COMFORT & STYLE ISSUE

CONCEALEDCARRY MAGAZINE

THE RESOURCE FOR RESPONSIBLY ARMED AMERICANS

APRIL 2026
VOLUME 23 ISSUE 3
$9.99



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Verb ~

To modify, build or alter something to meet individual, personal or specific requirements, tastes or preferences.

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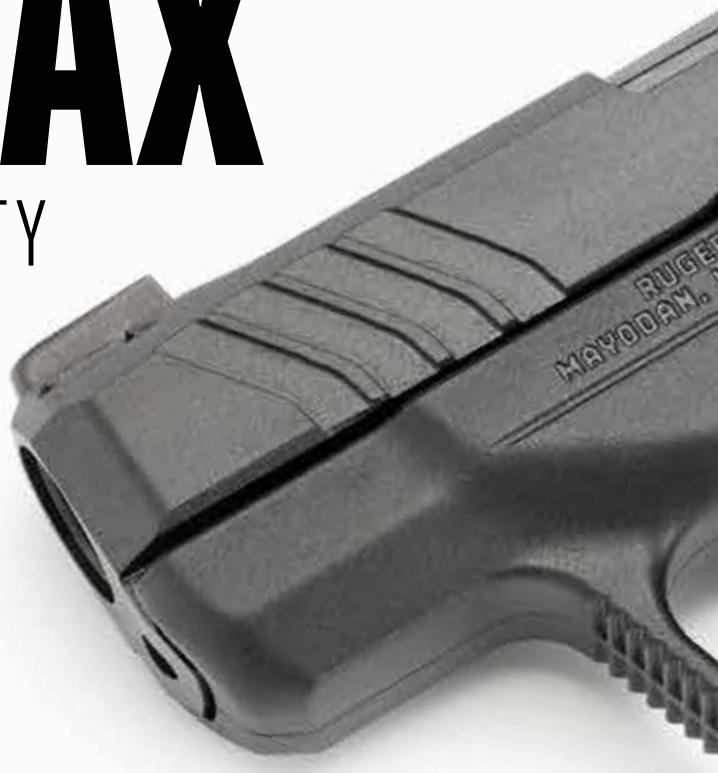

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The acquisition, ownership, possession and use of firearms are heavily regulated. Some models may not be legally available in your state or locale. Whatever your purpose for lawfully acquiring a firearm – know the law, get trained and shoot safely.

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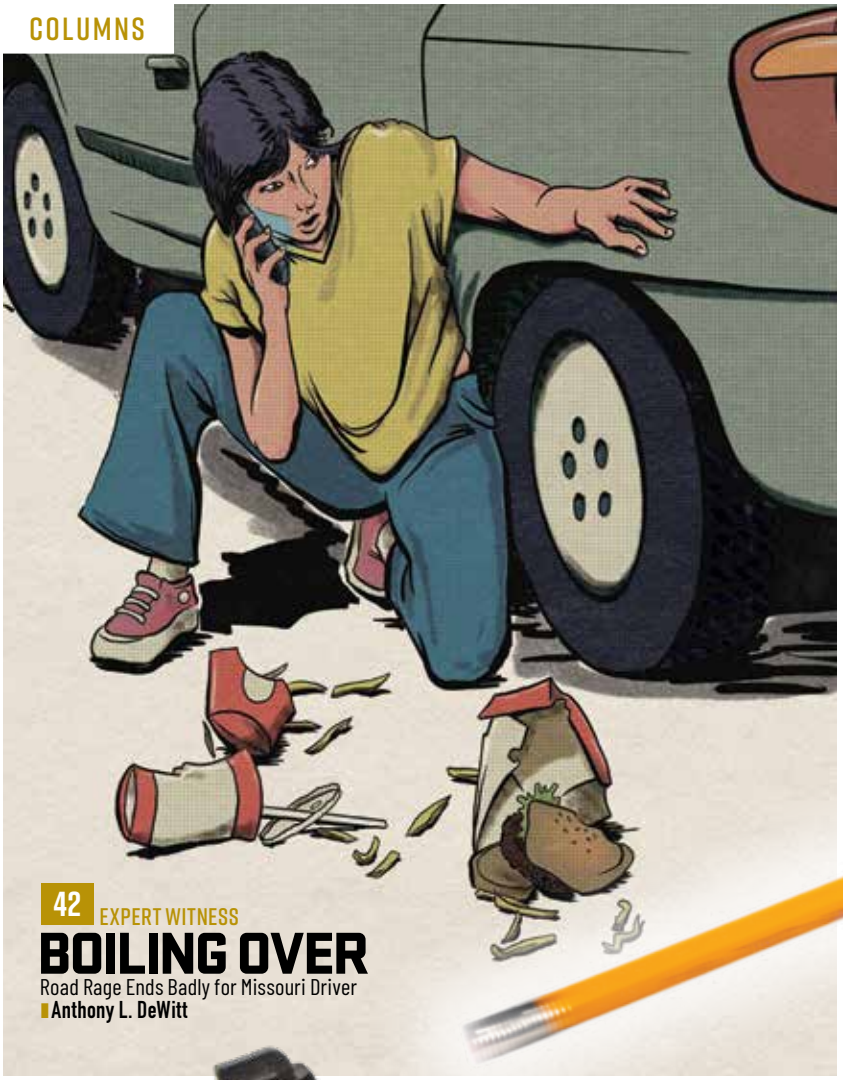

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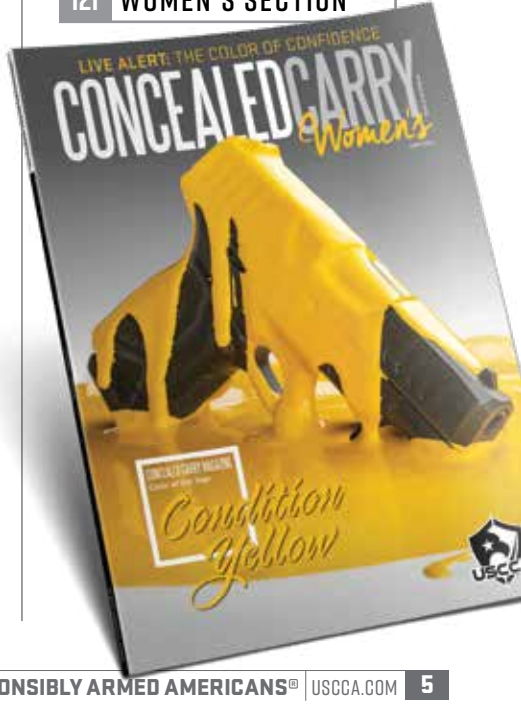



DON'T 'FAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT'

KNOW YOURSELF BEFORE YOU COMMIT TO CARRYING A GUN

You've probably heard the phrase, "Fake it till you make it." The way I see it, this concept is meant to help you work toward some attribute that you don't have quite yet. It's about projecting confidence — and even competence — until one day you find that you actually ARE those things. Some people suggest that it's a way to overcome "imposter syndrome" and realize your full potential.

While there may be benefits to "faking it" until you make it in certain contexts, presenting yourself as something you're not has no place in the worlds of concealed carry and self-defense. In fact, faking it can have disastrous, life-altering consequences.

Think about it: You can't fake being a responsible gun owner. You can't fake knowing how to safely operate a firearm. You can't fake a defender's mindset. You can't fake the skills you'll need to prevail in a lethal encounter. You can't fake staying calm in a moment of extreme stress if you haven't trained. And you can't fake carrying if you're not comfortable doing so.

You also can't fake comfort and style. I mean, have you ever seen someone who's even slightly uncomfortable in the clothes he or she is wearing? A woman wearing a dress and heels who can't stop adjusting straps and wiggling in her seat? A man who continuously pulls at his sleeves or his collar or is constantly shifting how his belt sits around his waist?

I think you'd probably agree that neither of these imagined individuals would qualify as projecting confidence or even appearing competent in some circles.

You've probably heard *CCM* Executive Editor Kevin Michalowski espouse the positive aspects of Hawaiian shirts for concealed carry, but that doesn't mean you should wear a Hawaiian shirt if that's not what you would normally wear.

Mark Kakkuri discusses fanny packs in "Pack Carry" (Page 62), but that doesn't mean you should wear a fanny pack if it would seem out of place on you or in the setting in which you would be wearing it. You need to operate within the parameters of what makes you comfortable, or carrying a gun will never work.

Don't misconstrue my words here; I'm not just talking about physical comfort. Part of carrying a gun is the way you carry yourself. I'm simply saying that you don't have to "disguise" yourself to carry. In fact, you shouldn't.

You need to conceal your gun, but you have to do so in a way that's true to you. And you might have to experiment until you find something that fits.

As Rob Chadwick aptly points out in his Mindset & Mastery column ("Intent Before Fashion," Page 44), "Physical comfort directly influences mental discipline." He says that you can easily talk yourself out of carrying and that "inconsistency is the enemy of readiness." You must accept responsibility for all aspects of carrying a gun. And then you must work to make it work, because it's just not something you can fake.

As far as style goes, we're lucky to live in a time in which there are so many options that make this a lot easier. And as for the rest of it? Your mindset? Your confidence? Your competence? Well, you're going to have to work to make that work too.

Maybe we can just shift our thinking to something a little more fitting: "Don't fake it till you make it; practice until you can't get it wrong."

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UNPARALLELED

THE SKINNER SIGHTS HTF GARMENT BAG

THE WELL-DRESSED GUN OWNER

When it comes to being a well-dressed gun owner, many different opinions come to the fore. Some of us might say the Hawaiian shirt, depending on color and pattern, is the pinnacle of concealed carry fashion.

Remember when the "tactical" vest was all the rage? Despite the oft-used moniker calling it the "shoot-me-first vest," I can find no documented evidence that anyone wearing such a vest was, indeed, shot first during a violent incident. I don't really think bad guys look at a tan vest and think, "That guy's dangerous."

My personal favorite expression concerning firearms and fashion comes from Will Parker, owner of Freddy Merc's Gun Works, who says he's "fully dressed" when he's carrying a gun. I've taken to using that term often, but I digress. Let me get back on track.

When we here at *Concealed Carry Magazine* talk about comfort and style, I tend to think "outside the box," where I wander around the fringes of fashion, which is why I consider the Skinner Sights HTF Garment Bag a key element of the fashionable firearms owner.

Let me be clear: This thing is a garment bag. That means you can, if you wish, use it to carry clothing, including but not limited to suits, shoes, belts and various other items. But it's so much more than that and, for my money, should only be used for clothing as a last resort.

The Skinner HTF Garment Bag is designed to hold a long gun, three 30-round AR-style magazines, two pistols, eight pistol magazines and other gear, such as knives, medical gear and flashlights. The handgun pouches serve as makeshift universal holsters in a pinch, but, in reality, there's room in there to store holstered handguns and a gun belt, if you wish.

But you might ask yourself, why use a garment bag for the staging/storage of firearms? I have a couple of reasons, offered in no particular order of importance:

- **Hidden in plain sight.** No one looks twice at a garment bag hanging in the corner of a closet. No one's coming to your home to steal your tweed.
- **Utilitarian.** You can also use the HTF Garment Bag as a gun case to haul your stuff to the range (or anywhere else). Just take the hanger out and the bag folds up with all of your gear in it.
- **Built tough.** Super-strong nylon, extra-tough zippers and what appears to be the world's strongest hanger mean that this bag is built to hold your gear and will likely outlive you.

Now, for those of you who must be contrarian, you'll likely point out that the bag does not offer secure storage. You're right. It doesn't.

You can make it more secure by attaching gun locks to the guns, locking the zippers shut and running a cable with a lock over the closet rod, but you're right; this is not a gun safe. The idea is to keep your guns hidden yet accessible. You must follow all of your local laws about safe gun storage. In a more restrictive state, this will likely not suffice. I expect you, as a responsible gun owner, to consider your individual situation should you use this product, just as I would advise with any product.

I'm not going to tell you where my HTF Garment Bag hangs, but I am going to tell you that it works as advertised. And it's made in America.

SOURCES

Skinner Sights: SkinnerSights.com



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IT PAYS TO BE PICKY

YOU'VE NEVER HAD MORE (OR BETTER) OPTIONS

Self-defense gear is personal, and no two hands are the same. Whether you evaluate a dozen or more pistols before choosing the one that fits you best or upgrade with an aftermarket frame such as this model from Icarus Precision, optimizing what you carry for your specific needs should be a top priority in defensive handgunning. And, fortunately, there's never been a better time to shake out what — exactly — will be the best fit for your preferences.

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NUMBERS GAME
The 9x19 (left), 10mm (center) and .40 S&W (right) are all excellent cartridges, but their (and other cartridges') names can lead to a bit of confusion.

BEAR STOPPER

A QUESTION ABOUT CALIBER SIZES

I'm looking for a caliber that I can carry when I'm hiking to defend against bears. When I look at conversion charts with millimeter and caliber, the conversion chart says a 9mm converts to an approximate .349 caliber and a 10mm converts to approximately .395 caliber. I hear the 10mm has a lot of stopping power but is slightly less than .40 caliber by conversion. Please explain these differences.

Kind regards,

Marc, via email

Well, Marc, as they say, it depends. But first, I would like to commend you on deciding to carry a firearm while you're hiking.

I was born and raised in Wisconsin, and though we've always had bears, I and every other kid who grew up in the '80s and '90s was always assured, "They're more afraid of you than you are of them." It was considered common knowledge that black bears never attacked humans.

Whether that was true back then is up for debate, but something fundamental's changed. Black bears are attacking humans in higher numbers than ever recorded, and whether it's because humans are better at reporting bear attacks now or that bears are just plain nervier than they used to be, those of us who recreate in the outdoors need to take heed. I would encourage everyone who hasn't to read our four-part series on armed self-defense against animals in the January 2025 through May/June 2025 issues.

But on to the differences between 9x19, .40 Smith & Wesson and 10mm.

There's a great deal of "marketing-ese" involved in the ammo world, and there always has been. The 9x19mm shares a bullet diameter with the .380 ACP as well as the .357 Magnum, the .38 Special and the .357 SIG — all of which are actually right around .355 caliber. The gun-and-ammo industry has been fraught with this kind of confusing stuff for more than a century, and the numbers you see on the headstamp of a cartridge aren't always according-to-Hoyle accurate down to a thousandth of an inch.

Most of the .40-cal and 10mm bullets sold to reloaders will be listed as 0.4 or 0.401 inches in diameter, and the bulk of the 9mm bullets I see for sale are listed at 0.355 or 0.356. But whenever I mention (and, it seems, whenever anyone mentions) anything about handloading in these pages, a tidal wave of angry emails from reloading nerds crashes over the editorial offices and we're reminded why we usually leave this kind of minutiae to our friends over at American Rifleman.

The difference between the .40 S&W and the 10mm is mainly in the length of the cartridge cases. The 10's is slightly longer, and the powder charge in the 10 is generally higher than the powder charge in the .40. This made a much bigger difference in the 1990s (when bullet design was more primitive than it is today), and even though countless law enforcement agencies enthusiastically adopted the .40 for duty, some holdouts clung to the higher velocities the 10 could offer.

Today, as evidenced by the FBI returning to the 9mm duty cartridge, projectile technology has advanced to such a point that there isn't a ton of difference in performance between the

9mm, the .40 S&W and the 10mm in the context of law enforcement or private-citizen self-defense use. There are differences, yes, but they will likely be small enough as to not matter in the lower 48 states. Alaska is always a different matter, and — as you mentioned — 10mm is more powerful than the .40 and is quite popular in Alaska for those seeking a bear-defense semi-auto. But in your reply to my follow-up email, you made it clear that you're not in America's Last Frontier.

"EITHER A 9MM OR A .40 WILL DO JUST FINE FOR DEFENSE AGAINST BLACK BEARS."

As for down here (which, by area, is basically though not entirely grizzly-free), either a 9mm or a .40 will do just fine for defense against black bears. As I was not raised a bear hunter, I was surprised to learn from hunting guides that black bears are not particularly difficult to kill and that just about any firearm can be used to stop an attack.

In fact, if you run "AmmoLand Dean Weingarten bear" in your favorite search engine, you'll find a wealth of articles written by the aforementioned author on the topic of bear defense. His research has yielded not only that black-bear attacks are stopped with firearms chambered for .22 Long Rifle but also that such situations are borderline common (at least in the context of defense against bears).

As one hunting guide told me, if a brown bear is launching an attack, you'll likely have to kill it to stop it. But, he said, if a black bear is launching an attack, you usually only have to hurt it to get it to quit. That temperamental difference — combined with the physical differences between black and brown bears — will leave you well-armed with a full-sized 9 or .40 or even a subcompact in either chambering.

And now it's time for the disclaimer.

I forget who I heard say it, but he said something to the effect of, "The first time you get a bear in your sights, you'll wish you'd brought a bigger gun." He was talking about grizzly hunting, and I believed him. And I understand how that kind of sentiment would be applied to a bear-defense pistol, especially if you normally carry something like a .22 or a .380 ACP.

In the spirit of the old adage, "If you're going after a big, dangerous animal, you'd better bring a big, dangerous gun," I'll never chuckle at anyone who buys a dedicated "outdoor pistol" for defense against predators — two- or four-legged. Though I've also been told it's no great task to kill a mountain lion (at least when compared to something like a moose), I'd feel a lot better about trying to stop one with a .40 S&W than a .22 Magnum.

Your projectile choice will make more of a difference than whether that projectile was sent from a pistol chambered for 9x19 or .40 S&W. Remington just released a fine line of hard-cast ammo specifically designed to maximize penetration, which is a key concern in defense against wild animals. The company Buffalo Bore also specializes in ammunition specifically designed for stopping dangerous animals, and famed Alaskan guide Phil Shoemaker used some of its 9mm "Outdoorsman" load to turn and kill a charging grizzly. (You can read about that incident in several articles by Mr. Weingarten.)

Best of luck and stay safe,

Ed Combs
Senior Editor

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WHAT'S WITH THE TAPE?

In the October 2025 feature "Ditch the Gun Belt," I noticed that in two of the pictures, the handguns had black tape on the handles. Is that because the product you're pushing allows the grips to rub against the body, so the wearer puts the tape on for comfort? The reason I ask is I recently acquired a Taurus G3C [to which] the previous owner had applied tape because the grips were abrasive on his side.

Tim, via email

That could be the reason, but my gut feeling is that the tape wraps pictured on Pages 96 and 98 in those images supplied to us by PHLster are there because they're currently popular with certain corners of the shooting world. As far as I can tell, it came out of competitive shooting and has made its way into concealed carry, as such things have a way of doing.

I've seen all kinds of competitive shooters use all kinds of grip enhancers on their pistols for decades, but I really saw this particular phenomenon heat up once something called "Goon Tape" hit the market a few years back. It's something like a hockey tape (hence the use of the hockey term for fighter), and some shooters believe it gives them a better grip on their pistols. I have a hard time telling the difference between it and regular cloth tape lightly treated with surf wax (as we used to do back when I was a hockey player at the close of the last century), but to each his own.

Ed Combs
Senior Editor

■ DO-IT-YOURSELF LENS

I'm 70 years old and, like many people, I'm now using trifocal glasses. My problem is that in order to use the close-up portion of my trifocals, which is at the bottom of the lens, I need to really tilt my head back in order to be able to focus on the front sight. The last time I got glasses, I requested a second pair with special construction: one for distance and one for close-up reading, but I wanted the close-up portion to be placed at the top of the lenses instead of the traditional bottom location. This would allow me to keep my head perfectly level while I'm looking through the top of the glasses and focusing on the front sight.

To me, it seemed to be a valid request, but I could not find any source that would do it. So I modified an old pair of distance glasses by going to Amazon.com and buying stick-on lenses. They were fairly cheap, so I ordered two different strengths to see which was best for me. They arrived in a half-moon shape and, after I picked the right strength, I trimmed them to fit at the top of the lenses. A little water and pressure and I had exactly what I wanted. I've been using them for two years now, and shooting has regained its pleasure and comfort.

Brian, Maryland

■ DECIDE NOW

Ed, thank you very much for sharing your very personal and difficult story in [the] October and November/December [2025 issues of *CCM*]. I've pondered the risks of a possible "friendly fire" scenario, but never to this extent. Your analogies and in-depth discussion certainly compel me to "acknowledge it could happen."

Many thanks to USCCA and *CCM*!

Eric, Colorado

■ FALLING SHORT (OR LONG, HARD TO TELL)

Beth Alcazar's "Pyramid Drill" [January 2026 issue, Page 26] looked very interesting. However, it did not give information as to where such a target could be acquired. The article did mention drawing one's own target but gave no clue as to dimensions. A little help, please.

Jim, Arizona

I regret not including a cartridge or permanent marker for scale in that photograph. My apologies, Jim; this one's my fault.

You can make the target as large or as small as you'd like, which is why Beth didn't include any measurements when she turned in that Drill of the Month.

We used an IDPA-sized piece of cardboard when we drew it up for the photo, but were I making such a target for indoor air-gun use, I would likely draw it out on a piece of office paper. It will all depend on your skill level and your specific application.

For future reference in such matters, if you look at the bullet holes, you can get a thumbnail idea of how large the target is.

If the bullet holes in that target were .22 caliber, it would mean that the pictured target was about true to size (which, for seated practice with a scoped .22 rifle, would be a decent size for such a drill).

Since the context of the drill is self-defense, and since the vast majority of self-defense sidearms in this country are chambered for between about .357- and about .45-caliber bullets, those bullet holes are about half-size on the page, which would mean that you'd draw up your target about twice as large as it appears there.

Again, my apologies.

Ed Combs
Senior Editor

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MIDNIGHT ATTACK

CALIFORNIA MAN USES .22 TO STOP ARMED HOME INVADER

A Siskiyou County homeowner was attacked at around midnight when a stranger broke into his home. The intruder attacked the homeowner with a wooden pole, and the resulting commotion awoke another resident who, fearing for his own life and that of the other residents, took up a .22-caliber rifle and shot the intruder. The wounded invader was held for responding police, who arrested him on multiple felonies.

Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office Facebook Page, California



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ROST MARTIN

■ MICHIGAN NEIGHBOR DEFENDS AGAINST SNOW-SHOVEL ATTACK

A Kalamazoo man was returning a ladder to a neighbor when he was accosted by a young man wielding a snow shovel. The attacker pushed him, demanded he leave the area and struck him with the shovel. Feeling threatened, the older man drew a pistol and shot his assailant, stopping the attack. He then called 911 and remained at the scene to speak with police. Surveillance video confirmed the shooter's account of the incident, and he was not charged at the scene. The county prosecutor is reviewing the case.

WZZM 13, Grand Rapids, Michigan

■ SOUTH CAROLINA MAN SHOOTS BACK, DEFENDS AGAINST AMBUSH

A Columbia man was lured to a location to complete an online transaction only to be shot on arrival by two armed men who tried to rob him. Despite being seriously wounded, the victim was able to draw his own gun and shoot both robbers, causing them to flee. He then reported the incident to police as he drove himself to the hospital for treatment. Both assailants were arrested when they later sought medical attention for their wounds.

WLTX News 19, Columbia, South Carolina

■ OREGON MAN HELPS NEIGHBOR ATTACKED BY INTRUDER

A Medford man heard an early-morning commotion next door and took a pistol with him when he went to investigate. He found that his elderly neighbor's home had been broken into and that the resident was being beaten. Fearing for the resident's life, the neighbor shot the intruder dead. The shooter cooperated with the police investigation and has not been charged.

Rogue Valley Times, *Medford, Oregon*

■ LOUISIANA MAN SHOOTS LATE-NIGHT HOME INVADER

A Shreveport nighttime burglar climbed to a second-story balcony to break into an apartment. Once inside, he was confronted by a guest of the owner, who was armed and shot him several times, seriously wounding him and ending the incident. Investigators highlighted the risks of breaking into homes because of the chance of getting shot for one's efforts — as happened in this case.

KSLA News 12, Shreveport, Louisiana

■ CALIFORNIA VETERAN AIDS NEIGHBOR FLEEING FROM NAKED INTRUDER

When a man was seen walking naked in broad daylight down a street in a residential area, neighbors called police. The man forced his way into a home occupied by a lone woman, who fled screaming. Her 79-year-old neighbor, a military veteran, confronted the intruder with a firearm. Not intimidated by the veteran or the gun, the naked man attacked him, throwing him to the ground. Despite suffering broken legs, the older veteran kept control of his firearm and, when the naked man advanced again, the veteran fatally shot him. While the investigation continues, police had filed no charges as of press time.

KTLA 5 News, Los Angeles

■ TEXAS HOMEOWNER SHOOTS MIDNIGHT HOME INVADER

A stranger broke into a Grand Prairie home through the back door. The elderly homeowner took up a hunting rifle and confronted the intruder as he went through items in the house. Fearing for his life, the homeowner shot the intruder, killing him. Police are treating the incident as lawful self-defense.

Fort Worth Star-Telegram, *Texas*

■ OKLAHOMA 7-ELEVEN CLERK DEFENDS AGAINST VIOLENT CUSTOMER

A 25-year-old female clerk working a late shift at an Oklahoma City 7-Eleven refused to accept what appeared to be a counterfeit $100 bill for a purchase. The customer became enraged, threatened to cut the clerk's head off, and ultimately assaulted and strangled her. When her attempts to flee failed, the clerk drew a legally carried pistol and shot her attacker, driving him off. He was later apprehended by police. The clerk was fired the next day for violating 7-Eleven's policy against employees possessing firearms on company property.

KOKH FOX 25 News, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

■ ALABAMA MAN THWARTS HOME INVASION

An angry apartment neighbor accosted a Huntsville man. When the man attempted to defuse the situation by going into his apartment and locking the door, the assailant forced his way inside and continued the attack. The man shot the intruder in self-defense, fatally wounding him. Unfortunately, the round passed through the assailant and struck another resident in the apartment, causing a minor injury. Police are calling the incident a classic case of self-defense.

WAFF 48 News, Huntsville, Alabama

■ FLORIDA MAN DEFENDS AGAINST RIFLE-TOTING AGGRESSOR

A Cocoa man was accosted by a man wielding a rifle. Fearing for his life, the victim drew a pistol and fired at his attacker, who later died of his wounds. The shooter cooperated with police, and investigators' preliminary conclusion is that the shooting falls under Florida's "stand your ground" law.

Florida Today, *Melbourne*

■ CALIFORNIA MAN STOPS DAYLIGHT HOME INVASION

A former NBA player living in Sherman Oaks heard noises at the back door of his rental home. He armed himself, went to investigate and saw several masked men trying to break in. That's when he fired three shots into the ground, causing the would-be burglars to flee. Warning shots are risky and can have serious legal consequences, though the tactic proved effective in this instance.

ABC7 Los Angeles



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