now Randi has more than one gun. Wherever she goes, she carries that small automatic pistol in a jacket pocket. Randi explained, "I have a six-and-a-half-year-old daughter, and we live alone together. I feel very responsible for protecting her as well as myself. There's nobody here to protect us.

"I especially find a need to carry a

gun when I'm in the car. If you're a woman driving home alone at night and someone tries to run you off the road, there's not a whole lot you can do if you don't have a gun," Randi insisted. "There aren't many circumstances when you need a gun, but when you need a gun, you need it very badly. Nothing else will do, really. I've never had to use a gun for self-defense; hopefully, I'll never have to. But if I'm in that situation, I would hate myself for having a gun but having it somewhere else."

Questioned about the possibility of killing someone, Randi replied quickly. "If I had to kill somebody, I would do it. Sure. Without a doubt. Absolutely! If I felt that somebody was threatening me or my child, I would use the gun, no question. As a lawyer, I know all of the legal consequences. Having a gun and making that kind of decision to shoot somebody in self-defense is a big responsibility. If you are wrong, certainly the law will penalize you. I think I am responsible, and I'm willing to test my judgment if it ever comes to it."

"Many, many people say that they are not entirely sure they could shoot anyone if they had a gun. Listen, if a man was in a woman's house and she knew he was going to rape her, I think most women would shoot him if it came down to that," Randi said frankly.

After counseling so many victims while she was a criminal prosecutor, Randi needed to express her views about self-defense and gun defense to other women. She wrote an article about her experiences and why she owns a gun. Because Randi has always considered herself a liberal and a feminist, her article presented a strong feminist viewpoint in terms of self-protection and taking responsibility. She sent the article to a national woman's magazine, which turned it down; according to Randi, "The return reply

clearly implied that the article was not right-thinking and that I was out of my mind."

Subsequently, *The American Rifleman*, a house publication of the National Rifle Association (NRA) with a readership of three million, accepted the article.

From the response she received from her article, Randi has found that quite a number of women all across the country carry guns. "I was floored by the number of letters I got. Nearly one hundred letters! I didn't think that any women read that magazine!" she exclaimed. "I didn't expect the tenor of the letters, which was that people are really scared. I hadn't realized how fearful people are."

Randi was further surprised about how many professional, middle-aged, matronly types of women, many of whom she knew, approached her on the street and in restaurants and told her that they, too, carried guns.

She was equally astonished to find out that people who would be called politically "liberal," who she assumed were anti-gun, are carrying guns. "These people never tell others that they have guns. They don't make it apparent at all and wouldn't come out if the NRA conducted a survey. These people would never, ever admit they owned guns."

"They are not politically vocal and do not see it as an issue whether or not they should be allowed to own and to carry guns. The reason they have guns is that they're scared and they want to protect their families," explained Randi. "I found out that they had guns because they called me and said they had liked my article."

Andrea Frank had a different reason for buying a gun. I met Andrea on Ladies' Night, when women shoot free at The Target Range, a San Fernando Valley, CA, indoor gun range. Andrea sells pharmaceu-

tical supplies and covers southern California for a major manufacturer in Chicago. She comes to the range to shoot at least twice a week.

Andrea took up a gun for self-defense after her home was broken into for the third time. On a warm September Friday night, a man entered her home through a back window. Andrea was in her den, preparing weekly sales reports and listening to her stereo with headphones. She didn't know the man was there until she saw him walking through the living room toward the den. She started screaming for help, hoping that he would be scared away, but he kept coming toward her as she backed into a small bathroom.

He grabbed her by the hair and smacked her across the face, telling her to shut up, and then punched her in the stomach, knocking her to the floor. The man saw Andrea's purse on the desk and grabbed it, demanding more money and jewelry. Andrea started to get up, but he punched her again, this time bloodying her nose. Unable to fight, Andrea began crying and begged him to stop hurting her. As she lay on the floor, the man pulled off her watch and gold chain, and then laughed at her as he kicked her in the chest. Within moments he was gone.

Andrea learned of her assailant's arrest two months later. She was subpoenaed to testify at his trial, where he was found guilty of a series of five robberies in Andrea's neighborhood. She also learned that the 24-year-old man who beat her up was addicted to drugs and alcohol, had been in prison once before, and was out on parole.

It was interesting for me to find out that felons, in general, are young males from socially marginal backgrounds who were exposed to, or experimented with, drugs, guns, and crime before their sixteenth birthday. The late teens of these

men were mostly spent getting into relatively serious trouble with the law; most wasted the largest portion of their twenties in prison. The average felon left school in the tenth or eleventh grade and had an erratic employment history thereafter. In the Wright/Rossi study, about 80% had committed at least one felony before the age of eighteen; many had committed large numbers of them, property crimes being by far the most common. About one-half the felons were or had been either alcoholics or drug addicts, or both, at some point. An additional one-quarter appear to have been rather heavy drug users, if not addicts.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, of the US Department of Justice, robbery ranks among the most serious and feared criminal offenses, because it involves both threatened or actual violence and loss of property to the victim. The Bureau also finds that, among commonly recorded crimes, only homicide and rape exceed robbery in violence. Over half of all robbery victims are attacked, and female robbery victims are more likely than men to be attacked and injured. Also, one in twelve robbery victims experiences serious injuries, such as rape, knife, or gunshot wounds, broken bones, or being knocked unconscious.

Since her violent encounter, Andrea keeps a gun in her house and often carries it in her car when she feels that she will be traveling to unsafe areas. She wonders whether there are any safe areas left.

Although she started shooting for self-defense, Andrea realized that she really enjoys shooting as a sport. "It can be very relaxing. The kind of work I do can be exasperating at times. When I shoot target practice, it uses up all of my frustrations, so I can start the next day feeling good," she explained.

"Women seem to excel at shooting. We seem to learn more rapidly, because we don't have any fixed ideas, and we don't have a macho attitude on how we're supposed to shoot, like men do. Men look at cop shows and Western movies and use the stars as role models. Women don't even think about guns unless someone finally hands us one, and then we look and we learn," Andrea said emphatically.

According to combat master Mike Dalton, who operates the renowned International Shootists, Inc. (ISI), a gun-training school in Acton, California, women do just as well with guns as men do, especially in the type of shooting events where accuracy counts most.

"Many women are intimidated by guns at first, looking at a gun as some mystical piece of steel that almost has a life of its own and can do some harm by itself," Mickey Fowler, who now operates DVC Shooting Sports, told me while I was taking the ISI weekend course. Many women also think that you have to be big and strong to shoot and that only men are good shooters. But Fowler insists that, once instructors get them to overcome these intimidating beliefs, women can become excellent shooters.

Ironically, women who have been the most afraid of the gun tend to end up enjoying shooting more than almost anybody else. People get into shooting for different reasons, and usually a woman's motivation is self defense. Not too many women Dalton and Fowler train are interested in either hunting or just going out and plinking tin cans for fun. They don't think it's feminine to shoot nor have they had the experience of shooting.

But after they've fired a few rounds, it's easy for them to get hooked on serious shooting.

If a woman has taken an introductory gun course and continues

to practice, within a few months she will be good enough to join a league of competitive shooters. Many communities have combat-shooting or action shooting leagues, and competition is worldwide. I have tried a number of these action-shooting courses and improved my shooting tremendously.

Actually, competitive shooting is much more than a sport. It is an enjoyable way to learn to use a handgun safely and effectively under time constraints and in stress situations, which will prepare you to save your life or your family's life, should the need arise.

There were hundreds of other women I met who told me why they learned how to shoot for self-defense, but one woman stands out in my mind.

Margo Feldman is an energetic, nonstop advertising woman whose enthusiasm at first seemed inappropriate to the story she was about to tell, but as I got to know her I found that she was actually heroic and offered an inspiring message to women. For Margo, her experience was a rite of passage, and as a result of it she developed an honest and worthwhile feeling about herself, which she believes all women who rely on themselves must acquire for a successful life. But I'll let her tell her story.

"The story is pretty simple," began Margo as we sat in her office during lunchtime. "A young man came through my closed bedroom window late one night when I was in the bathroom showering before bed. When I opened the shower curtain, he was standing in the bathroom doorway, leaning against the door-jamb, holding a large knife and grinning. I don't want to go on about how startled and instantly frightened I was. That's pretty routine: I was scared to death. I want to tell you about what happened with the gun, and what a vital role



**Paxton Quigley in the early 1990s with a Cicero Award from American Firearms Industry—one of many awards she has received over the years.**

it played.

“My father died four years ago. I was the oldest of his three children, all daughters, and always sort of stood in for the son he didn’t have. I liked it, though, and he was such a wonderful man that he always made me feel responsible and important—qualities I’m sure he felt were generic in men and only occasionally learned by women—and I responded always by being true to my word and clear about my preferences,” said Margo, smiling, as if she knew a secret.

The night before Margo’s father died, he asked her to go to his top dresser drawer to bring him a wooden box. He took a pistol from the box, checked to see that it was unloaded, and handed it to her. “It’s yours. I’m going to show you how to use it right now, and don’t forget what I tell you—it may someday save your life,” he said. “With this gun, you may someday save your mother’s or sisters’ lives, or your future child.”

“He showed me how the gun worked; I never even knew he had a gun. He watched me load and unload it; I was being responsible for him by following instructions and learning, although I never, ever planned to touch it again. I hated guns—sorry, Dad!” joked Margo,

laughing at herself.

She took the pistol home and put it in the top drawer, as he had instructed her, loaded, as she swore she would keep it always. “I felt half stupid about the big deal Dad made of the whole thing, but, you know, the eldest daughter and all,” said Margo, as she rolled her eyes toward the heavens and laughed again.

It was many months after Margo’s father’s death that the assailant broke into her apartment.

“So, this huge guy is standing at my bathroom door,” continued Margo. “I fling open the shower curtain and there he is. And there I am, wet, more than naked, and trapped. He handed me a towel. Nice guy, huh?”

“He came into the bathroom, making the big knife very obvious. He sat on the toilet-seat cover and told me to dry off. Scared? Phew, I was numb. This was bad any way you looked: I’m naked, rubbing my body all over with a towel. All I could think to do was to dry myself slowly, hoping time would reveal something—a weak spot—about this guy I’m now seeing as a rapist at the very least, and a murderer second.

“This guy—I know his name now, but I guess it isn’t important—gets comfortable and, I guess, turned on by me drying myself. So he tells me to put on some perfume. I do. Then he orders me into my bedroom. He sits on the bed, flashing the knife, and tells me to put on my sexiest underwear for him.

“I still remember my instant anger about his demanding that I get sexy for him,” said Margo, successfully slinging a pencil into a wastepaper basket. “But that instant of anger didn’t last too long; he pointed toward my body with his knife when I was slow to move.”

Going to her underwear drawer and opening it, Margo remembered the whole scene with her father. She

couldn’t understand at the time the significance of his stressing the top drawer, but there she was opening her top drawer, while this stranger sat eight feet away from her holding a knife. As she reached into the drawer, there was absolutely no question about what she was going to bring out. Her father’s words were in her head, “With this gun, you may someday save your life.”

“I turned, with the gun in my right hand and a pair of red bikini underpants in the other. I’m laughing now. It was a scene out of some corny movie. Here I am in my birthday suit, pointing a gun and a pair of bikinis at this big, bad criminal sitting on my bed with a butcher knife in his hand waiting like a cat for a mouse. You should have seen the look on his face!” howled Margo.

The gun surprised the intruder so much that he launched himself back in the bed, dropped his knife on the floor, and banged his head on the light over the pillows, squealing like a pig. She told him that if he made a move, even scratched his head, she would shoot him with every bullet in the gun. She ordered him to put his hands on top of his head, which he did.

“It was at that moment that panic overcame me. What was I going to do with him, and how was I going to get dressed?” asked Margo, throwing her arms in the air. “I decided that getting dressed was not my priority until I called the police.

“Just then I saw the phone on the nightstand next to where this shithead was trying to disappear into the wall. I don’t know where I came up with the idea—I don’t even watch TV very much—but I handled this like I was on the SWAT team,” laughed Margo.

She told the man to keep his right hand on top of his head and reach across his body with his left hand and pick up the phone and dial 911

for the police. He relaxed just enough to start complaining about calling the police, and Margo lifted up the gun, which was getting heavy even though she was holding it with two hands as her father had shown her.

"I reminded him again that if he moved or didn't do exactly as I told him I would empty the gun on him and probably get a medal for doing it, from—I think I said—the PTA. He got jumpy again, begged me to calm down, and lifted the phone and dialed 911 and repeated everything to the police that I told him," said Margo excitedly, feeling very proud of her maneuver.

Margo was beginning to get weary then, and a little lightheaded. Next she told the man to keep his hands on top of his head and, without moving off the wall, turn toward it and slip down until he was lying on the bed face down. He did this all very deliberately, but complained that he couldn't breathe with his face down and his hands on top of his head; Margo reminded him that it would be a lot easier trying to breathe with his face in the pillow than trying to breathe with holes in his back. Margo felt that he looked secure in that position, so she reached around the dresser into the closet and grabbed her bathrobe. "I felt a whole lot better being dressed," said Margo, "but I was beginning to shake badly. I was pretty glad that he couldn't see me."

The police arrived twelve minutes later. They yelled to Margo through the front door, because she couldn't leave the man alone to open it. They told her to keep the man covered with the gun while they found a way into the apartment.

Moments later, two policemen popped up in the open bedroom window. One officer gave Margo the okay sign as he yelled to the man not to move. They climbed through

the window, and one officer handcuffed the man while the other took the gun from Margo and put his arm around her to comfort her.

"The rest of the details don't matter," said Margo as she got up from her desk and paced the office. "There was paperwork that seemed like it would never stop, detectives, district attorneys, and court, and all that." Margo stopped pacing, looked at me steadfastly, and said, "What does matter is that I saved my life, or at the very least I saved my sanity, with a gun that I never had to shoot. And I saved the lives of who knows how many other women. And you know what else? I would have shot the creep if I had to. I would have shot him gladly—the look on his face, holding that knife and sizing me up like I was a slave girl..."

Margo Feldman was very lucky. She had never shot a gun before, nor did she know anything about gun safety—all of this could have contributed to her demise. What was most important was that Margo had the ability to remain cool under extreme pressure.

World-renowned gun combat master Jeff Cooper said that if you lose your cool under deadly attack you will probably not survive to make excuses, so don't bother to improvise any—just keep your head. Anger, as long as it is controlled anger, is no obstacle to efficiency. Self-control, Jeff Cooper said, is one thing the psychopath does not usually possess. You must use yours to his undoing.

This final personal account was most difficult to obtain and demanded hours of interviewing and every ounce of emotional energy, from Mrs. Bower and me.

Mrs. Maxwell Bower is sixty-five years old and lives with her seventy-two-year-old husband in a condominium on a respectable eighteen-hole golf-course development in Phoenix, Arizona. On an early Mon-

day evening in January, Barbara Bower shot and killed one of a pair of intruders who broke into their home to steal their money and have some fun.

"Max saw the men first—or maybe, I should say, the men saw Max first. He was sitting in his chair, watching the end of a baseball game he had videotaped from last year's World Series. He's a nut for baseball," laughed Mrs. Bower.

She was in the kitchen, which shares a breakfast bar with the living room but can't be seen from the television chairs over near the sliding glass door opening onto the patio. She had just cut some flowers from the patio and was trimming them for a vase when she heard the television go off and knew something was wrong—her husband hadn't growled about some umpire's call or a pitcher's curve ball. So Barbara started for the living room. When she came around the corner, two men, stockings on their faces and dressed in white T-shirts, were lifting Max out of his chair, holding a gun to his neck.

"They must not have known I was in the house," recalled Mrs. Bower, "because, when I walked into the living room, one of the men flew across the room and almost yanked my arm from its socket and jerked my reading glasses right off my head, pulling me into the middle of the room."

Max Bower started to protest, but the man pointing the gun at him slapped him so hard across the face that his glasses smashed against the wall and his nose began to bleed.

"I can't say that I have feared a thing like this," said Mrs. Bower, "but, coming from a big city, you always hear about these things happening, and I guess what you always fear about these things is that the statistics about it happening to you are really that great."

Mr. Bower had bought a gun

years ago when the Bowers lived in Saint Louis. He'd discussed it with his wife, and they'd both agreed that their neighborhood was no longer the safe, family neighborhood it had once been, so that a handgun in the house for added protection was both appropriate and prudent. He purchased a .45-caliber semi-automatic, because he was familiar with its operation and reputation from the army. After shooting it once, Mrs. Bower said she would prefer a revolver, which she would find simpler to use, but Max convinced her that she could learn to operate the .45 easily with some instruction and that the shooting efficiency of the automatic greatly outweighed the hard-shooting revolver in the horrible event they should ever need the weapon.

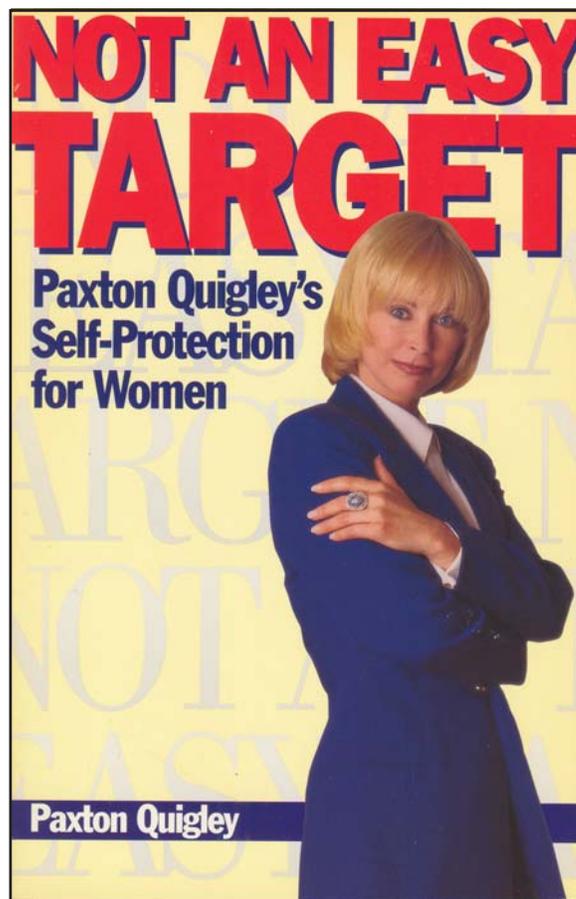
The Bowers learned to shoot with an instructor recommended by a police lieutenant Max knew from the municipal golf course, and the gun was put in Max's top dresser drawer, loaded. Although it was shot every summer by both of them, they were always aware that they didn't really know enough about the gun to consider using it except in a life-or-death situation. When they moved from Saint Louis to Phoenix, the gun moved along with the contents of Max's drawer, but it wasn't shot again.

"I saw the kind of trouble we were in," said Mrs. Bower, nervously rubbing her hands. "They were talking so fast, and I tried to calm things down by offering to give them whatever they wanted if they would leave us alone and not hurt us. Max's nose was bleeding down his face onto his shirt and to the carpet. I begged the one man to help stop Max's bleeding and offered to take the other man throughout the house to find what they wanted," continued Mrs. Bower, wiping back tears that she couldn't control.

The two men only wanted cash and jewelry. They took the \$40 Max had in his pocket, both their wedding rings, and Mrs. Bower's diamond studs. The man holding Max at gunpoint mashed the heel of his hand into Max's bleeding nose, breaking it and squirting blood all over both men. They weren't happy with forty dollars, and told Mrs. Bower that they would kill Max if she didn't come up with one thousand dollars.

"I don't know who keeps that kind of money around; for us, one thousand dollars earns interest in the bank. I was so frightened that I panicked and told them I would get it. I don't know what I was thinking of when I blurted that out, but something had to happen," sighed Mrs. Bower. "It was a nightmare."

The one man grabbed her arm again, shoving her toward the other room, and told her to "get it." Mrs. Bower led him into the bedroom, where the only thing she could think to do was empty her purse on the bed. She knew there couldn't possibly be twenty dollars in her wallet. As he was looking through the contents of her purse, holding her with one hand, she was mentally searching the whole room, trying to think where more money might be forgotten or saved. Just as her inventory took her to the drawer with the gun, the man found eighteen dollars and change in her wallet. Angry and swearing, he flung her on the bed and left the bed-



Quigley's 1995 book, *Not an Easy Target*, published by Simon & Shuster.

room, laughing derisively.

Mrs. Bower said she sprang off the bed to the gun drawer before the heel of her assailant had left the door frame. She picked up the .45, released the safety, and walked out her bedroom door. The one gunman saw her in the hallway pointing the gun toward him. Her size and appearance added no additional menace to the pointed .45, so the gunman jumped for his gun, lying on the bar in front of him. His hand reached it just as the bullet ripped through his chest. He was dead before he hit the floor, and his partner bolted through the patio door.

"The most amazing thing—and it's easy now for me to say 'the most amazing thing,' because at the time everything was so amazing—but the amazing thing was that I don't remember hearing the gun fire," recalled Mrs. Bower. "Max always

insisted, when we went for our annual practice session, that we fire the gun at an indoor range. Now, I don't know if you have ever fired a .45-caliber gun inside, but even with ear protection, the noise and percussion is quite impressive. And on that night I never heard the gun go off."

The details of what happened next are routine: the police, the paramedics, the coroner, and the investigation. Max fully recovered from the surgery necessary to repair his broken nose and cheekbone; the hallway and living room were re-carpeted and painted; the whole family came from back east to visit; and the Bowers are once again taking two long walks a day, playing golf, reacting to baseball games, and feeling very close and strong and happy to be alive.

"What I did had nothing to do with courage or shooting or murder; what I did had to be done. It was necessary, there was no other choice. I just thank God and I thank Max for that gun. Without it we would have spent the rest of our retirement that night, or have been injured beyond repair and lived with pain and fear and tragedy," said Mrs. Bower, smiling for the first time.

And, yes, the other man was caught within an hour of Mrs. Bower's call to the police. He was stopped for a speeding ticket and was detained because of the blood splattered all over his chest and face, and his behavior, which was reported by the traffic officers as being erratic and frightened. Barbara Bower has no fear that he will ever want to see the inside of her house again.

After talking with these women, as well as many others, I realized that there is a quiet but definite trend among women to shoulder the responsibility for their personal safety. They feel that they have been made fools of by the experts

who advise the use of "personal weapons" for protection against vicious assault and are buying guns in astounding numbers.

Many women are open about their gun ownership, and more than willing to discuss with anyone their reasons for having a gun and their methods of using it should the time come. Yet many women gun owners consider the subject intimate and personal, and refuse to talk about it or be associated with any trend or gun culture. But the evidence is inescapable: the threat of assault against women continues at an alarming rate; law enforcement is virtually incapable of preventing such assault; and women are arming themselves in self-defense.

**W&G**

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