



IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

THE LITTLE-KNOWN BACKSTORY OF THE
UNITED STATES CONCEALED CARRY ASSOCIATION



BY TIM SCHMIDT WITH ROY H. WILLIAMS

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If It Is to Be, It's Up to Me
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IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

PREFACE

After reading the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestselling *Wizard of Ads* trilogy by Roy H. Williams, I decided to track him down and see if I could arrange for him to give us some feedback on our marketing plans.

After a daylong introductory meeting, Roy asked if I would be willing to let him interview me for a book.

Frankly, I was honored.

I flew to his campus having no idea what to expect.

This book is a record of the day we spent together at the nonprofit school for entrepreneurs he and his wife built in Austin, Texas.

When I accepted the invitation, I had no idea that he had never owned a handgun and had mixed emotions about concealed carry.

I hope you enjoy this story.

PRELUDE

Roy: OK, Tim, come over here, because the closer you are to the microphone, the better the recording is going to be. OK? I'm going to go make some coffee, but I'm listening. Start.

Tim: OK. Just start going?

Roy: Just start telling your story the way you like to tell it.

Tim: Well, I would say that so much of what the USCCA has become, and who I am, is because of my father. And-

Roy: Because of your father?

Tim: My father, yeah. So growing up in the Schmidt household, we had a very traditional, I guess, family setup whereby Dad was authoritarian and Mom was the one who told us that she loved us. Never really heard that from Dad. But his actions certainly showed it. I was pretty much scared of my father until I was nearly 23 years old.

Roy: Why?

Tim: Why?

Roy: Was it mannerisms or?

Tim: Oh, no, he was just a very stern, strong disciplinarian, and he had very high expectations. And, yeah. And I was also, I was a very shy boy who became a very shy engineer. And I can remember, here's a story that'll make you laugh. So my brother, Greg, was a year and a half younger than me. And I hit puberty quicker, so he was always like a foot and a half shorter than me.

But I remember one time Mom dropped Greg and me off at the YMCA to get a day pass to play basketball. I was in fourth grade, my brother was in third grade, and I was too scared to walk up and talk to the 17-year-old girl to get my day pass, so my brother had to do it for me. That's who I was. I didn't have a lot of confidence. And who knows? Maybe that's why I was afraid of my dad so much.

Roy: Did your dad introduce you to firearms?

DAD AND ME

Tim: The first experience I had with a firearm was with my father when I was 11 years old. One thing Dad would always do is take each of his three kids, one-at-a-time each summer, on a father-son or father-daughter trip. It was usually a camping trip. I always looked forward to these trips. I know that my brother and sister did as well. And you know what, Roy? This is a tradition that I've continued with my three children. There's something special about spending one-on-one time with each of your kids.

OK, back to the story ... one of the reasons that our trips were usually camping trips was that both my parents were very frugal. Dad was a finance guy for a food processing plant, and he was very smart with money. We lived a very middle-class lifestyle, and we didn't do a lot of fancy things.

Haha ... here's an example: We got to go out to dinner three times a year. It was on each of the kids' birthdays, and it was always to Pizza Hut. That was a big deal, right? And we literally had to ask permission if we could order soda, because water was cheaper.

And so, anyway, it was on one of those trips with just my dad and me. We were up in northern Wisconsin. And I remember one night we were sitting around the campfire, and we were just sitting there talking, and there was some rustling in the woods. And we didn't camp in campgrounds. We just went out where you weren't supposed to go, just in the middle of nowhere. And so it wasn't like there were any forest rangers or anyone nearby.

It was very dark. Not many stars out. When I heard that rustling in the woods, I was scared. My dad instantly hopped up from the log we were sitting on and went into the tent. A few seconds later, he came back and sat next to me on the log. But now he had his 5-inch barrel, .357 Magnum, nickel-plated Smith & Wesson revolver with him.

And he didn't say anything about it. He just had it sitting right there with him because we didn't know what was in those woods. I went from feeling very scared to very safe. I just remember how safe I felt. There's just something about that feeling when you're with someone who you know will do ANYTHING to protect you. And my dad had his revolver with him to make sure nothing happened to me.

Roy, please bear with me ... remembering my dad is tough for me.

I may get a little choked up because Dad died a few years ago. So I apologize in advance.

So then like two days later on that same trip, Dad and I were driving back home, and we just randomly happened to drive past this outdoor gun range. And Dad said, "Hey, let's pull over

here." So we set up there. And, for the first time in my life, my dad let me shoot that gun.

I was scared to death. But it was exciting to shoot a gun. I knew that Smith & Wesson was probably my dad's prized possession. I mean he would never let us touch that thing. Not just because it was a firearm, but because it was one of his prized possessions and he was a very frugal man, and when he had nice stuff, he didn't want anyone touching it.

That's just the way it was with my dad.

I can remember being at that shooting range with my dad like it was yesterday. It was way up in northern Wisconsin. Nobody else was shooting, so we had the whole range to ourselves.

Dad kept his prized revolver in this funny little brown case. Even though it had a lock on it, it certainly wasn't made to store a gun. This was my frugal Dad at work here. He just didn't think it was worth it to buy some fancy case when he had a case that would work just fine. It looked like that case used to store a shoe-cleaning kit or maybe a hairdryer.

But that didn't matter. Dad had installed some foam pads inside, so it worked perfectly for his needs.

I can literally feel my dad looking down from heaven right now, shaking his head, saying, "Son, you don't always have to buy the fancy stuff."

So Dad got this case out and opened it up. There sat the gleaming revolver. As you can imagine, Dad kept it immaculately clean.

Dad took his time and made sure I understood the four universal rules of firearms safety. He helped me load the revolver chambers, and then we took turns shooting for what seemed like hours.

It was just SO much fun.

It was a really powerful experience for me, and it increased my connection with my dad. I was still very fearful of him, but, overall, I think it was a healthy relationship.

[Long pause]

Dad died of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) in the spring of 2017, which is just the most messed-up disease you can ever imagine.

I'll never forget the day when he could barely talk, barely breathe for that matter, and he gave me that gun and said...

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Roy: Take your time.

Tim: He said...

Roy: I guess this was sort of the ultimate passing of the torch between father and son.

Tim: *[Nods his head yes]*

Roy: I'm going to go check on that coffee.

CHAPTER 2

I'VE NEVER BEEN MUCH OF A LEADER

Roy: So you were a shy kid who grew up to be a shy engineer, and you had a very stern dad who introduced you to firearms.

Tim: Dad had guns in the house to protect the family. He wasn't a hunter. He was just a stern-yet-loving German Dad. But I knew he loved me because he would always go to my football games and whatnot. I knew he watched all my games, and I knew that he loved me.

Roy: That night in the woods, your dad got the revolver because there were noises in the woods?

Tim: Yeah.

Roy: And you're sitting around the campfire. And he pulled his Smith & Wesson out of the tent to protect you from whatever wild animals were out there.

Tim: Yep.

Roy: OK. So when you came home from the woods, what happened next?

Tim: So then I went back to grade school, where I wasn't very popular. I wasn't completely a loner, but I certainly wasn't in a popular group. In sixth, seventh and eighth grade, I literally had no friends because I wasn't very good at making friends. It was just my personality, the way that God made me. Dad tried to help me. His solution was the same solution that I give people nowadays, which is to read books. He said, "Tim, you need to read *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. And you need to listen to these Zig Ziglar tapes about positive thinking."

So I would go on my paper route and listen to these tapes and then come home and read these books, and I started to become a little bit more of a pleasant person, but still ... I'm an introvert. I'm an introverted person. But when I got to high school, thanks to the help my dad gave me, I started to make a few friends, and I had a great high school experience. I loved science, loved math, and was a fairly happy introverted person with a handful of friends.

Roy: You said your dad came to all your football games?

Tim: He sure did. My dad played high school football, and he really understood the game.

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I'd come home from a game and he'd describe, in detail, almost every important play of the game. But the way he described the plays ... well, I could tell that he wasn't really watching the game as much as he was watching me. He knew every single block and tackle that I made. Dad and I really connected on that.

Roy: Sounds like your dad really helped you in football.

Tim: Well, something happened early on ... I was a sophomore in high school, and I wasn't getting much playing time on the junior varsity team.

Roy: Hmmm ... you weren't very good, huh?

Tim: It wasn't so much that but rather my mindset was wrong. And this was where my dad really helped me.

I remember complaining to Dad one Saturday about how I wasn't getting much playing time. So Dad said, "Son, the next time you line up on the kickoff team, I want you to say to yourself, **"If it is to be, it's up to me."** I want you to pretend that there's nobody else on your team. You're the only player. And if you don't make that tackle, the other team is definitely going to score a touchdown."

I said, "If it is to be, it's up to me"?

Dad nodded and said, "It's up to you, Tim."

So the next time I lined up with the junior varsity kickoff team, I visualized myself making the tackle. I pretended that none of my teammates were on the field. I whispered to myself, "If it is to be, it's up to me."

When the ball was kicked, I sprinted down that field like a demon and tackled that guy on maybe the 12-yard line and Coach saw it and said, "Holy, who the heck was that?"

Needless to say, I got more and more playing time. And my dad and I grew closer and closer together through this shared football experience.

Roy: "If it is to be, it's up to me." That's what he told you?

Tim: Yep. That was the first time those words had a big impact in my life. Dad really helped me change my mindset.

You know, it's funny, as a father of three adult children, I often wonder if any of the words that I say to them have an impact. I sure hope so.

Roy: You said it was the FIRST time those words had an impact. Were there other times?

Tim: Well, there was another thing that happened in high school, which to this day I still can't believe that son-of-a-bitch said this, but...

Roy: Who?

Tim: Like I said before, "loved science, loved math, really good at it." So my chemistry professor got angry at me in my senior year because I decided not to take advanced chemistry. I just didn't want to. It wasn't required, and quite frankly, the guy was kind of a jackass. It's my senior year. I'm going to have fun. I joined a band, and I think that's what put me on his shit list. And on the day of high school graduation, we had a practice ceremony where everyone practices walking across the stage to receive their scholarships. And I had gotten a scholarship to receive in-state tuition at Michigan Tech University, which is a great engineering school.

So as I walked up on stage, this chemistry teacher, because he was the guy handing out the scholarship certificates, shakes my hand, looks me in the eye and says, "You're never going to make it at Michigan Tech."

Roy: Wow.

Tim: Yeah, can you believe that? What kind of high school teacher tells a student that they're not going to make it?

Roy: So, how did this impact you? Did you say anything to him?

Tim: I don't think I said a word.

And, as it turns out, I DID struggle at Michigan Tech. I had to take a remedial math class freshman year. This is for engineering majors who don't do well on the pre-calculus screening exam. I pretty much struggled with ALL of my classes at Tech. Nothing really came easy for me. Heck, it took me five years to get a four-year degree.

I can remember many, many solitary, late nights in the campus library. I remember questioning myself. Did I really have what it takes to become a mechanical engineer?

And then I'd remember what my chemistry teacher told me ... that I wasn't going to make it. And I'd also remember what my dad taught me: "If it is to be, it's up to me."

And remembering those things put a burning in my gut. I'd show my chemistry teacher that he was wrong.

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Roy: Tell me more about your Michigan Tech experience.

Tim: I went to Michigan Tech and became a mechanical engineer. I think I was drawn to the engineering field because I was told by my high school teachers that “well, when you’re an engineer, you get to sit down at a computer and solve problems, and you really don’t have to talk to people.”

I thought that sounded great! Don’t forget I am a very introverted person, and I loved to solve problems.

As it turns out, this advice was not so good. Even engineers have to talk to people!

I studied hard at Michigan Tech. Nothing ever came easy for me. But I told myself every day, “If it is to be, it’s up to me,” so I was the guy who spent a lot of extra hours in the library just to get through my classes, but I graduated with a decent grade-point average.

I got married while still at Michigan Tech. She was studying Civil Engineering and she had graduated a few semesters before I did.

When I finally graduated, we got jobs and moved out to Boston.

And this is where my “transformation” began.

Roy: Wait, what transformation are you talking about?

Tim: Well, I finally started to come out of my “shy engineer” shell.

Roy: Hmmm...

FAILURE IN BUSINESS, FAILURE IN SALES

Tim: Wait. I almost forgot an important part of the story. My dad was always like the ... he always wanted to be an entrepreneur. And when I was in seventh grade-

Roy: What did he do?

Tim: He was an accountant. He studied math and became an accountant. And then he was a controller for various companies, usually in the food industry. But when personal computing came on the scene in the early '80s, he wrote software to automate the inventory of small retailers and whatnot, which sounds silly nowadays, but back then, it was a big deal. Because everyone was tracking their inventory by hand in ledgers.

So in seventh grade, Dad launched this company with a handful of customers and one full-time employee. It was called Business Results. He was still working full-time at his main job, and my mom was a part-time middle school Spanish teacher, so we watched Dad literally pour his heart and soul into this business. And about a year into it, he was getting close to the point where he could actually afford to leave his day-job company and do this full time, which was literally his dream.

And this woman, I'll never forget her name, it was [NAME DELETED]. She was the outward face of the company, the one interacting with all the clients. So she began telling all of Dad's clients, "Oh, by the way, Russ is getting out of this business and I'm starting my own thing." So she stole all his clients, the ones he had paid her to interact with while he did all the actual work, and my dad was crushed.

I watched him fail at something that he was really going for, all-in. But that didn't dissuade me from wanting to be an entrepreneur. It did just the opposite. It made me think, "My dad was so close to making it. So close. But he had an employee that wasn't very honest and he got screwed. But, man, it would be great to run a business someday."

Which is super ironic, because the first business I actually ran was a paper route. And I did that paper route for an entire year and never made a dollar because I didn't quite grasp the concept that I needed to collect from everyone I was supposed to be collecting from. So, after the first year, Dad said, "Son, why are you doing this? You're not making any money."

I said, "I don't know, Dad."

So we sat down and had this talk. He said, "Tim, every day you need to wake up and say, 'If

it is to be, it's up to me.' No one else is going to go out and collect that money for you. No one else is going to do your job if you don't."

And then he said, "Tim, you're giving half the people their paper for free. You either need to get out there and collect that money or find yourself a different business."

Over the course of the next few months, I managed to turn the paper route around. But it was only after my dad would repeatedly remind me, "If it is to be, it's up to me."

As you can imagine, by this time in my life, I was getting sick of hearing this from him.

Roy: Wow. You said you were a shy kid. I'm beginning to believe you. Now take me with you to that first engineering job in Boston. Was this also part of your "transformation"?

Tim: I loved my first engineering job. I loved sitting behind a computer solving engineering problems 10 hours a day. It was a blast. I really enjoyed it. You really don't learn much in college other than how to solve theoretical problems. But now I was solving real problems, not imaginary ones.

My first boss was a former captain in the Israeli army, a tough character. I think he found pride in repeatedly pointing out to me that I really knew next to nothing about engineering. I worked very hard to prove him wrong.

And then, one day, I met a guy named Brennan Campbell. He owned a small Massachusetts company that sold expensive engineering computer workstations to companies that used this fancy engineering software I used. So he called on the company where I worked, and we bought a bunch of computers from him.

About a month after that transaction, he calls me out of the blue and says, "Tim, I want to take you to lunch." So I went out to lunch with him, and he said, "Tim, if you come to work for my company and help me sell these computers to engineers, I'll pay you the same base salary you're making as an engineer. And then if and when you hit your annual sales goal, your commission will be that same amount again."

I could hardly believe what he was saying. He was essentially offering to pay me TWICE as much as I was making now. All I had to do was sell engineer computer workstations to other engineers?

Roy: Wait a minute, shy engineer Tim was going to become a salesman? How did you think you were going to pull that off?

Tim: Hold on. I'm getting to that part.

I'll admit that the whole concept of selling really anything made me a bit nervous. But I just couldn't say no to the opportunity to be able to earn twice as much as I was earning as an engineer.

I accepted the job with Brennan's company. My dad's words were certainly ringing in my ears as I showed up for work that first day.

"Tim, don't forget: If it is to be, it's up to me."

I remember walking into Brennan's office that first day. The place was a dump. It was a poorly constructed, run-down, two-story office building just off the freeway in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. The carpet smelled funny, and the bathrooms were filthy.

Brennan had been selling most of his computers in the New England area, so my territory was everything outside of New England. I essentially had the whole country outside of Massachusetts.

My desk was a folding table, but at least I had a nice phone.

And now shy Tim is saying to himself 10 times a day, "If it is to be, it's up to me," and I'm calling other engineers on the telephone, which is easy, because I'm an engineer and can completely relate to them.

We sent direct mail pieces to the engineering heads of companies, and I would follow those up with a phone call. That first year, I sold enough of these expensive computer workstations to earn my full commission. It was exciting and kind of fun.

Roy: So you were actually a GOOD salesperson?

Tim: Well, for some reason, I was a lot more comfortable on the phone. Plus, like I said before, I was talking to other engineers. We had a lot in common, and I knew what they needed to do their jobs. Selling these computers came naturally for me.

And then it all fell apart.

Roy: What are you talking about?

Tim: I was 27 years old, selling \$20,000 computers over the phone and loving life. But Brennan started getting nervous. He was convinced I was going to start my own company and steal his business like that woman had done to my dad, which, of course, I had no intention of doing. I think Brennan was worried I was going to do it because it's what he would have done if he had been me.

What I actually wanted was to move back to Wisconsin with my wife and start an engineering firm. But all Brennan could imagine was that I was planning to take his business away from him because I was making two-thirds of all the sales in his company.

Roy: You had no intention of doing what he was worried about?

Tim: No intention whatsoever.

In fact, I went out of my way to introduce him to my key contacts at all my customers. Just so he would be more comfortable. I told him, "Look, my wife and I want to move back to Wisconsin and I want to start my own engineering firm."

But he got so worried about it that he fired me. And then he refused to pay me the commission he owed me. Which was, by that point, a fair amount of money. It was the money I was intending to use to move back to Wisconsin and start this engineering business!

Roy: So this guy fires you and then refuses to pay you the money he owes you?

Tim: Yes. So we moved back to Wisconsin, and I hired a lawyer and got the money and started this engineering business called Schmidt Engineering. I came up with that name myself. *[Laughter]*

My overhead was fairly low because I was operating out of my house, but the software, to actually own a license for the software, was like 20,000 bucks, plus another \$5,000 a year in maintenance. I didn't have that cash because most of the sales commission I finally collected went somewhere else. So I went to the bank and tried to borrow \$15,000.

I'll never forget that banker. He sat behind his desk in that little branch bank in Muskego, Wisconsin, and laughed at me.

He literally laughed.

He said, "No one's ever going to give you that money."

Roy: So this was your high school chemistry teacher all over again?

Tim: Yeah. But if it is to be, it's up to me, right? So I found a guy who had six or seven licenses of that software, and I leased one from him that I could use when his employees had all gone home. But our agreement meant I could only work from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. So I had to stay up all night doing my engineering work, but the business did well enough that I was able to support my family. My wife didn't have to work. She stayed home with the kids, which was important to us.

Roy: So what brought you into concealed carry?

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CHAPTER 4

A BABY IS BORN

Tim: My first child, Tim Jr., was born on July 15, 1998. This was about two years after I started the “overnight” engineering business.

I remember this moment in the hospital when they put him in my arms. I have a photograph of it. I was overwhelmed by this thought that I had to protect this little guy in the same way my dad had protected me.

I’m looking at my brand-new baby boy and thinking about the kinds of things that happen to people when they’re least expecting it. My only thought was that I needed to be able to protect my baby boy and my wife.

“If it is to be, it’s up to me.” I was 27 years old and did not own a gun, but I wasn’t afraid of guns either.

In 1966, Truman Capote wrote a famous book about how Richard Hickock and Perry Smith murdered the Herbert Clutter family in the basement of their home because they had heard a false rumor about how Mr. Clutter had a lot of cash hidden away there. Capote’s book was titled *In Cold Blood*.

And then, in 1974, there was another famous book called *Helter Skelter*, which described the equally random and brutal murders of five people, including a young woman who was eight months pregnant.

Those books were big bestsellers because weird, random murders were unusual in those days. But by 1998, when Tim Jr. was born, we were hearing about those kinds of murders all the time. They had become so common that no one was writing books about them anymore.

Holding Tim Jr. in my arms, it hit me all at once, “I need to buy a gun that I can always carry with me.” So being an engineer, I took the deep dive into massive research about concealed carry. I was determined to learn everything I could, but I became deeply distressed when I saw there wasn’t a lot of good information out there. How was I going to protect my wife and son?

I already told you that my Dad gave me some Zig Ziglar tapes to listen to while I was on my paper route, right?

Roy: Yeah. Zig Ziglar and Dale Carnegie.

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Tim: My favorite thing Zig ever said was, "If you're not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are determined to learn, no one can stop you." That's where my head was at when a friend recommended an article by Robert Boatman called "The Constitutional Right and Social Obligation to Carry a Gun." Boatman's language was inflammatory and accusatory because he wrote passionately and with great conviction about things that were happening to regular people in America — people like you and me.

Roy: Tell me more about when you read this article by Robert Boatman.

Tim: Well, it was shortly after Tim Jr. was born. I was sitting on an airplane waiting to take off.

I couldn't believe some of the things this Boatman guy had written ... inspiring words that were going straight to what matters to me.

He wrote, "Carrying a gun is a social responsibility."

A social responsibility? Come on. I always thought only cops were supposed to carry guns. Heck, I grew up around guns. Like I told you before, my dad had me shooting his .357 Magnum when I was 11. But carrying one everyday? Now that seemed a little over the top.

The next powerful quote that hit home was this: "A citizen who shirks his duty to contribute to the security of his community is little better than the criminal who threatens it."

This really blew my mind. I had never really thought that carrying a gun was really that important.

And now this guy was telling me that I am "shirking my duty" if I'm not willing to arm myself?

Roy: So this Robert Boatman really opened your eyes.

Tim: Yeah, he sure did.

Boatman described the very things that I too saw happening and was worried about.*

Boatman was saying in his direct, unfiltered way, "If you're not willing to defend your own family, if you're depending on other people to do that for you, what kind of person are you?" I felt Robert Boatman was saying that to me, and it was really hitting home.

I came to the obvious conclusion: I needed to do whatever it took to protect my loved ones. And if that meant carrying a gun, well then I had better start learning how to do just that.

It was like hearing my dad say, "If it is to be, it's up to me."

As I've said, my engineering brain required me to gather facts and verify them, so it shouldn't surprise you that it took me nearly two and a half years to buy my first gun.

Roy: Why did it take so long?

Tim: Let's just say I ran into a few roadblocks.

** The Boatman family has given me permission to reprint the important parts of that chapter in the back of this book. Perhaps it will speak to you in the same way it spoke to me. — Tim*

CHAPTER 5

I GET LAUGHED AT AGAIN ... AND AGAIN

Tim: It was a Saturday morning and I was excited because I was finally going to go to Gander Mountain Gun World in Germantown, Wisconsin. I thought I knew which gun I wanted, but I was anxious to talk to someone who knew more about concealed carry than I did.

I walked into the store and went all the way to the back to where the glass cases are filled with handguns. And a big, rough guy was standing behind those handguns, sort of sneering at me.

Roy: For real? Sneering?

Tim: Yeah, this really happened. And in the days that followed, I would find guys like that in gun shops everywhere, and I kid you not, this is exactly what happened.

I said, "Sir, can I look at that gun right there?"

He looked me over from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet and said, "What would a guy like YOU do with a gun like THAT?"

Roy: The chemistry teacher, the banker and now this guy?

Tim: *[Laughter]* Yeah. I said something like, "I don't know. That's why I'm here." I went to lots of other places and never found any real help, so the first handgun I bought was completely the wrong gun for concealed carry. I was never able to find anyone who knew any more about it than I did.

Roy: What about the NRA?

Tim: Well, back in 2000, I was under the impression that the NRA was mostly about protecting gun rights and lobbying for pro-gun legislation. They were also doing a great job with hunter safety training, but they didn't have much to offer people like me who just wanted to protect their family with concealed carry.

So I did a deep dive on handgun and concealed carry research. I read book after book. I read magazine article after magazine article. Every gun shop I would visit gave me a similar cold reception. I felt like an outsider looking in on some sort of secret gun world. And I didn't know the right words to say or the right things to do.

Roy: Well, I bet that was frustrating.

IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

Tim: Yes, it really was. So, after about 18 months of research, I finally found a suitable concealed carry gun and holster. My first carry gun was a Glock 36. I would carry this gun in a Galco Ankle Glove holster or a SmartCarry waist holster.

I'll never forget the first time I walked out of my house carrying concealed. I felt like a human attached to a HUGE gun. I read once that carrying a gun is supposed to be comforting, not comfortable. Well, in the beginning for me ... that was certainly the truth!

And you know, Roy, it's kind of interesting. When you begin to go about your daily business carrying a gun or even having one in your home for self-defense, you can't help but become a better person.

Roy: Wait, what? What do you mean by that?

Tim: Well, when you have a gun on your hip or in your purse, you no longer have the luxury of losing your temper while driving. You now must be adept at de-escalating confrontation. You must be much more aware of your surroundings. It is a tremendous responsibility.

Roy: That's interesting.

Tim: I continued to carry a gun on a daily basis for at least another year when it finally occurred to me: I bet there are a LOT of other people like me out there who are struggling with learning to become a responsible gun owner, learning to carry concealed. Ultimately struggling with learning to protect their families.

And this is where my entrepreneurial spirit kicked in. My engineering business was doing fine at the time, but I really felt a calling to help people with this concealed carry thing.

So I decided to publish a magazine. I called it *Concealed Carry Magazine*.

Roy: You published a magazine?

Tim: Yeah. I bought three books about how to start a magazine, and all three of them said, "Don't do it." But I did it anyway. [Laughter]

My engineering business had become successful enough that I had a \$100,000 line of credit from the bank, and I used almost every bit of it to publish 30,000 copies of the inaugural issue of *Concealed Carry Magazine*.

I did NOT tell the bank what I was doing!

I hired a guy from Craigslist to come to my engineering office to teach me how to use Ado-

be InDesign. This was the magazine-layout software I used for that first issue. I agreed to pay him \$25 per hour to teach me. After two hours, I told him, "OK, I got this."

I wrote most of the articles myself. I just shared some of the lessons and mistakes I had learned over the last couple of years.

It took me six months to create that first issue of *Concealed Carry Magazine*. It was only 36 pages, and it was mostly black and white.

I rented a bunch of names from a list broker and sent out those 30,000 magazine copies. I got 1,000 subscribers, which is actually a pretty good conversion rate, but I've always worn rose-colored glasses. So when those 30,000 copies went in the mail to prospective subscribers, I was literally expecting the Postal Service to be dragging giant bags of subscription response cards to my house every day.

I was so excited about what I had learned about concealed carry that I thought everyone else would be excited too. Even to this day, when the United States Concealed Carry Association does something new, I always think, "This is going to be the big one. You just watch."

It never turns out that way, but that doesn't keep me from expecting it.

Roy: So how did it turn out?

Tim: *[Rolls his eyes]**[Shrugs]*

WHY DO TOUGH GUYS ALWAYS THINK I'M AN IDIOT?

Tim: Like I mentioned before, after I mailed the 30,000 copies of the first issue of *Concealed Carry Magazine*, about 1,000 people decided to subscribe!

I was very excited.

But then it dawned on me. It had taken me six months to create that first issue. I now had 1,000 people expecting six MORE issues before the end of the year. You don't have to be an engineer to realize that math doesn't work.

That's when I started getting some help.

I hired this girl named Maria and a few others. That was from 2004 to 2006. It was three or four of us trying everything we could think of to get this thing to work.

I'd work on engineering projects for Schmidt Engineering during the day, and I'd work on *Concealed Carry Magazine* at night. No matter what I did, I just couldn't get the subscribers to grow fast enough. Not to mention, it's almost impossible to find magazine advertisers when you have practically zero circulation.

It just wasn't working at all.

After that second year, I was in debt another \$100,000, and it was just like ... every dollar I was making from the engineering business that wasn't feeding my family was going into this thing. It was essentially a very, very expensive hobby.

That was when I said, "Dad, can you come out to Las Vegas with me to go to this thing called the SHOT Show?" It's the Shooting, Hunting, Outdoor Trade Show, and it's massive. There's like 10,000 companies, 70,000 people. I said, "This is what we need. This will be our launching point. We'll finally get ourselves on the scene."

So Dad said, "All right, yeah."

You're not supposed to do what we did. You're supposed to pay for a booth and all that. But we just showed up. I finagled some press passes, and we shipped maybe 500 copies of the magazine to the show. This would have been January 2006.

I was at my wit's end because I was out of money and out of ideas. This was a Hail Mary. So

we're staying at the crappiest hotel in north Vegas and my Dad is with us. We're walking around the show introducing ourselves and trying to hand out copies of the magazine to people.

Remember, this is Tim the Shy Guy and I'm way out of my comfort zone, but I have no choice. "If it is to be, it's up to me."

The first booth I walked into was a high-end custom handgun manufacturer. I saw a badge that told me who the main guy was, so I walked up to him, stuck my hand out and said, "I'm Tim Schmidt. I publish *Concealed Carry Magazine*." He looks at me, looks at the magazine, and just walks away.

That was a gut punch. Most people didn't do that, but that first guy did and it rocked me. So I introduced myself to a few more people. I also had a contract ad salesman walking around who I would pay a commission on any ads he sold. He represented a bunch of magazines, but I think he felt bad for me and just wanted to do me a favor.

He called my cellphone and said, "Tim, you're not going to believe this, but Colonel Bob Brown, the publisher of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, said he wants to meet with you."

I was ecstatic. This was going to be my big break!

Colonel Bob Brown has been publishing *Soldier of Fortune* since the '60s, right? So I said, "Great. Where am I meeting him at?"

I told Dad about the meeting. He said, "All right, son. Good luck." So I took off for the meeting and Dad kept walking the floor. This place was so huge that it was easy to be in different parts. Finally, I walked into this enormous booth with lots of private meeting rooms and I had an invitation from the man himself, Colonel Bob Brown.

I presented myself at the front desk and the woman said, "Oh, you're Tim Schmidt." Then she looked at another person and said, "Take him back to Room 3." So they took me back and there he was, Colonel Bob Brown, and he's reading a copy of my magazine.

I don't think I've ever been more excited.

I sat down and Colonel Brown held up the magazine and said, "So, Tim, you're doing this, huh? This is you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I've got to tell you, man, this is not a good idea. This is not going to work. You're just going to waste a ton of money on it. You realize I'm just trying to help you, right?"

It hit me so hard that I literally couldn't think of anything to say. I just sat there, frozen.

Finally, Colonel Brown said, "That's really all I've got to say." And then he got up and walked out of the room.

Roy: You make it sound like he might have had good intentions.

Tim: His intentions were good, no question. But it wasn't a message I was ready to hear. So, yeah, it hurt like hell.

2 FEET TALL

Tim: I walked out of there feeling 2 feet tall. I just wandered around the show doing nothing, talking to no one. I especially didn't want to go back to face my dad because there was no way for me to explain why the meeting had lasted only two minutes. I needed to be invisible for an hour. Eventually, I realized, "I have to find Dad."

He asked, "How did the meeting go?"

"It went really well. Really well." And then I changed the subject. It wasn't my finest hour.

I flew back to Wisconsin from the SHOT Show feeling defeated. I needed cash. And if it is to be, it's up to me, right?

Roy: Uh-huh [*affirmative*]. What year was this?

Tim: It was 2006. Back then, I was a member of the West Bend Noon Rotary Club, which was made up of the guy who owned the dry-cleaning place, the banker, a few insurance agents and a whole bunch of lawyers. But from my perspective, these were big, rich guys. They actually drove cars that weren't 21-year-old Honda Accords with 250,000 miles on them.

Roy: That's really what you were driving?

Tim: Yeah, it was.

I'm thinking, "All right, Schmidt. You need money. And you know the banks aren't going to give it to you." So I put on my engineer hat and put together a highly detailed 10-year P&L projection of what *Concealed Carry Magazine* was going to become. It was the most rock-solid business plan you've ever seen. I spent about \$200 at Kinko's printing 85 of these and putting them in beautiful binders. Then I sent them to 85 members of the West Bend Noon Rotary Club.

And, of course, I included my dad as well, because he was always curious about what I was doing. Part of the package I sent to those 85 people was a stamped envelope with a form where you could say, "No thanks," or, "Yes, I will attend one of these two investor meetings."

I got 30 responses out of the 85. So 50 ignored me, and 29 of the 30 said, "No thanks." On the comment line, they wrote, "I don't believe in what you're doing," or, "I don't have any money" or whatever. I taped them onto the back of the door of my office.

The one person who agreed to come to the investment meeting was my dad. So I called him and said, "Uh, Dad, you were the only guy that said yes, so we're not going to be having those investor meetings."

Fifteen years later, we're now one of the largest employers in West Bend. I still run into those 85 people in West Bend all the time, and I'm very glad they all said no!

Roy: OK, you got shot down by all your local business owners in town. What did you do next?

Tim: So now it's February 2006 and my wife and I had just built a house in West Bend, Wisconsin. It was not a very fancy house, but for us, it was a big deal. Every dollar we had went into buying it, so much so that we were close to approaching the two-year deadline where you had to replace the gravel driveway with cement.

But I couldn't even afford the \$7,500 for the driveway.

I remember sitting on the front stoop of my house with my feet on that gravel driveway at 11 p.m. It was a Monday night and I was thinking, "Sheesh, I got to figure something out." The house, the engineering business, everything was about to go down the drain. This was the first and only time I felt like I was backed into a corner with no way out. That was when I decided—

Roy: So this is your crisis moment, the dark night of the soul?

Tim: I had spent my \$100,000 credit line on the magazine, so I owed all that, plus the bank thought I had used it to grow my engineering business. They don't know anything about *Concealed Carry Magazine*.

Roy: So, you owe the bank \$100,000.

You just built a house. I'm guessing you were struggling with the mortgage? And you need an additional \$7,500 for your driveway that you can't get.

And the magazine is going nowhere.

Tim: Yeah.

AVOID DANGER. SAVE LIVES. KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE.

Tim: I finally just decided to share my hopes and dreams and plans and frustrations in a letter.

I decided to just speak from the heart.

I also changed the business model a bit. I created an association. I called it the United States Concealed Carry Association. I improved the magazine, and I added a few new member benefits in addition to the magazine subscription.

Trust me, in the beginning, the membership benefits were rather sparse. But I had a vision that, someday, member benefits would be amazing. Now I just had to convince other people of my vision!

I posted this letter on the new U.S. Concealed Carry Association website homepage. I had been doing a lot of research on how to drive traffic to websites, and so I launched a few inexpensive ad campaigns to get some fresh traffic to see this letter.

Roy: That's when things began to turn around?

Tim: Yeah. Sitting on that gravel driveway at 11 o'clock on a Monday night, I learned a great gimmick: "Tell the truth."

Roy: What gave you the idea to write that letter?

Tim: I just had some things in my heart that I really needed to say. And the biggest of those things was that we had to have an association to train thoughtful, responsible citizens who felt the need to equip themselves to protect the people in their care.

Roy: Who were you imagining would join?

Tim: I was imagining single moms and shy engineers and all the other people who tough guys laugh at and predators prey upon.

Roy: Predators?

Tim: I want to ask you a serious question: How many rapists do you think would have to be shot by the girls they were trying to rape before all the other rapists began to have second thoughts?

Roy: You were imagining young women with concealed carry licenses?

Tim: I was imagining all the bleeding and the crying coming from the rapists instead of the women.

Roy: But don't you think a lot of situations can be defused with pepper spray and a whistle?

Tim: Roy, have you ever been to Acadia National Park in Maine?

Roy: No.

Tim: When you enter the park, you have to listen to a little orientation speech from the park ranger. He says, "You're going to need to keep alert for bears when you're outside your car. We advise that you wear these little bells on your clothing so the bears hear you coming. Black bears are dangerous when startled, but if they hear you coming, they will likely move away. We also advise you to carry pepper spray. If you see a bear, spray the pepper spray into the air. This will irritate the bear's sensitive nose and cause them to leave the area. Lastly, keep your eyes open for bear scat. Black Bear scat often contains squirrel fur and smells like blueberries. Grizzly Bear scat, on the other hand, has little bells in it and smells like pepper."

Roy: [*Laughter*] Did you just make that up?

Tim: No, it's a joke I read online. But I think it makes a good point.

Roy: Which is?

Tim: There are predators who can be driven away with a bright flashlight in the eyes and a whistle and maybe some pepper spray, but there are other predators who are going to make you wish you had a gun.

Roy: Fair enough. You were telling me what made you send the letter that launched the United States Concealed Carry Association.

Tim: Yeah. During the years when I was gathering information and doing research, I realized there were two big reasons why the Framers of our Constitution gave every citizen the right to carry a firearm. The first reason was to save lives, and the second reason was to stop crimes and keep families safe. But to do these things thoughtfully and responsibly, citizens also need to be trained on how to avoid danger.

Roy: What do you mean?

Tim: About avoiding danger?

Roy: Yeah.

Tim: Do you know the best place to be when someone throws a punch?

Roy: No.

Tim: Not there.

Roy: *[Laughter]*

Tim: But avoiding dangerous situations is just part of avoiding danger.

Roy: OK.

Tim: A concealed carry license comes with physical danger if you aren't trained by an expert trainer.

Roy: You provide that?

Tim: Absolutely. We have 500 full-time employees that answer questions for our over 500,000 members, plus more than 4,000 certified trainers – people who can positively teach you how to avoid danger, save lives and keep your family safe.

Roy: You've got trainers in every town in America?

Tim: Multiple trainers in most towns. That solves the training problem. But then there is the legal danger. When you draw your weapon, you have to be ready to face the police when they arrive. Because they will, most definitely, arrive.

Roy: How do your trainers solve the legal danger?

Tim: Good training and education is the foundation of responsible armed self-defense. The best training and education will teach you to detect and avoid dangerous situations. It will teach you to improve your awareness skills. The best training and education will teach you to de-escalate threats.

The best armed self-defense outcome is that you DO NOT have to use your gun. But, trust me, if you ever have to pull that trigger in self-defense, you're definitely going to need a lawyer.

Roy: You realize you're talking me out of concealed carry, right?

IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

Tim: Concealed carry isn't for everyone. But for thoughtful citizens who are willing to embrace the social and legal responsibility of carrying a firearm, the United States Concealed Carry Association provides the best education and training system out there. Plus, all active members receive a self-defense liability insurance benefit.

Roy: What the heck is self-defense liability insurance?

Tim: The U.S. Concealed Carry Association members at all levels get the exact same insurance, subject to a \$2 million limit for "claim expenses" and "damages," and a \$250,000 limit for "defense expenses." This ensures our members have the resources necessary to hire an attorney who will defend them.

Roy: Wow, that is impressive. How did you manage to put that together?

Tim: Trust me, it wasn't easy. I got laughed out of many insurance company executive boardrooms before I finally found an insurance partner that would take me seriously.

Roy: Don't you ever get sick of people laughing at you and telling you you can't do it?

Tim: *[Laughing]* I just keep thinking of the words my Dad told me. "If it is to be. It's up to me."

CHAPTER 9

THE POLICE ARE NOT YOUR BODYGUARDS

Tim: Here's the deal: U.S. Concealed Carry Association members receive education, training and self-defense liability insurance for two reasons. The first reason is because America needs thoughtful, responsible citizens who are trained to-

Roy: What about the police?

Tim: What do you mean?

Roy: There are almost 700,000 sworn police officers in the United States. Why do we need a "happy homeowner" to carry his or her own gun?

Tim: I'm glad you asked that question.

Roy: And your answer is?

Tim: The job of a policeman is to find lawbreakers and present them to the courts for prosecution. That's it. The police are not your personal bodyguards. They will respond when you report a crime, but until that crime happens to you, you're on your own.

Roy: Are you sure about that?

Tim: One hundred percent. If you know any policemen, or lawyers, or district attorneys, just ask them.

Oh, now don't get me wrong, I have the utmost respect for our police force. They have one of the toughest jobs out there, but I'll say it again, they're NOT your personal bodyguards.

There's an old saying in the concealed carry community: "When seconds count, the police are minutes away." Think about it, Roy. If you do the math, there are approximately 2.12 sworn police officers for every 1,000 U.S. citizens. How on earth can you expect them to be right next to you when some criminal decides that you're their next victim?

The ONLY people who you can guarantee will be there are the criminals and ... YOU! And that's why it makes so much sense for average, everyday Americans to be prepared to protect and defend themselves and their families!

Roy: You were telling me about how “America needs citizens who are trained to...” and then I interrupted you.

Tim: I said the U.S. Concealed Carry Association members receive education, training and self-defense liability insurance for two reasons. The first reason is because America needs thoughtful and responsible citizens who are trained to avoid danger, save lives and keep their families safe, and the second reason we provide self-defense liability insurance is because we trust the people we have trained. Come over here and look on my computer. I want you to read this email from a member.

[Seven-second pause] Read that out loud.

Roy: “I did everything right and was charged with first-degree murder. I called the USCCA, and they went right to work. Since then, my case has been dismissed and labeled as self-defense. My advice: Don’t carry a firearm without protection from the aftermath of possibly having to use it. Thanks, USCCA! — Brian”

Wow.

How many of your members have ever drawn their weapons and then called on you to provide legal representation?

Tim: Quite a few.

In fact, according to our own insurance actuarial numbers, a responsible USCCA member is three times as likely to need to file a homeowners insurance claim as compared to a self-defense insurance claim. However, the self-defense claim, on average, will cost seven times as much as the homeowners claim.

Not to mention that if your house burns down, you just build a new house. If you’re successfully prosecuted for a crime you didn’t commit, well, you could go to jail for a very long time.

Roy: OK. Those are some sobering numbers.

SHY ENGINEER ON *60 MINUTES*?

Tim: Have you ever watched *60 Minutes*?

Roy: Absolutely.

Tim: Do you know Steve Croft?

Roy: I know who he is.

Tim: Right after the NRA decided to try and compete head-to-head with us-

Roy: What?

Tim: I forgot, I haven't told you about that yet. Forget that for now. We'll come back to it later.

Roy: OK.

Tim: Anyway, I got an invitation to be interviewed by Steve Croft on *60 Minutes*.

Roy: Wow.

Tim: I didn't want to do it.

The shy engineer in me wanted to say, "No thank you. Can you ask someone else to do the interview?"

But I knew I had a responsibility to my employees and my customers. This all happened during the early part of 2018. At that time, the USCCA had over 250,000 members. So, I sucked it up, prepared like crazy and did my best to represent the U.S. Concealed Carry Association!

Roy: So how did the interview go?

Tim: I'll never forget flying to New York. My son, Tim Jr., was with me. It was awesome to have him there.

I remember sitting at this Greek restaurant in New York City with this giant Greek salad

sitting on the plate in front of me. All I did was just mash that salad up and push it around the plate. I was so nervous. I couldn't eat a bit.

Then we showed up at the *60 Minutes* office. First, we recorded for about an hour and a half. Of course, I knew they were only going to use a few minutes of what I had to say. So every word had to be on point. Then we went walking down the streets of New York City, just me and Croft and the cameramen. That show was so huge that death threats started coming into our office right after it went on the air. But, really, it was a tremendous—

Roy: So why was he interviewing you?

Tim: At the time of the interview, U.S. Congressman Richard Hudson sponsored a bill called the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2019. Croft and *60 Minutes* were doing a piece on that.

Roy: What's concealed carry reciprocity?

Tim: OK, you know how if you get married in one state, all the other states recognize that marriage?

Roy: Yeah.

Tim: And if you get a driver's license, you can use it to drive in all 50 states?

Roy: Yeah.

Tim: And if you graduate from a state university, all the other states will recognize your college degree?

Roy: Are you saying that a person who is licensed to carry a concealed weapon can only carry it in the state that issued the license?

Tim: Yeah, that's what Richard Hudson was trying to change.

Roy: And that's what Steve Croft was interviewing you about?

Tim: Yeah. He said, "There's a lot of people who feel citizens carrying guns is a bad idea. It's going to turn into the Wild, Wild West. What do you think about that, Tim?"

Roy: Ambush journalism is what *60 Minutes* does best.

Tim: Yeah, I knew that when I accepted the invitation to be interviewed.

Roy: So how did it turn out?

Tim: When we went outside and were walking down the street together, there were people everywhere. We were right by the CNN headquarters when Steve said, "So you mean to tell me that you think these people should all be carrying guns?"

Roy: How did you respond?

Tim: I can't remember my exact response, but in general, I said, "Well, Steve, if they're well-trained and know what to do, then yes."

Roy: That was either the best thing you could say or the worst thing you could say. How did it turn out?

Tim: It turned out to be huge for the United States Concealed Carry Association. But, like I mentioned before, it also caused people to call us claiming they were going to hunt me and my family down and kill us.

Roy: Anti-gun people said that to you?

Tim: Yeah. It kind of scared me at first, but the death-threat calls eventually stopped coming in.

Unfortunately, the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2019 never made it very far, but it is very important to me that we get this done.

Roy: Why?

Tim: One of my life goals is to see the day when concealed carry reciprocity is enacted across all 50 states.

Roy: Is that important to you?

Tim: Roy, I believe it would save lives and reduce crime. I believe that with all my heart.

Roy: I believe that you believe that. I'm just not sure why you believe it.

Tim: We sent a survey to 350,000 of our members asking if they had ever used our education and training to save a life or stop a crime.

Roy: How many responded?

Tim: About 38,000.

Roy: What did you learn?

Tim: 25.4 percent said that something we had taught them helped them save a life. And 17.8 percent said something we had taught them helped them stop a crime.

Can you believe that? According to our very own members, the education and training at the USCCA has had a hand in saving over 100,000 lives!

Roy: You've got to be proud of that.

Tim: It's what I live for.

Roy: You said you made a mistake when you bought your first handgun, that it was the wrong gun for concealed carry. Just out of curiosity, what was it?

Tim: I bought a Taurus PT92, which is very similar to a Beretta 92, because back then, I didn't fully understand the "concealed" part of concealed carry. But the gun I carried for four years was a Glock 36, which is a single-stack .45 Auto, a very compact Glock. I carried it in an ankle holster because I wore big baggy jeans in those days, and people don't usually look at your ankles.

Roy: Have you ever had to draw your weapon?

Tim: No, and I hope and pray I never do.

Roy: Are you sure you're a gun guy?

Tim: Roy, I'm an avoid-danger-and-keep-my-family-safe guy. A gun is just the tool of last resort.

Roy: Tim, you've got to tell me something.

Tim: OK.

Roy: You said you were invited to be on *60 Minutes* — and I quote — "right after the NRA decided to try and compete head-to-head with us."

What was that all about?

CHAPTER 11

THE NRA WANTED US TO DISAPPEAR

Tim: You didn't tell me that you were planning to ask about this stuff.

Roy: I didn't know anything about this stuff until you brought it up. Now scoot a little closer to the microphone.

Tim: *[Laughter]* Fire away.

Roy: Pun intended?

Tim: No. No pun intended. Ask your questions.

Roy: How did the NRA try to take away your business?

Tim: OK, in January of 2017, or maybe it was December of 2016, the second-in-command to Wayne LaPierre came to our USCCA headquarters office as a "Trojan horse," but we didn't know that's what he was doing at the time.

Roy: What did you think he was doing?

Tim: Well, we took him at his word. He said, "I'm Wayne LaPierre's right-hand man, and we like what you guys are doing and we want to partner with you."

What do you think about working with the NRA?"

Roy: What was your response?

Tim: I was all for it. I knew we had the best education and training program on earth and our members were proof of it. I thought the NRA wanted to partner with us so they could popularize our training among their NRA members. Our members are safe, sane citizens. Moms and dads. Guardians of the weak and vulnerable. I thought the NRA wanted to spread our training among their members. I was honored. I felt validated.

I told the guy everything he wanted to know.

Roy: So when did the other shoe drop?

Tim: It was about two weeks before the 2017 NRA Annual Meeting that was going to be in

Atlanta. Our 20-foot-by-30-foot booth and our semi-trailers were already in Atlanta, and we had hotel rooms booked for the 50 or so employees who run that show.

Now this booth space had been reserved at least 9 to 10 months in advance. We are all geared up and ready to go.

That's when I got a FedEx letter from the NRA that said, "Hey, you guys can't come to the show. We've already sold your spot to someone else."

Roy: That's cold. Hard cold. What did you do?

Tim: I called my leadership group into the Executive Team conference room for an ad hoc meeting.

I explained what had just happened. Needless to say, they were all shocked and confused. We all just sat there in silence. What could this mean? What the heck was the NRA up to?

A few theories were thrown around the team, but we all agreed that it was time for an emergency, all-company "Oh, Shit" meeting.

Roy: An "Oh, Shit" meeting?

Tim: Yeah. Every Thursday at noon, I hold an all-company meeting in our giant stadium-style-seating meeting room. It can get sort of crowded in there, but it's a great way to keep all my employees up to speed with what's happening with the business.

The reason it's called the "Oh, Shit" meeting is because any employee at any time during the meeting can grab one of the microphones and ask me a question about something they don't think I've considered.

The goal is for them to get me to say, "Oh, Shit."

Roy: Really? Why?

Tim: I'm an engineer, remember? The thing that worries every engineer is that they might not have considered every possibility. Engineers appreciate it when someone points out a possibility they had overlooked.

Roy: I get it. You want your team to point out your weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Tim: Yes. That's exactly right.

So I scheduled this special, all-company meeting for the next day. I said, "Hey guys, I'm

not sure what the hell is going on here, but I think we're in trouble." And then I read them the FedEx letter from the NRA. So now 50 employees knew they were no longer going to Atlanta, and they were asking, "What's going on? Why aren't we going to the NRA Annual Meeting?"

And then one of my employees said, "The NRA is probably going to launch a competitive product, and they'll use our booth location to do it."

That's when I said, "Oh, Shit."

Roy: Was that guy right? Is that what happened?

SO I WROTE ANOTHER LETTER...

Tim: We started by calling every person we knew who might know what was going on, and within an hour, we had the whole story. So I prepared a presentation for my team and wrote a press release for everyone who would be expecting to see us in Atlanta.

Roy: What was in your presentation?

Tim: The theme was David versus Goliath. I said, “This is our big opportunity, guys. We’ve had some success. We’ve moved into our new offices. But now we’re up against our biggest threat ever. Our backs are against the wall, but we’re going to take the high road.”

Roy: The high road? How?

Tim: De-escalation of dangerous situations is instinctive to everyone who has been trained by the USCCA. We were being stalked by a bigger, stronger opponent, so avoiding a fight — if possible — was the right thing to do.

Roy: But David-the-shepherd-boy gathered five smooth stones, put them in his pouch and walked out to face the giant. That sling he carried was like a gun.

Tim: But David only fought when it could no longer be avoided. Everyone else was incapacitated by fear, and a whole lot of people were going to die at the hands of the Philistines if David didn’t take action. We weren’t at that point yet. The NRA never attacked us. They were just wandering around in our territory.

Roy: Is that really how you felt about it, or is this revisionist history?

Tim: When the NRA launched Carry Guard, it caused us to up our game, rethink our product and completely re-engineer how USCCA Membership works.

It invigorated our Critical Response Team to get even more attorneys, more lawyers for members who would need our help. It super-charged our training team to create more and better education and training courses.

Although it wasn’t their intention, the NRA inadvertently pushed us to develop the best, most powerful benefit enhancements we had ever created.

Likewise, although it wasn't their intention, the dozens of psychopaths who went on rampage shooting sprees across America are directly responsible for over 500,000 trained and alert citizens carrying a deadly response mechanism.

Our goal is to increase that number until every American is safe in every situation every day.

Roy: You aren't worried about putting guns in the hands of the wrong people?

Tim: Roy, the guns are already in the hands of the wrong people. I'm trying to put them in the hands of the right people.

Roy: You said you wrote a press release. Can you email me a copy of that?

Tim: Sure.

[45 seconds later] Look in your inbox.

USCCA President's Message: 4/21/2017

WHY I'M EXCITED ABOUT GETTING
'KICKED OUT' OF THE NRA ANNUAL MEETING...

We Will NEVER Stray From Our Mission

Something sort of bizarre happened to me recently that I sincerely believe you have a right to know about. After all, it concerns you too...

About a week ago, I came in to work and found a FedEx letter from the NRA sitting on my desk.

Now, I don't know about you, but I LOVE getting mail from friends in the firearms industry. And since I'm a proud Lifetime Member of the NRA, and with their Annual Meetings and Exhibits just around the corner, I figured it *had* to be about one of those two things.

As it turns out, the note inside was concerning the upcoming NRA Show in Atlanta, Georgia ... just NOT in the way I was expecting.

Long story short, the NRA sent over a brief letter with a very clear mes-

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sage: The USCCA would no longer be allowed to exhibit at their upcoming show in Atlanta.

Yep ... the NRA *canceled our booth space* less than TWO WEEKS before we were scheduled to appear at the show.

Now, you're probably wondering what the heck is going on, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little perplexed myself.

The truth is, I don't really *know* the motive behind the NRA's move. I mean, the USCCA has ALWAYS had a great relationship with the NRA. And the way I see it, we're all in this together.

If I had to guess, I'd say that perhaps this is a strategic business maneuver. I mean, the concealed carry market has really exploded over the last decade — just look at how long the USCCA has been around! Maybe the NRA recognizes us as the front-runner in providing the absolute best education, training and self-defense protection in the industry. And perhaps they're starting to see us less as a partner and more as a competitor.

As much as it sort of stings that we got "booted" from the NRA Show, I believe that this sort of competition is a good, healthy and even *exciting* thing — especially from a goliath like the NRA.

Here's why:

When there is healthy competition in the free market, the CUSTOMER always wins. And in our industry — in our niche — that means MORE good guys and gals with guns. And you already know how I feel about that: The more good guys and gals with guns, the safer we all are!

Now, here's something I need to make perfectly clear:

Whether or not the NRA supports *us*, we will continue to support *them*.

We will continue to believe in their mission.

We will continue to respect the historical significance of what they have done to preserve and protect our God-given rights.

And we will *always* support their legislative and lobbying efforts.

I personally will continue to donate to the NRA as a proud Lifetime Member.

IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

And even though you won't find the USCCA booth at the NRA Show in Atlanta next weekend (although a few of us *will* still be attending), I want to reassure you that the USCCA isn't going ANYWHERE.

We're not backing down or straying from our own focused mission: to provide you with the most comprehensive education, training and self-defense protection ANYWHERE. (This has always been — and always will be — our main focus, and that's why we do it better than anyone else!)

Trust me when I say that our beliefs, our values, our culture *and our customers* will continue to be the driving forces in all we do.

Oh, and one more thing:

While I don't really know the "why" behind the NRA's decision to exclude us from their upcoming event, there is something I DO know — unequivocally and without a single bit of doubt:

The USCCA's "why" stems back to the single, powerful desire to *protect the ones we love*. And I may be just a bit biased, but I truly believe that this will keep us a solid step ahead of the competition.

Thanks for sticking with me. I promise I'll always have your back!

Take Care and Stay Safe,

Tim Schmidt



USCCA Founder & President

Roy: [*Roy reads the press release*]

I see what you mean about taking the high road.

So what happened next?

IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

AND THEN I WENT TO ATLANTA AND WALKED AROUND ALL ALONE

Tim: Well, I decided to attend the NRA Annual Meeting anyway.

Roy: Wait, I thought they said you couldn't attend?

Tim: No, they just said we couldn't have a booth there. I'm a Lifetime NRA Member, so I just figured I'd show up by myself and say hello to some of my fellow USCCA members and supporters.

Roy: Oh, OK, that makes sense.

Tim: So I'm walking around the NRA Annual Meeting as an outsider because my company wasn't allowed to be there anymore. As I'm walking around, I see banner after huge banner advertising the NRA's new Carry Guard program.

As it turns out, the one employee who spoke up at the emergency meeting was right. The NRA Carry Guard program was designed to compete directly with USCCA Membership.

That meeting back in late 2016 with Wayne LaPierre's right-hand man was ALL about intelligence gathering. I have to hand it to them; they really pulled the wool over my eyes.

Roy: Wow, how did that make you feel?

Tim: Hmm ... I guess I felt a bit betrayed, but at the same time, I felt excited. I was excited because the USCCA had become big enough to get noticed.

And the groundswell of support from USCCA members was overwhelming.

Roy: What do you mean, "support"?

Tim: Well, there are over 80,000 NRA members at these annual meetings, so it makes sense that I'd run into some of my fellow USCCA members as well.

And that's exactly what happened!

I could barely walk down the corridors without people coming up to me and saying things like:

"Hey, Tim, sorry to hear what the NRA did to you. I'm a proud USCCA member, and I don't think they should have kicked you out!"

It was a tough weekend for me, but I was really glad I attended.

Oh ... one more thing. You're not going to believe this.

Roy: What?

Tim: Halfway through the second day, a messenger reaches out to me and says Colonel Bob Brown wants to see me again.

Roy: You're kidding.

Tim: Nope. I'm not kidding.

It was hard not to reflect back on that first meeting with Colonel Brown back in 2006.

Roy: You mean the meeting when he crushed your dream?

Tim: He didn't crush my dream. He just gave me some honest feedback on just how hard it is to publish a successful magazine, let alone start a national firearms education and training organization. I honestly think he was just trying to save me from certain bankruptcy.

Roy: Well, how did the second meeting go?

Tim: I wasn't really sure what to expect.

As it turned out, Colonel Brown had no memory of our first meeting 11 years earlier, and that's OK. So now I'm sitting down with this famous veteran who was also a famous mercenary for many years and he publishes a hugely famous magazine. AND ... he's keenly aware of the USCCA and what we do!

This is the meeting I was hoping for back in 2006.

Roy: It must have felt good.

Tim: Yeah, it really did.

I'll never forget sitting in that VIP lunchroom and listening to Colonel Brown talk about how pissed he was over the NRA's lack of character and how furious he was about them screwing us over.

He said, "Tim, anything I can do to support you, let me know, because this is bullshit. The NRA shouldn't be dicking around in your space."

I politely listened and then I thanked him for the lunch he bought me.

Roy: So how does the NRA Carry Guard Membership compare to USCCA Membership?

Tim: Well ... why don't you Google "NRA Carry Guard" and see what it says. I'm not a big fan of throwing rocks at my competitors.

Roy: *[30 seconds later]* Wow. Wow. Wow...

Tim: What did you find?

Roy: This is from a website called "TheTruthAboutGuns.com:"

"The NRA rolled out its Carry Guard insurance program in 2017 with great fanfare. Now, a mere two years later, not only has NRA Carry Guard ceased accepting new customers, but existing participants have received notices of cancellation."

Tim: They lasted two years. Now they're gone.

Roy: What is your honest opinion of the NRA?

Tim: Roy, I believe in the natural born right of free people to defend themselves ... to defend their families and loved ones. The founders of our country understood this, and they affirmed this right in the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

We talked about this before: Police officers are not here to be our personal bodyguards. If you want your family to be safe, well, then that responsibility is on you.

And that's what I do at the USCCA. I give everyday citizens the tools, the training and the education to be the protectors and defenders of their families. It's simple, and it's effective. I feel like I mentioned this before, but our training and education has saved over 100,000 lives.

Nobody wants to use their gun in self-defense. And the more USCCA education and training you get, well, the less of a chance you'll ever have to pull the trigger.

IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

Roy: Tim, you're dodging the question. Please tell me your honest opinion about the NRA.

Tim: *[Sigh]* OK. At this moment in time — September of 2020 — I feel the NRA has turned into primarily a political and legislative organization that, for the most part, attempts to affect laws by using fear and the threat of mass gun confiscation.

I feel the NRA has turned into an organization that is not responsible with the money that their members give them when you consider the value that they actually provide. I feel like they've kind of been corrupted, from the inside, mismanaged. I don't think they've come up with any new safety curriculum since the '70s. They've just gone in a very different direction.

Roy: Do you ever worry that your organization will be seduced by the fame and money of political influence?

Tim: No. I'm going to tell you something here that's going to blow your mind: The United States Concealed Carry Association is ALL about education and training ... and that education and training allows our members to avoid danger, save lives and keep their families safe.

We're primarily an organization of learning and knowing what to do and what not to do with the gun so that you never have to use the damn thing. Because the last thing you want to do is pull the trigger, because nothing good is going to come out of that.

I mean, if you have to, if you're going to save the life of someone, then, of course, you have to do it, but then you also have to be prepared to deal with the consequences.

But with our education and training, there's a very, very high chance that first of all, you won't even be in that situation. You won't allow yourself to get in that situation. You'll be able to de-escalate the threat because you have threat de-escalation skills. You will have been taught hyper-awareness skills that will help you mitigate those situations.

Save lives. Keep your family safe.

Avoid danger. Avoid danger. Avoid danger. Avoid danger.

This is the heartbeat of every employee and every certified trainer. Avoid danger. Avoid danger. Avoid danger. But when danger can't be avoided, you have to know how to overcome it.

Your only other option is to be a willing victim and allow others to be victims as well.

Roy: That was a pretty good sermon. I was starting to get worried you were about to take up an offering.

IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

Tim: *[Laughter]* I guess I can get a little bit worked up.

Roy: You guess?

IF GRASSHOPPERS CARRIED GUNS, BIRDS WOULD QUIT TRYING TO EAT THEM

Roy: Earlier, you said, quote, “The dozens of psychopaths who went on rampage shooting sprees across America are directly responsible for 500,000 trained and alert citizens carrying a deadly response mechanism.”

You’ve mentioned these boogey-men a number of times. Can you name some of them for me?

Tim: 1984: James Oliver Huberty kills 21 people at a McDonald’s in San Diego.

1990: James Edward Pough kills nine people in a GMAC loan office in Jacksonville.

1991: George Pierre Hennard kills 23 people at Luby’s Cafeteria in Killeen, Texas.

1993: Gian Luigi Ferri kills eight people on the streets of San Francisco.

2002: John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo kill 10 people in Washington, DC.

2007: Robert Arthur Hawkins kills eight people in the Von Maur Department Store in Omaha.

2008: Nicholas Troy Sheley kills eight people total in Missouri and Illinois over a seven-day period of time.

2009: Robert Stewart kills eight people in a nursing home in Carthage, North Carolina.

2009: Jiverly Antares Wong kills 13 people at the American Civic Association in Binghamton, New York.

2009: Michael Kenneth McLendon kills 10 people in three rural communities: Kinston, Samson and Geneva, Alabama.

2011: Scott Evans Dekraai kills eight people at the Salon Meritage in Seal Beach, California.

2012: James Eagan Holmes kills 12 people in a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado.

2017: Devin Patrick Kelley kills 26 people at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

2017: Stephen Craig Paddock kills 61 concert-goers at a music festival in Las Vegas.

2017: Cleophus Emmanuel Cooksey Jr. kills nine people in Phoenix over a 21-day span.

2018: Ian David Long kills 13 people at Borderline Bar & Grill in Thousand Oaks, California.

2019: Connor Stephen Betts nine people on the sidewalk in Dayton, Ohio.

And that's just the psychopaths who have killed eight or more people in recent years. If we began naming all the ones who have killed seven or less, we'd be here for hours.

Roy: You make it sound like we all need a bodyguard.

Tim: You either need a bodyguard, or you are one.

Roy: That's an interesting perspective.

‘WHERE THERE IS NO VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH.’

Tim: There’s a verse in the Bible, the 29th chapter of Proverbs I think, that says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but happy is he that keeps the law.”

Roy: And you think that has something to do with concealed carry?

Tim: Not directly, no. But another translation says, “Where there is no divine guidance, people cast off restraint; but happy is the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction.”

Roy: And your interpretation of that verse is?

Tim: I believe it’s contrasting two groups of people. One group accepts guidance and embraces discipline and exercises self-restraint, while the other group “casts off restraint.”

In other words, the unrestrained are not willing to inconvenience themselves or accept responsibility for anything other than their own pleasure and comfort. But the people who plan ahead and prepare are the ones who are called “happy.”

Roy: Sort of like the Grasshopper and the Ant.

Tim: Exactly. The grasshopper laughs the summer away while the ants prepare for the winter. And, in the end, it is the ant who is the happiest. Accept guidance. Embrace discipline. Exercise self-restraint. That’s what it takes to carry a concealed firearm.

Roy: You’re saying that no one should carry unless they have self-restraint?

Tim: The self-restraint comes from understanding the gravity of your decision and the seriousness of the responsibility you have accepted. It’s a mindset of personal responsibility, not just for who you’re protecting but for all of your actions. And when you truly understand that, the last thing you want to do is pull that trigger.

The USCCA provides training courses that give you many, many tools other than the firearm. Your firearm is always the tool of last resort.

Roy: Give me an example.

Tim: An example of the other tools?

Roy: Yeah.

Tim: Do you remember when I said earlier that my dad used to take one-on-one trips with each of his kids? Well, my son, Tim Jr., and I have this annual tradition of going on spring break together, so earlier this year (spring 2020) we went down to Florida.

Roy: How old is he?

Tim: He's 22. He goes to Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He's almost done. He's studying mechanical engineering, just like his old man!

This year, we did this low-light flashlight and vocal training course.

There's a large room in a dark warehouse with a vehicle in it. Each of the participants waited outside in the daylight while the instructors set everything up. There were actors in there and camera crews filming the whole thing, and when you walk into that pitch-dark warehouse, your only job is to get to your car, and the only things you have are a flashlight and your voice. And you also have a Simunition gun, of course, but that is your absolute last resort.

The first couple of times, I didn't do a very good job, but you quickly learn just how valuable and how powerful your voice can be when you are giving direct commands and have a tactical flashlight.

I remember thinking, "God, when people understand this, when they know what to say, when to say it, and when and how to use the light ... because essentially what you're doing is communicating to the aggressor, who starts to think, 'Oh crap. I picked the wrong target.'"

Roy: Sounds like some valuable training.

Tim: Yes, it was amazing!

Roy: So let me get this straight. You've got more than 4,000 trainers teaching over 500,000 members and you're still traveling across the country to learn new things?

Tim: It's precisely because we have over 500,000 members that I'm traveling across the country to learn new things.

Roy: How long does it take until you've learned enough?

Tim: For me? Never. I'll never stop learning.

For USCCA members? Well, that's entirely up to them. First you go through Concealed Carry and Home Defense Fundamentals, and maybe a light training course. The next thing you know, you're walking into a restaurant with your family and friends, and without even thinking about it, you're picking the safest table in the restaurant.

Not only that, but you've subconsciously identified multiple exits. It just becomes part of who you are.

Roy: Sounds paranoid to me.

Tim: You're not paranoid. You're prepared.

Do you remember that guy who walked into that church in Texas with a sawed-off shotgun under his coat?

Roy: While the church service was being live-streamed?

Tim: Yeah. The shooter got off two shots in six seconds before a 71-year-old man named Jack Wilson took him out with a single shot. If you watch the video, you'll see that he was sitting in the best spot in that church because that's what he had been taught. Like I said, either you're a guardian or you need one.

Roy: What, exactly, does the United States Concealed Carry Association teach its members? What do you stand for? What do you believe? Is it all just about the Second Amendment?

Tim: What do we believe? That's easy...

We believe in something bigger than the right to bear arms.

We believe in the right to protect our loved ones.

We believe in the right to be strong in a world where criminals prey on weakness.

We believe in the right to stand up to any danger that approaches us.

We believe, "If it is to be, it's up to me."

We believe in the right to be confident and optimistic about the future while being prepared for the worst.

We believe in avoiding danger, saving lives and keeping our families safe.

IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

CHAPTER 16

AND NOW WE'RE BACK WHERE WE STARTED

Roy: Tell me some more about your Dad.

Tim: Dad was diagnosed with ALS in 2015.

Roy: Lou Gehrig's disease.

Tim: With ALS, you either suffocate to death or you starve to death. Dad was an aggressive eater, so he suffocated to death. But that's what happens, and it usually takes about two to four years.

So, in 2015, I knew I would have my dad for maybe a couple more years, but I also knew that I would have him for *only* a couple more years.

Dad lived long enough to see the USCCA become what we had dreamed it could be. Then he passed away right after I got that FedEx letter from the NRA.

Dad died 22 months after his diagnosis.

Roy: You got that letter before your dad died?

Tim: [*Nods his head yes*]

Roy: I need to make a phone call. I'll be back in a few minutes.

[*Six minutes later*] Are you ready to wrap this up?

Tim: We had just built this beautiful headquarters building. Up until that point, all of our offices were in crappy little business parks. Everything was always on the cheap. But finally I decided, "We're going to build the headquarters building our members expect us to have." So we built it and moved in, and all the employees were there, and Mom brought Dad down, and he was at that point where he had to wear a pressurized face mask that makes it easier to breathe. He hadn't started the morphine yet, which takes away the anxiety from not being able to breathe.

So he was really struggling with that. He never wanted to be seen wearing it, so he would take it off and pretend it didn't exist. He came hobbling into the office, but I had already asked Mom if she thought it would be all right if I got him one of those high-tech electric

wheelchairs because he was such a prideful man that he never wanted ... he wouldn't even tell his brothers and sisters he had ALS.

Mom said, "You know what Tim? I think he would be OK with it."

So I got him the best of the best. It had a little joystick, and it could go like 15 miles an hour and it was black. Very cool. I hid it in the cafeteria.

When Dad came in, I said, "Hey, Dad, totally up to you. I understand if you don't want it. I can help you get around. But I got you this cool wheelchair. You want to check it out? It's a hot rod."

"Yeah, Tim, I'd like that." *[Laughing]*

I'm telling you the look on his face as he tooled around that office ... he was going so fast we could hardly keep up with him. We had over 100 call center agents watching him while they were on the phones. He was so proud.

He died three weeks later.

Roy: Tim, tell me again about what happened to your Dad's nickel-plated .357 that made you feel so safe when you were out in the woods?

Tim: Dad could barely talk, and he had this recliner in the living room, and he motioned me over to him, and then he took his mask off and made a signal to Mom, and she went back to their bedroom. When she came back out, I knew exactly what it was. It was-

Roy: She was carrying the gun?

Tim: Dad was always a frugal man, so, yes, on certain things, he would get the best of the best, but with everything else he was very frugal. So he had this beautiful nickel-plated Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum in this custom-made cowboy holster with one of those belts that had all the little loops for the ammunition. But he stored it in this ... it was a hard case, but it wasn't made for a gun. It could've been, I don't know, for a hair dryer or something.

I remember when Dad would bring the gun out, it was always in that strange hard case. But as soon as Mom came out of the bedroom carrying it, I thought it was the most precious thing I had ever seen. I looked at Dad and he looked at me. He couldn't say the words, but Mom put the gun in his lap, and he held it out to me with both hands. And he had a look in his eyes that I will never forget

Roy: No words?

Tim: His eyes and his hands said, "This is for you, son." He couldn't talk, and I couldn't either.

Roy: I've only got one last question: do you keep it in that weird hair dryer hard case?

Tim: You better believe I do.

The Constitutional Right and Social Obligation to Carry a Gun

By Robert Boatman

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There's an old wisecrack, true as witticisms, proverbs and aphorisms usually are. It goes like this: Funny the things you see when you don't have a gun.

Suzanna Gratia (now Gratia Hupp) was having a pleasant lunch with her parents in Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen, Texas, when she saw a pickup truck come crashing through the wall. A man armed with two guns and plenty of spare magazines emerged from the truck and started shooting everyone in sight, including Gratia's mother and father. Al Gratia was shot fatally in the chest. Ursula Gratia was shot point-blank in the head. More than 20 other people in the cafeteria were murdered in cold blood before the killer turned one of his guns on himself and blew his own brains out.

Suzanna hid under a table, clutching her purse, which normally contained a .38 revolver. In deference to Texas law at that time, which prohibited carrying concealed weapons on one's person, she had left her gun in her car. Several more dead diners had guns legally and inaccessibly locked in their cars. Suzanna Gratia Hupp has vowed never to make that mistake again, though such pronouncements always come far too late.

"The decision to follow the law cost me the lives of my parents," she says. "There is not a day that goes by when I do not think about that."

Not long after the Killeen massacre, John Taylor and Craig Godineaux knocked on the locked front door of a Wendy's restaurant in New York City. They called out to the manager, Jean Dumel Auguste, by name. Taylor was familiar with the operation and layout of the restaurant, having worked there for a short time before he was dismissed for theft. The manager

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opened the door for Taylor and Godineaux and led them to his basement office. Minutes later, he used the store's intercom to summon his entire night crew of six employees down into the basement for a meeting. What followed was one of the worst massacres in New York history.

The two armed killers herded all seven Wendy's employees into a walk-in refrigerator, bound their hands, gagged their mouths, covered their heads with plastic bags, ordered them to kneel on the floor, and methodically shot each person in the head with a small-caliber pistol at point-blank range. They then stole about \$2,000 in cash and left. New York law and Wendy's corporate policy had prohibited the victims from arming themselves.

All of the people involved in these incidents were, in a profound way, responsible for their own deaths or the deaths of loved ones. They were equally responsible for the deaths of innocents who dared associate with them and, by abstract extension, for the deaths of everyone ever killed in similar circumstances. Anti-gun laws and policies are always complicit in the execution of innocents. And it's appropriate that survivors are always ashamed of their inadequacy.

In the final analysis, to face evil with impotence — whether out of cowardice or feeble-mindedness or submission to foolish laws — could well be responsible for the death of society.

Suzanna Gratia Hupp decided to fight back. She set out to change the foolish laws. She turned her anger on her legislators who had "legislated me out of the right to protect myself and my family." She joined the crusade for the right to carry concealed weapons in Texas, and she ran for the state Legislature. She was successful on both counts, though not in time to save the lives of her parents.

Today, Rep. Hupp has some harsh words for those gun-control fanatics who come out of the woodwork every time there's a mass slaying like Columbine: "Why is it that mass shootings now seem to always take place in schools and post offices, places where guns are not allowed? They're always in these so-called gun-free safety zones." Like Luby's Cafeteria.

Five Wendy's employees — Ramon Nazario, Anita C. Smith, Jeremy Mele, Ali Ibadat and Jean Dumel Auguste — took their shame to their graves. There was no good reason on earth why it had to end that way.

A scenario almost identical to that of Wendy's in New York began to un-

fold at Shoney's restaurant in Anniston, Alabama. Two armed robbers took over the restaurant, which was filled with two dozen customers and several employees, and started to herd everyone into the restaurant's walk-in refrigerator. But, this time, a smart employee, Thomas Terry, drew his concealed .45 and shot both of the bad guys before this particular mass execution could take place. In a matter of seconds, one criminal lay dead, the other incapacitated, and more than two dozen innocent people had been handed back their lives thanks to a man who had a gun and was not afraid to use it. Thomas Terry, bleeding from a grazing wound to the hip, was happy to play the hero with so many lives at stake.

And still they ask, "Why do you carry a gun? What are you afraid of? Do you think some nut is going to drive through the wall and start shooting everybody? Do you think a couple of hardened criminals are going to shove you in the refrigerator and execute you?" To which you can only reply, "Do you think when you walk out of here and cross the street, you're going to be hit by a truck?"

Only when the custom of carrying a gun once again achieves its deserved high level of social legitimacy and political priority will this country get back on the track of respect for human freedom and dignity that has set it apart from the rest of the world for two centuries...

In the beginning, weapons grew on trees.

In the lost paradise of our species, every man, woman and child was armed to the teeth with the finest state-of-the-art killing machines society could produce, and all was well. As man grew more sophisticated and his weapons grew even more effective at protecting weaker citizens from stronger ones, the first evil caveman genius saw that, as a precursor to the enslavement and destruction of his intended victims, all who would dare resist him must first be disarmed. In the name of peace. In the name of social harmony. In the name of common sense. To save the children...

Whom are we to trust with our lives and our liberties, other than ourselves?

Carrying a gun is an absolute right. The Framers of the Constitution were under no pressure from the NRA when they wrote "... the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE to keep and bear arms shall NOT be infringed. The right of the people TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS shall NOT be infringed. The

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right of the people to keep and bear arms SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED...

The Constitution of the state of Pennsylvania (adopted Sept. 28, 1776) allocated more words to make the point even more unmistakable: "XIII. That the people have a right to bear arms for the defense of themselves and the state; and as standing armies in the time of peace are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up; and that the military should be kept under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power."

The Second Amendment, like most other articles in the Bill of Rights, was adopted from the English Bill of Rights of 1689 which, in turn, was based on centuries of English Common Law. English jurist Sir William Blackstone observed that the English Bill of Rights clearly meant that Englishmen possessed "the right of having and using arms for self-preservation and defense" and that "having arms suitable for their defense" was one of the five auxiliary rights people possessed "to protect and maintain inviolate the three great and primary rights," the first of which is "personal security."

The great Roman philosopher and senator, Cicero, immortalized armed self-defense as an "inalienable right" more than 2,000 years before the U.S. Constitution did so. Cicero said:

There exists a law, not written down anywhere but inborn in our hearts; a law which comes to us not by training or custom or reading but by derivation and absorption and adoption from nature itself; a law which has come to us not from theory but from practice, not by instruction but by natural intuition. I refer to the law which lays it down that, if our lives are endangered by plots or violence or armed robbers or enemies, any and every method of protecting ourselves is morally right.

Even people to whom armed self-defense is but a remote abstraction often endorse, without even realizing it, the unquestionable principles underlying the right to carry a gun. Jaron Lanier, writing in *Discover Magazine* (February 2001) said in reference to new copyright-protection technology, "In a democracy, citizens are supposed to act as partners in enforcing laws. Those forced to follow rules without being trusted even for a Moment are, in fact, slaves."

Even the Dalai Lama, Nobel Peace Prize and all, said in May of 2001 during a speech about "nonviolent resolutions to conflict" to 7,600 Oregon and Washington high-school students, "But if someone has a gun and is trying to kill you, it would be reasonable to shoot back with your own gun." So said the Dalai Lama.

IF IT IS TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME.

There are criminals among us who are both homicidal and incorrigible. Their parents took a shot at civilizing them and failed. Their schoolteachers took a shot at them and failed. The odds are overwhelming that government welfare programs and penal institutions took a shot at them and failed. If it ever becomes your turn to take a shot at them, don't fail.

Carrying a gun has always been both a right and a duty.

There have been many societies in which not carrying a weapon was a serious and severely punishable crime. This was true in Greece, Rome, Europe, Britain and, though seldom enforced, is still true in certain places in America today. This is as it should be. A citizen who shirks his duty to contribute to the security of his community is little better than the criminal who threatens it, and is better off living in a society that places lesser demands on his capacity to accept responsibility. As cowards from the Vietnam era discovered, that's what Canada is for.

English scholar Granville Sharpe, who helped bring about the abolition of slavery in England and supported American independence, wrote in 1782 that "no Englishman can be truly loyal who opposes the principles of English law whereby the people are required to have arms of defence and peace, for mutual as well as private defence ... The laws of England always required the people to be armed, and not only armed, but to be expert in arms."

In 1785, William Blizard, chief legal advisor to London's mayor and city council, stated that "the right of his majesty's Protestant subjects, to have arms for their own defence, and to use them for lawful purposes, is most clear and undeniable. It seems, indeed, to be considered, by the ancient laws of this kingdom, not only as a right, but as a duty..."

Commenting on the early legal requirement that every American male and every American household be armed, attorney Don B. Kates says that citizens "were not simply allowed to keep their own arms but affirmatively required to do so." He further says that these statutes reflect the classical world view that "arms possession for protection of self, family and polity was both the hallmark of the individual's freedom and one of the two primary factors in his developing the independent, self-reliant, responsible character which classical political philosophers deemed necessary to the citizenry of a free state."

There have not always been police. England had none until 1829, America had none until 1845, and only in the so-called modern era have police

officers been armed. At one time, fear of anything resembling a standing army was so intense that police were, in fact, the only citizens not allowed to carry guns. Throughout much of 19th century England and America, the policy of forbidding police to have arms while on duty was the only form of gun control.

Police were expected to rely on a fully armed citizenry to come to their aid when armed enforcement of the law was necessary.

(A) In 1986, Don Bennett of Oak Park, Illinois, was shot at by two men who had just stolen \$1,200 in cash and jewelry from his suburban Chicago service station. The police arrested Bennett for violating Oak Park's handgun ban. The police never caught the actual criminals.

(B) Ronald Biggs, a resident of Goldsboro, North Carolina, was arrested for shooting an intruder in 1990. Four men broke into Biggs' residence one night, ransacked the home and then assaulted him with a baseball bat. When Biggs attempted to escape through the back door, the group chased him, and Biggs turned and shot one of the assailants in the stomach. Biggs was arrested and charged with assault with a deadly weapon — a felony. His assailants were charged with misdemeanors.

(C) Don Campbell, of Port Huron, Michigan, was arrested, jailed and criminally charged after he shot a criminal assailant in 1991. The thief had broken into Campbell's store and attacked him. The prosecutor plea-bargained with the assailant and planned to use him to testify against Campbell for felonious use of a firearm. Only after intense community pressure did the prosecutor finally drop the charges.

Notwithstanding the fact that most people do not carry guns, the mere possibility that an intended victim could be armed with a handgun eliminates millions of crimes every year.

According to the FBI, states with "shall-issue" right-to-carry laws have a 26 percent lower total violent crime rate, a 20 percent lower homicide rate, a 39 percent lower robbery rate and a 22 percent lower aggravated assault rate than those states that do not allow their citizens to legally carry guns.

Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University, Gary Kleck, in *Point Blank: Guns and Violence in America* (Aldine de Gruyter Publishers, 1991), found that "robbery and assault victims who used a gun to resist were less likely to be attacked or to suffer an injury than those who used any other methods of self-protection or those who did not resist at all."

Convicted felons reveal in surveys that they are more afraid of armed citizens than they are of the police. And well they should be. Armed citizens kill 2,000 to 3,000 criminals each year, three times the number killed by the police. And only 2 percent of civilian shootings involve an innocent person mistakenly identified as a criminal, whereas the error rate for the police is more than five times that high.

Kleck's research shows that private citizens use firearms to protect themselves and thwart crime about 2.5 million times a year. Citizens use firearms to prevent mass killings, bank robberies, gang attacks, carjackings, rapes, kidnappings and hostage-takings.

The beauty of armed self-defense is that, because of its immediate, sure and severe nature, the mere threat is usually enough to stop the behavior. Is it any wonder that states that pass concealed carry laws experience immediate and obvious drops in crime rates? The violent criminal in these states isn't nearly as worried about being arrested for his crime as he is about being shot by his would-be victim. This fact fits perfectly with well-established principles of behavior modification.

On the flip side, gun-control advocates, with their notions that we should submit to criminal assault, reward criminal behavior. The criminal gets what he wants — your money, your dignity and maybe your life. Since positive reinforcement — reward — is the strongest, most effective behavior-modification tool, that criminal behavior is likely to be repeated. In other words, by submitting to criminal demands, you are encouraging criminal behavior.

Gun ownership saves lives.

Gun ownership also saves money. Nationwide, each 1 percent increase in the number of people owning guns reduces crime-victim costs by over \$3 billion.

Concealed handgun carry by private citizens reduces violent crimes, including rape, murder, aggravated assault and robbery, throughout the entire community and in surrounding communities.

When a state passes a right-to-carry law, crime reduction is immediate and substantial, and crime-reduction benefits continue to grow the longer the law is in effect.

The greater the number of concealed handgun permits issued, the greater the reduction in crime.

Mass shootings in public places are reduced to virtually zero within four or five years after right-to-carry laws are passed — except in designated “gun-free” zones, such as schools, where self-defense is known to be prohibited.

The largest drops in violent crime from concealed handgun carry occur in the most urban areas with the greatest populations and the highest crime rates.

Citizens who do not carry guns benefit equally from the crime reduction which results when other citizens carry guns. The people who benefit most from this “halo” effect are women, children and the elderly.

Of all the methods studied by economists, the carrying of concealed handguns is by far the most cost-effective method for reducing crime. Each and every concealed handgun permit issued reduces total economic losses to crime victims by \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Accident and suicide rates are unaltered by the presence of concealed handguns.

The effect of increased penalties for using a gun in the commission of a crime is small.

Bottom line, in keeping with the title of his work, the more guns there are in society and the more these guns are carried by private citizens, the less crime there is.

These are some of the reasons why police, who fight crime for a living and are well aware of the realities of street criminals, support right-to-carry laws for private citizens by an overwhelming three-to-one margin. This is an even higher margin of support for right-to-carry than the strong support voiced by the civilian population.

Policemen are nobody’s personal bodyguards. Their jobs are to find and arrest people who have committed crimes, not to prevent such potential crimes from happening in the first place. Clearly, the responsibility for victim-prevention lies with the victim-to-be.

The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals (*Bowers v. DeVito*, 1982) did not mince words when it ruled, “There is no Constitutional right to be protected by the state against being murdered by criminals or madmen.”

That loaded Glock in your holster is a powerful expression of your constitutionally guaranteed liberty as an American citizen, your recognition of the solemn duty you have to your fellow man and your willingness to accept the full weight of a life-and-death responsibility.

When you are prepared to defend yourself, you are equally prepared to defend all of society and all of its guiding principles. Your responsibilities are therefore many — moral, legal and tactical. That is why most people, including lifelong gun owners, experienced hunters and competitive shooters, even in states that freely issue concealed carry permits, do not choose to carry a gun.

Your moral responsibilities are to fire your gun into another human being only when the line of necessity has clearly been reached, and then to fire without hesitation and to full effect. Remember the words of Cicero.

Your legal responsibilities are to justify your actions to those who would call you a criminal ... and quite possibly to a jury of your peers.

Your tactical responsibilities are to carry your gun with confidence, to be well-trained in your ability to operate it effectively, and to have instilled in yourself an iron will to use deadly force to prevent or end violence committed against yourself or others.

Violence happens either at random or directed toward the obviously vulnerable or toward someone in particular for a reason. You can rest assured it will not happen at the shooting range. It will happen when you are home sleeping in your bed, shopping at the grocery store, walking out to get the mail, mowing the grass, at dinner, at church, at the theater.

The most dangerous places in the world are those so-called “gun-free safety zones.” Even an adolescent school kid can figure out that an advertised killing field where no one is allowed to shoot back is the safest location in the world to carry out a mass shooting.

The assistant principal of a high school in Pearl, Mississippi, broke the law. He kept a .45 in his car parked on the school grounds. When a deranged student opened fire, Joel Myrick ran for his gun. Two students were killed because Myrick had to retrieve his gun from his car instead of his holster. But the .45 eventually prevailed, and Myrick stopped the massacre long before police arrived on the scene. God only knows how many lives he saved. But assistant principal Joel Myrick wasn't awarded any medals. Of the several hundred newspaper and television stories about the incident,

only a few even mentioned his name. Almost none revealed the fact that he used a gun to stop the killings.

If you ever find yourself under attack by an armed criminal, you will be on the defensive and he will be on the offensive. In other words, he will have a strong advantage going in. And, though he will not have trained himself to shoot nearly as well as you have trained, he will be far more experienced in the art of killing. The odds are, any criminal who is intent on killing you has probably killed men before, knows how to do it, knows how it feels and likes it. You're not going to talk him out of it, scare him out of it or wound him out of it. You're going to have to kill him.

Studies show that simply brandishing a weapon saves many lives, but I am personally against the idea of waving a gun around while your adversary thinks. The way to overcome his offensive advantage is to strike without warning. Once you make the decision to free your Glock from its holster, the entire situation should be over and done within a second or two.

More than a century of military and police research tells us that most people, including up to 85 percent of trained soldiers and cops, are psychologically unable to use deadly force in a life-or-death situation no matter how compelling the circumstances may be. If you can't kill, there is no reason for you to carry a lethal weapon.

Carrying a loaded gun with the ability and will to use it is not a casual fling meant to bring some excitement into your boring life. It is an all-embracing lifestyle and must take precedence over your respect for law, your fear of social criticism, your love of humanity, your wardrobe and your drinking habits.

EPILOGUE

Written by Tim Schmidt Jr., 22 years old

(The same Tim Jr. I held in my arms that day when this whole thing started!)

I still remember the day when my dad first taught me how to shoot a gun. It was a .22 Long Rifle, and we were at the shooting range in Barton, Wisconsin — about 15 minutes from our house in West Bend (home of USCCA headquarters). My dad had been very careful to teach me, my sister and my brother the four rules of firearms safety like they were a code to live or die by. I remember sitting on that bench with the box of ammo on the table and the rifle in my arms, looking down the iron sights to the target ahead. I remember pulling the trigger, seeing the empty case shoot out of the firing mechanism and hearing the gunpowder explode. It gave me a sense of this powerful tool in my hands and the responsibility required to properly wield it. This experience ignited my interest in firearms and my curiosity about different calibers and guns (which, in retrospect, was probably a little odd for a 12-year-old). I will never forget that first time shooting a gun with my dad at the range.

Growing up, my dad was energetic and enjoyed hanging out with me and my siblings. Almost every Saturday when we were kids, we would go to a toy store on Main Street in West Bend, and while we never actually got to buy any toys in that store, we got to walk around with my dad and look at the toys, which was still so much fun. I think my dad wanted to instill in us the idea that if we wanted something, we had to earn the money to be able to buy it. He really cared about how we would act as adults once we moved out of the house and were on our own, and he modeled that for us in more ways than I can count.

One of those ways was how, when we were at home, he was not secretive about how he would carry a concealed handgun around in public. He wanted us to know that he was willing to stop anyone who threatened us harm, and that showed me he was willing to put himself in danger to protect us. Talk about the actions of an exemplary role model.

A saying that my grandpa instilled in my dad was, “If it is to be, it’s up to me.” In addition to living that statement out, my dad really passed on this advice to me as well. He taught me that if I made a mess, I was the one who should clean it up. He taught me that I should accept responsibility for the mistakes I made and that I should not be immobilized by those mistakes but rather learn from them and move on. He taught me each of these important life lessons but also lived them out every single day. I always have (and always will) look up to him, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have someone like him guiding me and believing in me. I hope I can grow up to be a father like him someday. Something I heard recently that really stuck with me is that “a father is his son’s first hero.” I couldn’t agree with that statement more!

Tim Schmidt Jr.

Waco, Texas

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