



## VALIDATION NEEDED FOR THE FORCE SCIENCE SUPPOSITION ABOUT POINT SHOOTING

Dr. Bill Lewinski, executive director of the Force Science Institute, has an article in Force Science News #276 titled: Can you really use your sights in a gunfight? Should you if you can? [Link to Force Science News #276](#)

In the article, he makes a negative supposition about Point Shooting that I think needs validation.

The following is a portion of the article with the supposition in bold text.

In a panic situation, where an officer is caught in a threat by surprise and perhaps overwhelmed by emotion, he or she may not be able to respond with sufficient control to attain a sight picture in the fraction of time available. There are changes to the eye under stress that can make sighting more difficult, but with the right training these can be overcome. Our research with equipment that tracks eye movement shows that sighted fire can be accomplished even under intense stress.

The key is a combination of two critical elements: 1) your innate ability to acquire and implement the technical skills of effective weapon management, and 2) the type and quality of instruction that constitute the "right" training for gunfight mastery.

In the US, many departments train their officers only to the level of minimum state standards, which are inadequate for achieving high-level proficiency. The bulk of their training often is presented in concentrated blocks, after which learned psychomotor skills rapidly deteriorate, rather than through continual reinforcement at intervals, which tends to build and maintain skills over time. And, deplorably, many officers are never exposed to firearms training of any kind that allows them to practice perception, decision-making, and responses at the speed of an actual gunfight.

All this leaves them dangerously deficient in many aspects of quality performance in a crisis, sight-acquisition among them.

It's important to understand that using your sights in a gunfight is not always necessary or even desirable for effectively placing rounds. If you don't get a sight picture at 20 ft. and beyond, your ability to shoot accurately is likely to be seriously impaired. That's actually not very far, in real world settings--down a hallway or across some rooms.

Closer than that, at distances where most gunfights occur, trying to use your sights may take too long; by the time you're sighted in, your target may have moved. At less than 20 ft., you're probably best to fix your gaze on your target and quickly drive your gun up to align with that line of view, firing unsighted.

**Obviously, to do this successfully requires a great deal of consistent practice,** responding to force-on-force scenarios at various distances that develop realistically in terms of action, movement, and speed. This will help you learn to identify the telltale patterns of an evolving threat so you can get ahead of the reactionary curve.

Over time, you will learn how threats unfold and be able to anticipate what, where, when, and how the "play" will progress. This, in turn, will build in you the ability to react automatically--without conscious thought--either with or without the use of your sights, depending on the dynamic circumstances you face. You will, in effect, be better equipped to stay ahead of the reactionary curve.

To achieve that level of skill, be prepared to go, on your own, beyond the training offered by your agency. It is the rare department indeed that has the budget and the time to take officers as far as their native ability allows and elevate them to truly elite status.

Even at no cost, you can still strengthen your fundamental skills, including sight acquisition, through dry-fire drills. With modern weapons, you can dry fire literally thousands of times without damage to your equipment.

When your life is on the line, your personal commitment to be the best you can be will seem a small price to have paid.

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Dr. Lewinsky's description of the level of Police training is in line with the thinking of many in the world of the gun. Training is to meet qualification standards that have little if any connection to real world Close Quarters situations where there is the greatest chance of Officers being shot and/or killed. To achieve the skill level needed for dealing with life threat situations, continued and extensive training is required, and even if an Agencies routinely do not provide it, and that is normally the case.

Others in the gun world are of the opinion that current training turns out only novice level shooters, and that the key to effective combat shooting is participation in competitive shooting events, which no doubt increases the shooting skill level of participants.

We are left with a bizarre situation where on the one hand, Officers are trained to meet novice level shooting qualifications that are not connected to the real world life threat situations they can be expected to encounter on the job, and who most likely will need to continue extensive training on their own, and participate in competitive events if they are to move above a novice level of shooting. Officers are left to left to train themselves up to an elite level which is needed for effective action in CQB situations.

FYI, it was not so many years ago that Officers were blamed for being shot and/or killed because of their lack of training and commitment. No blame was attributed to the brass or their trainers. Makes one wonder who's been in charge of the asylum.

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As Dr. Lewinski stated above, sight acquisition, which is an aspect of quality performance in a crisis, can be achieved even under intense stress with the right training per Force Science

research. That may well be true, but it also is true that there is no hard evidence in the form of photos or videos of Sight Shooting ever being used effectively in a CQB situation. The elements of CQB situations such as bad light, the dynamic nature of the encounter, the activation of our natural fight or flight and its affects, and the urgency to shoot, can make sight acquisition impossible. Those factors are very likely to come into play in most all armed encounters, and present a real dilemma for Officers and civilians alike.

Dr. Lewinski states: "At less than 20 ft., you're probably best to fix your gaze on your target and quickly drive your gun up to align with that line of view, firing unsighted."

**"Obviously, to do this successfully requires a great deal of consistent practice,** responding to force-on-force scenarios at various distances that develop realistically in terms of action, movement, and speed...."

Now, I take exception to the negative supposition that: "Obviously, to do this successfully requires a great deal of consistent practice...."

Dr. Lewinski provides no scientific data to support that supposition, which is also a much repeated mantra by those who champion the use of Sight Shooting in CQB. Also and very importantly, the reader is left with no particulars on the brand of Point Shooting best used at the less than 20 feet distance where most gunfights occur, and where there is the greatest chance of being shot and/or killed.

Hard evidence exists of Point Shooting being used in CQB situations, and Point Shooting methods can be learned with little or no training, and maintained with minimal practice. Some skill is involved, so waiting until a life threat situation arises to learn it on an ad hoc basis in a real gunfight with you life on the line, is not advisable. Also, Point Shooting is not a bar to the use of the sights if they can be seen and there is time to use them, and it can be applied in CQB scenarios. Consider it as an enhancement or supplement to Sight Shooting.

I e-mailed the Force Science News Editor and mentioned that I am very interested in reviewing and posting available data and findings that validate the supposition that effective "Point Shooting" requires a great deal of consistent practice."

I also mentioned that I would be very interested in reviewing and posting any scientific data comparing the effectiveness of shooting by basically trained "Point Shooters" versus basically trained "Sight Shooters" in CQB scenarios at distances of 21 feet or less. Per FBI stats, it is at those distances where there is the greatest chance of an Officer being shot and/or killed. Those stats also call out to the brass and trainers to train Officers in the use of an effective CQ shooting method and within available training resources.

Such study data and findings, would be a tribute to those like Rex Applegate (RIP), Darrell Mulroy (RIP), Jim Cirillo (RIP), and Walter Dorfner (RIP), who believed that Point Shooting was an effective shooting method for use in CQB situations. Darrell was a Mineapolis based instructor. Walter Dorfner was the long time lead firearms instructor at the Vermont Police Academy and felt that P&S, as I call it, would be the next step in the evolution of survival shooting.

I have been a fan of and supporter of Force Science for years and years, and appreciate their making available research findings and other info on defensive shooting.

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Hocking College offers a course on the "Applegate" method of Point Shooting, and states in the course information that "the techniques have been scientifically validated by an independent research organization and employed by numerous law enforcement organizations and the United States Military," As such, I e-mailed Hocking College and asked for data that supports their course offering, and info on the elements of the course.

No responses have been received to date.

End.