

Fourth Edition

High-Risk Patrol

Reducing the Danger to You

Gerald W. Garner



HIGH-RISK PATROL

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Fourth Edition

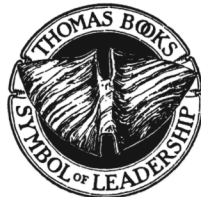
HIGH-RISK PATROL

Reducing the Danger to You

By

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*Dedicated to the officers
Who have died,
And in their dying,
Helped others to live.*

SPECIAL NOTE

This book presents practical, proven, commonsense suggestions for responding to the dangers that threaten police officers. They work. But there are alternative means for handling these hazards that under certain circumstances may also work. As a result, the author and publisher accept no responsibility for harm to persons or property resulting from utilization of tactics and procedures suggested in this text. Every officer is responsible for applying his or her training, experience, and common sense to each tactical situation encountered on the job.

PREFACE

- A big-city uniformed patrolman, 15 years on the job, stops a vehicle containing a known robbery suspect. He saunters up to the driver's door and is fatally shot for his carelessness.
- A sheriff's deputy in a rural Texas county chases down a speeder on an isolated country road. After contacting the driver, he turns to get his summons book from his patrol car. This momentary lapse is all the wanted fugitive needs to shoot the deputy in the back. The officer dies.
- Two officers—longtime car partners—take a drunk into custody and place him, unsearched and unhandcuffed, in the car seat behind them. Each relies on the other to do something neither actually does. And both die needlessly when the drunk produces a handgun.
- A rookie officer stops by the corner drugstore for a quick purchase. Her mind in neutral and her thoughts of officer safety suppressed, she walks into a robbery in progress. Stunned, she draws her weapon without clear-cut plan or purpose. She is subsequently killed by a shotgun-wielding lookout she never even saw.

American police officers are killed—murdered—in the line of duty. Officers have been dying with frightening regularity on the paved streets, dirt roads, cluttered apartment landings, and spotless living room carpets of the nation for a long time now. They were dying violent deaths long before anyone thought about formal, organized training in something called officer survival.

Unfortunately, they are still dying violently today even after the last three decades of long-overdue emphasis on police field survival skills. It is obvious that more work—a lot more work—will be needed if the nation's peace officers are to reach their potential as guardians of the public while they simultaneously protect themselves from criminal violence. Fortunately, it is a job that can be done. It must be.

This book goes a long way toward helping the individual police officer do that vital job. It is designed and intended to help him or her survive. It provides a general orientation for survival, and it details the specifics the

intelligent police professional must master to survive the many types of potentially risky situations he will be exposed to over a career. As it must if it is to be really helpful, the book delves into the down-and-dirty, nuts-and-bolts details of everything from searching a prisoner to searching a building; arresting a 300-pound outlaw biker or a surly teenager. The volume is painstakingly thorough in its approach to officer survival. The officer who reads it can afford to be no less thorough as he applies its practical information to the street situations he encounters.

A printed narrative, no matter how careful and comprehensive, can only do so much. It can emphasize important principles in such areas as firearms use and self-defense, but it cannot teach complete physical skills, and it cannot instill nearly automatic motor responses. As a result, the wise student of officer survival will supplement this book with personal exposure to skilled, hands-on training in such areas as marksmanship, pursuit driving, come-alongs, and other physical tactics and techniques. By meshing that experience with what he reads here, the safety-conscious police practitioner can become the skilled professional he must be to survive and stay healthy, both physically and emotionally. He can, in sum, drastically reduce the personal risks of high-risk patrol.

Today's peace officer must do more. He is expected to solve society's problems without so much as hurting an offender's feelings. In an era where peacekeepers are required to be highly transparent and accountable (certainly these are good things) in all their actions every use of force by a law enforcement officer will be closely scrutinized. That is one reason why it is important that today's officer—you—has access to every viable tactic and technique that may prevent the need for the use of force in the first place. An equally important reason is that this same officer always must be able to go home safely at end of watch. This book offers information on many of those tactics and techniques. Its ultimate goal is to see to it that *everyone goes home*.

G.W.G.

INTRODUCTION

The fourth edition of *HIGH-RISK PATROL* piles additional, potentially life-saving information atop that provided in the prior editions. It recognizes that now more than ever the public has huge and occasionally unrealistic expectations about what you, the law enforcement officer, can do to fix the ills of society. But the book also emphasizes that the phrase “everyone goes home” includes you, the peace officer with all those heavy-duty responsibilities borne on your broad shoulders.

This book has a singular purpose: to help you stay safe. Twenty-one chapters provide time-proven advice for safely handling everything from domestic violence calls to ambush attacks. Some “extra” dangers are also discussed, including off-duty confrontations and the mental and emotional hazards of your difficult job.

The book recognizes that you are highly pragmatic in your approach to your life and your very important job. As a consequence, each chapter is long on practical information and short on theory. Every chapter concludes with a quick and concise summary contained in a “Risk Reduction Checklist.”

Also provided at the close of each chapter are real-life examples of officers killed. These are culled from the annual “Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted” reports compiled and published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Each tragic case makes a point by way of grim example. Each one is intended to help you avoid mistakes that have felled your brothers and sisters. Additional samples of tragedies and what may have led to them are provided in the Appendix at the close of the text. More examples have been added to this fourth edition.

Key points for surviving on the street appear in more than one chapter. This is intentional, inasmuch as something so central to officer survival as “obtain necessary backup help” is relevant to the safe handling of more than one kind of assignment.

Chapter 1 is intended to help you navigate the “guardian versus warrior” discussion preoccupying law enforcement today. Chapter 2 defines just what high-risk patrol is and lays bare the mistakes that can kill you. Chapter 3

offers an in-depth explanation of the survival skills that can help you survive on the street, while Chapter 4 explores the skills needed to stay safe on all kinds of vehicle contacts.

Chapter 5 offers practical advice for safely handling a disturbance call. Chapter 6 provides direction for making it in safety through the dangers of a domestic violence intervention. Chapter 7 furnishes some to-the-point advice for detecting and safely handling under the influence people. Chapter 8 offers guidance for staying safe while dealing with the suspicious person or incident.

The intricacies of burglaries and structure searches are examined in Chapter 9, while the dangers of barricades and hostage-takers are covered in Chapter 10. “Man with a Gun” calls are detailed in Chapter 11 and the tactics and techniques of a vehicle pursuit are discussed in Chapter 12. Meanwhile, Chapter 13 contains experience-proven guidelines for surviving a stickup in progress, and Chapter 14 furnishes advice for responding to increasingly prevalent and too-often-deadly ambush attacks. Chapter 15 provides newly revised and up-to-date suggestions for working with the emotionally disturbed or mentally ill person in a manner calculated to assure that everyone gets home safely.

The book’s Chapter 16 identifies some special risks and recommends some special responses and is followed by a chapter providing important guidance for surviving an off-duty confrontation. Chapter 18 looks at the dangers and safety measures involved with handling prisoners, while Chapter 19 goes into the hazards of today’s terroristic threats and suggests effective responses to them. Chapter 20 is intended to help you reduce the mental and emotional risks of your sometimes dangerous job. Finally, Chapter 21 exposes the danger to you of accidents encountered in the performance of your duties and stresses how they can be prevented.

The information contained in this volume is as current as today’s news and as relevant as the eulogy for a fallen comrade. This is HIGH-RISK PATROL. Its goal is REDUCING THE DANGER TO YOU. That means everyone goes home.

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HIGH-RISK PATROL

Chapter 1

GUARDIAN OR WARRIOR?

You cannot have too many tools for doing your job in safety. Some of those tools you hang on your belt when you go to work. Many more of them are the “tricks of the trade” that you have amassed through education, training, experience, and plain common sense. Some of those “tricks” you may have learned from the shared experiences of your peers.

Today more than ever critical voices are questioning what police do and why they do it. Most Americans have not served as law enforcement officers and they simply do not grasp the dangers and complexities of the job. But they “know” when something an officer is shown doing on television or the Internet looks excessive or otherwise inappropriate to them.

Today you do your difficult job in a fishbowl. That does not mean that you cannot do what you need to do to protect yourself. To the contrary, you must do whatever is required to remain safe. This book will explore in depth what to do and how to do it in order for you to survive on and off the job. It also will emphasize the importance of de-escalation in an effort to assure that a situation does not require the application of force unless that is the only reasonable option.

Recent years have seen a number of highly publicized incidents in which law enforcement officers have used deadly force against unarmed individuals. Yet other incidents have seen well-intentioned officers use lethal force on persons armed with replica weapons or weapons deemed by vocal critics as “not lethal enough” to merit a potentially fatal police response. The old cry of “why didn’t you shoot him in the arm” (or leg, or hand, or finger, or whatever) has also resurfaced from some elements of a television-watching public conditioned to see the Lone Ranger bloodlessly shoot a gun out of a bad guy’s hand.

Some of the major news media organizations have picked up the cop critics’ demands for more transparency, more accountability, and less violence from police, particularly where racial or ethnic minorities are involved. Politicians have, in some cases, joined in the hue and cry and helped pass

what they have termed “police reform” legislation. In some cases, these quick-fix laws have been aimed at addressing highly complex issues.

Setting aside the over-heated rhetoric for a moment, you as a police professional likely would agree that there is a very real need for an honest and in-depth examination of many of law enforcement’s long-established practices aimed at dealing with a threatening or violently-attacking offender. You are well aware that some things done in law enforcement, as in many professions, are done that way simply because seemingly they always have been. In an effort to arm you with the very latest and most practical tools for keeping you safe on the job, this chapter will look at some of those “things” and how some of them might be modified to serve you and the community you protect even more effectively.

There are significant efforts underway to re-engineer how police use of force training is done in this country. Take any opportunity you can to contribute to them. Learn as much as you can. Include de-escalation tactics in your training. You will be all the safer for your work.

TAKING A HARD LOOK AT TRAINING AND CULTURE

To a large extent you are the product of your law enforcement training. Since you entered the recruit academy you have been drilled in tactics, techniques, and attitude intended to assure that you function effectively and safely as a law enforcement professional. Your trainers also have done their best to help equip you to complete your career as a peace officer—whether it amounts to four years or 40—alive and in good health, both physically and emotionally.

You doubtlessly have supplemented your early training with in-service and specialized refresher schooling. To this you have added the on-the-job experience you have amassed in your career to date. You have learned a lot about staying safe. You are continuing to learn more by the day.

One of the realities about life (and law enforcement) is that change is both inevitable and constant. Weapons and threats change. So do your tactics designed to defeat them when they are aimed at you. Laws change. So do public expectations. All this can make for some very interesting moments for you, the man or woman with a badge who is expected to go out and solve society’s worst ills, day and night, 365 days a year.

If you have been in law enforcement for even a few years you already have noticed the ever-present swinging of the proverbial pendulum. The public you serve has always expected you to protect them from evildoers. But today more than ever much of that same public demands that you do it while assuring that the offender does not have his feelings—or anything else—

hurt in the process. Most of those citizens also do not want for you to be hurt, either. Increasingly, however, they are concerned about the welfare of the offender. That is the atmosphere in which you labor. Your safety requires that you recognize that reality. It is an environment that holds much danger for the careless, the unwary. Your task is staying safe as you capture and handle those accused of wrongdoing, sometimes horribly violent wrongdoing, in an appropriate manner. “Appropriate” means a manner which includes a minimal reliance on force, whenever possible.

Arriving at the same time as these revised expectations is a re-examination by law enforcement leaders and trainers of some of the officer safety staples that have been around for a long time. No doubt your past training has exposed you to some of these. Some of them will be discussed here, along with how you can meld the old with the new to produce a safe, effective guardian of the public’s safety: you.

You also are a product of the law enforcement culture. It is often a culture that says suck it up, handle your fears, charge in to take control and solve the problem. It can be a culture that says get it done and move on to the next call that you know is waiting. There are a lot of good aspects to that culture. It is the culture of a courageous problem-solver who runs towards danger, not away from it. It is a culture that also sometimes leads to casualties. You are intelligent enough to know that if there is a smarter and safer way to do a specific job, you are open to considering it.

There may be a number of “old saws” from your prior training and immersion in the law enforcement culture that merit a second look on occasion. They include:

- Move in and take charge quickly.
- Issue instructions in a loud and commanding voice.
- Never back down.
- Remember the “21-foot rule.”
- Everyone represents a potential threat to you.
- You are a warrior.

There may be some truth in each of these. But it is more complicated than that. Your experience has taught you that reality of life. As a consequence, a further examination of each of these “directives” is in order.

Move in and Take Charge Quickly. You may confront threats for which that is precisely the correct response. A situation in which a gunman is actively hurting people would be an excellent example of a situation in which you should act quickly and decisively. Virtually any scenario in which you are observing serious harm being inflicted on innocents would provide a classic example of a need to take charge and implement quick action.

However, you know by now that the truth is that the majority of calls and contacts you will make as a law enforcement officer will not require instantaneous intervention on your part. In most cases you will have at least *some* time to observe, assess, and plan before you must act. What you learn may tell you that trying to move in and take charge before help arrives would be unwise and only serve to make the situation worse and more dangerous for everyone. In addition, prematurely closing the distance with danger—getting too close too soon—is something you never want to do. It can get you killed. There can be safety in both time and distance. You do not want to forsake either without really good cause.

Think before you act. Move in when it is tactically sound to do so. Subsequent chapters will offer some advice about that. Take charge when you must to gain control and begin to defuse a hazardous situation. But do not be too quick to leap to either response as the one, best solution to the challenge you are facing. Sometimes keeping your distance, staying quiet, observing, and waiting for adequate assistance to arrive is absolutely the right thing to do.

Issue Instructions in a Loud and Commanding Voice. At times that is the right thing to do. In the midst of a noisy bar crowd, in a parking lot full of loud belligerents, or on the scene of an out-of-control physical battle a loud and commanding voice may be precisely the ticket for commencing the task of gaining control and restoring order. But there are other times when employing that tactic only will serve to aggravate an already volatile situation.

You probably have seen it or even participated: a whole group of officers shouting orders—including contradictory ones—at an armed or otherwise dangerous offender. You may have correctly concluded that the crook could be excused if he had no idea whether he was supposed to put his hands in the air, clasp them atop his head, prone out, turn around, or do jumping jacks. Confusion reigned as various loud voices continued to bark. The scene may not have become any safer as a result of the well-intentioned but conflicting and confusing efforts. Danger and stress actually may have ramped up rather than being reduced.

The “shout as loud as you can” approach may be especially ill-suited for dealing effectively with the mentally ill or emotionally disturbed individual, who may become further frightened and puzzled by the apparent tirade. If you know or suspect that you are working with such an individual, attempting to dial down the tension by relying on a calm and quiet voice may work better as your first option. It may be your first step in your de-escalation efforts.

As a cop from the United Kingdom put it, “When you Yanks confront a mentally ill guy with an edged weapon, you start screaming at him. We’re not armed so we have developed different tactics. We teach our officers to talk quietly, not scream orders. Often it works.” This may prove good advice