

ROBIN "BROWNIE" BROWN



## INTERVIEW WITH A MODERN DAY GUNFIGHTER



SHOOTING ON THE MOVE.

I have had the fortunate opportunity to train intensively with Robin "Brownie" Brown who teaches his Integrated Threat Focused Training System (ITFTS) that has evolved over the past 26 years. As I described in my previous article, "The Need for Speed", "Brownie" is a firearms, edged weapons, hand to hand, and stick trainer whose background includes being a former United States Marine, former special police officer, former executive bodyguard, former PI, and the owner and maestro of the Threat Focused Forums at:

[www.ThreatFocused.com/forums](http://www.ThreatFocused.com/forums)

Recently, Brownie gave a two-day combat handgun class at Easton Fish and Game Association's outdoor range in Easton, PA on his Integrated Threat Focused Training System, which I attended. It was a remarkable class in which we progressed from one-handed point shooting techniques at close-in distances on Saturday, to using two-handed threat focused aiming techniques at greater distances on Sunday. Over the course of the weekend, the class also progressed from shooting in stationary positions to shooting on the move.

This class was both a great review for me as well as a great new learning experience, as I had previously traveled to Arizona to take personal, one-on-one instruction with Brownie. With the skills really fresh in my mind, I was at my local indoor range within days after the class practicing the techniques.

Brownie agreed to let me interview him about ITFTS and armed personal defense issues of concern to senior citizens and the physically challenged, and this is the edited transcript of that interview.

**Bruce: What do you focus on when you work with senior citizens or anyone for that matter who has physical challenges such as waning eyesight, limited mobility, decreased flexibility, and so forth?**

**Brownie:** Let's cover them one at a time starting with the problem of waning eyesight. As people get older, they often have problems focusing on near objects. Having threat focused skills means they don't have to look at the gun. This is also helpful for shooters who wear lenses for distance correction. They need enough



BROWNIE DEMONSTRATING ONE-HANDED QUICK KILL THREAT FOCUSED SKILLS.



ELBOW UP/ELBOW DOWN.

eyesight to see the threat and deal with it. As we get older, our eyes become less flexible in focusing and refocusing from near to far, adjusting focal points from up close to further away. Threat focused shooting precludes having to worry about that. Your focus is on the threat and where you are aiming on the threat/target. This is a definite advantage for people with waning eyesight.

Limited mobility is often due to some physical impairment; a person needs to use a cane or walker or may have shoulder problems. In these instances, good one handed shooting skills become paramount and a high percentage of my course skills imparted to people deals with one handed shooting at typical self defense distances encountered in the home or on the street. The goal is to be able to hold onto a cane or walker for balance and still be able to defend one's self effectively with different one handed shooting techniques.

**Bruce: I have decreased flexibility due to injuries to both of my shoulders?**

**Brownie:** With many of the ITFTS techniques, the gun doesn't have to be brought up to one's line of sight. You can shoot from or just above hip level. In most situations, threats are going to be close, probably under ten feet away or less. Many of the ITFTS techniques do not require the shooting arm to be extended to just below or at their line of sight. This is an advantage from the standpoint of

weapon retention in instances where the threat is at near contact distances and "in your face".

**Bruce: What do you mean by "Integrated Threat Focused Training System" or ITFTS?**

**Brownie:** "Point shooting" is often misunderstood. When you are point shooting or more correctly threat focused, you are still aiming the firearm. You're just not focused on the gun or your sights. You are focused on the threat.

ITFTS is a compilation of various skills from several well known threat focused shooting systems that have been used in combat over several generations. These include the systems of Fairbairn and Sykes, Rex Applegate, Lucky McDaniel, and the U.S. Military's Quick Fire, as well as other shooting systems that are threat

focused and not gun focused. What they all have in common is that they do not rely on one's direct attention to the gun and its relationship to the threat. They rely on one's natural ability to point at objects of attention.

**Bruce: What do you consider to be realistic defensive handgun training?**

**Brownie:** There are many variables that come into play. The ability to be aware of your surroundings and who and what is in your immediate vicinity and their actions or apparent intent. Developing and practicing skills that allow the defender to access his or her handgun immediately and deploy it with as much speed as is possible to produce combat accurate hits at normal self defense distances. We are likely only talking from contact distance out to 12 feet when we fail to use our observational skills. These observational skills could have alerted us to impending potential danger and given us time to retreat if possible or prepare for potential threats to our person or loved ones who may be with us.

**Bruce: What are some of the techniques that constitute the backbone or core skills of your defensive shooting system?**

**Brownie:** First there is drawing and shooting from the hip, a skill called "Elbow Up/Elbow Down" (EU/ED) for close self defense situations.

The term comes to us from a military combat veteran and former police officer who was trained by some of the best at threat focused skills that ever lived, and goes by the moniker DJ. I believe he coined the term describing the physical action which occurs with this skill to affect instant hits on threats from, at, or

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SHOOTING ON THE LINE.

just above, hip level. Fairbairn and Sykes basically taught this same skill as a 1/2 hip position. Flowing from this technique is the "Zipper" wherein after the gun is horizontally pointed at the threat and the elbow is indexed at the hip, you extend your arm out towards the threat and run bullets up the center of the threat's body, stitching him up the middle.

"Quick Kill Hip" is a skill where your elbow is tucked into the "pocket" in front of your hip bone upon drawing the firearm, your handgun about 45 degrees outboard to keep your wrist straight. This technique is more effective than EU/ED for more than one assailant. It allows you to turret your upper body to remain locked into the position while not moving the gun's relative position.

**Bruce: How do you think a person can best make use of his or her practice time at the indoor range?**

**Brownie:** Practice drawing the gun and firing as soon as the handgun clears the holster and the muzzle is horizontal to the ground at distances of 10 feet or closer from the target. Learning to draw and fire your weapon immediately from below line of sight has many advantages not the least of which is a faster first shot on the threat before he might be able to get a round on you.

Relative to the distance one should train at, most people would be well served by spending the majority of their training time at distances of no more than 12 feet and the majority of that training under 8 feet.

Relative to the shooting skills themselves, an indoor range is not the most conducive place to practice effective

techniques that reduce the time it takes to put shots on threat and that make use of firing the weapon as soon as it has cleared the holster from well below eye level. I am referring to skills like "Elbow Up/Elbow" Down [EU/ED] and firing throughout the drawstroke until the arm is extended up and toward the threat such as the "Zipper" Most of the indoor ranges do not allow such practices.

However, with that said, if I were under these typical indoor range constraints, I would practice my eye/hand coordination skills with the firearm until I could point the muzzle as naturally as I can point my index finger at any object without waiting to find my sights or front sight [without directly looking at the firearm] before getting rounds downrange and into Center of Mass [COM]. It's imperative to be able to just instinctively put rounds on the threat without hesitation as soon as the muzzle is aligned properly.

Time is not going to be on our side if we are using lethal force to defend ourselves. Taking the extra time to align the sights or consciously waiting to get the front sight on the threat in our direct vision before we fire is not necessary at combative distances, and with the proper training, most everyone is very capable of putting rounds into a 6" COM group, or much less, from these distances in less than an hour.

Practice instinctively shooting without looking at the gun until your eye/hand coordination skills are such that you can raise the firearm and fire immediately and repeatedly, putting your shots into the area you are looking at on the threat/target. It may sound difficult to accomplish, yet it doesn't take a lot of time before most everyone learns to

develop their eye/hand coordination to their best advantage.

Remember that the mind is the limiting factor.

**Bruce: How can a person train for a gunfight?**

**Brownie:** In my opinion, you cannot train for a gunfight. But you should practice being able to make combat accurate hits as fast as possible and with unconscious thought while focusing on the threat itself. I typically make it a point not to worry about shooting small groups. I want my students to get upper center of mass torso hits as fast as they can in any given situation. The various skills taught give the student options based on variables that present themselves on the street or in our homes.

**Bruce: What do you make of the debate between those that advocate sighted fire versus unsighted or point shooting?**

**Brownie:** Sometimes very heated arguments have occurred. However, I think that this debate is probably over for the most part as people are starting to resurrect some of the real world survival skills that have been used in the past by men such as Bill Jordan, Jelly Bryce, Colonel Charles Askins, Fairbairn/Sykes, Rex Applegate, etc. These were men who understood that speed of presentation and solid hits were conducive to staying alive when time is in limited supply in a life or death encounter. They survived using these types of skills to become old men. Many of them had seen a lot of gunplay and survived their encounters with these very skills well ingrained through diligent practice until they could use them without conscious thought literally in the blink of an eye.

**Bruce: If you absolutely have to carry super concealed, what carry guns do you recommend?**

**Brownie:** For super concealed carry, I would consider a gun that is palm sized and that has a reputation for being ultra-reliable. My preference at this time is for a Kahr Arms PM9 in 9mm, and for a sub-caliber, a Kel-Tec .380 or .32. The bottom line criterion for me is to carry a handgun that's ultimately reliable and that carries more rounds rather than less.

**Bruce: What carry methods offer the best concealment with the least compromise in gun accessibility?**



KAHR ARMS BLACK DIAMOND FINISH PM9 POCKET PISTOL.

**Brownie:** I like pocket carry, especially in environments where you cannot wear cover garments. If you have good observational and awareness skills of your environment, with pocket carry, you can have your hand on your handgun and you only need fractions of a second to draw your gun. You can simply put your hand in your pocket which is a natural stance on the street anyway. Pocket guns lend themselves to being able to have your hand on your gun without raising other people's attention. The fastest draw is having your hand already on your gun. So, I like pocket carry. In colder climates, we are typically wearing cover garments, so there are more options.

**Bruce:** For those of us who find carrying a J-frame snubby revolver the best compromise, what shooting techniques do you recommend we practice with our snubby revolvers?

**Brownie:** Trigger control is paramount to handling double action revolvers. Recoil management also becomes extremely important. People who carry a 5-shot usually carry a lighter gun in that guise as a matter of convenience. Five rounds are a limited number of rounds in my opinion. People need to make sure that they practice enough to be able to make every round count under pressure. You just cannot afford to waste shots when you only have 5 or 6 onboard before you have to reload. There is usually no time to make a reload in a self defense situation. So, my rule of thumb is to carry enough ammunition (rounds) in the gun to get the job done. I think 5 rounds really are not enough in most self defense situations. It may be statistically, however force-on-force training shows us that the more rounds you have on board initially, the less likely you are going to have to rely on a reload. That's based on one assailant! If we are looking at more than one assailant, five shots are just not going to be enough to confidently

dispatch all of them in my opinion.

Keep in mind that a six shot auto-loader increases your round count by 20% with just one extra round over a 5-shot snubby! The more ammo on board to start, the better. In a gunfight, once you run out of ammo, you're pretty much done. You are unlikely to have the time to reload in the middle of a gun battle.

I personally prefer to carry a 9mm Kahr PM9 in my pocket which affords me seven shots. This gives me lots of horsepower. Seven 9mms versus five .38s. The 9mm is a good cartridge and that's a 40% increased round count over the 5 shot snubbies!

If you need a gun to protect yourself, more rounds on board is always better than less. I myself would carry a snubby as a backup gun, or as I used to do on the streets when concealment in the summer months meant hiding smaller guns, two snubbies.

Nevertheless, I still carry an extra magazine or speed loader because there may be an opportunity to reload and I like to err on the side of caution. However, there are many times now when I carry two small autos out of necessity.

**Bruce:** That is making use of a "New York reload".

**Brownie:** Yes. You can have your hand in your front pocket. It is not as obvious as having your hand in your back pocket. A gun in the hand is always going to be faster than a gun having to be drawn.

**Bruce:** What holsters do you use?

**Brownie:** For my Kel-Tec in my front pocket, no holster. But, I carry nothing else in that pocket. I carry my Kahr PM9 in my back pocket in a sort of home fashioned pocket holster. I take a thin, rough side out soft IWB and remove the clip. I am only concerned with protecting the trigger. I find most commercial pocket holsters to be too bulky.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of practicing with the gun you carry on the street. Become one with the gun you are going to have with you.

**Bruce:** What about practice techniques with the snubby?

**Brownie:** You need to focus on making the most effective use of the limited rounds you have. Snubs are one of the hardest handguns to shoot well. They really require dedicated practice in

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recoil management and trigger control. So, your best ammunition load option in an Airlite or Airweight snub is an intermediate cartridge that reduces recoil impulse and thus allows faster follow-up shots. The less the recoil, the faster you can shoot the gun and stay on the threat.

People typically choose lightweight, small-frame snub-nosed revolvers for concealed pocket carry for the following reasons: cool looks, simplicity of operation, good concealability, ease of carry, and always readily at hand. However, in my opinion, people are better served with a small semi-auto as a primary carry firearm rather than choosing a lightweight snub-nosed revolver for the following reasons:

**1.** Snubbies are the hardest guns to shoot well.

**2.** They require extraordinary amounts of range/training time to shoot as proficiently as most shooters are capable of with other platforms based primarily on the strong felt recoil impulse and heavy [relatively speaking] double action trigger stroke. The recoil impulse generated and heavier trigger pull is not conducive to accurate fast follow up shots.

**3.** We are never guaranteed one shot stops in any caliber and we need to remember that the faster we can put subsequent shots on threats, the better our chances of surviving a potentially lethal encounter.

**4.** The other major concern I have is the limited amount of ammunition on hand without having to reload the firearm. Potentially running out of ammunition and having to recharge the firearm by making a reload when the situation dictates you need to use the firearm to protect yourself, by the situation's very nature, is not going to put one at an advantage, but more of a disadvantage.

**5.** And snubbies are hard to reload fast under stress.

**6.** As I mentioned earlier, I like to err on the side of caution at all times, and in doing so, a 6 or 7 shot semi-auto holds a 20-40% greater load capacity to begin with. Those extra rounds could make all the difference in having or not having to reload in the dynamic environment we find ourselves in if we are using a handgun to defend ourselves to begin with.

**Bruce: Talk with me a little bit more about the Integrated Threat Focused Training System (ITFTS).**

**Brownie:** The main purpose of our program is to introduce people to skills that can be used very effectively with minimal experience and training, adjunctively to their present sighted fire skills when more appropriate. It is important for people to realize that threat focused skills are not meant to replace sighted fire, but as a compliment to the skills people already have using their sights. It's not an either or situation, but both, and the threat focused skills we impart to people should get as much practice trigger time as sighted fire skills by people who carry a firearm with self defense in mind. They are at least as important to own as other skills, and are seriously lacking in most people's skill sets unfortunately. Fortunately, that is changing with the advent of courses such as I provide through our ITFTS program to the general public and law enforcement. In the last two years since I've been training others professionally, the overwhelming consensus from the students after receiving the training and learning these skills is very positive.

**Bruce: What other suggestions do you have for our readers who carry small auto-loaders, that is, small pocket guns?**

**Brownie:** With small guns, practice shooting one handed. Learn to use your gun instinctively. That means practicing with the gun you carry that you'll likely have on you when something happens that necessitates your needing to use your defensive handgun. Practice employing your peripheral vision skills to shoot your handgun one handed below your line of sight. Learn to use your gun without having to look at it. When you practice in this way, you will develop the confidence to shoot as fast as possible so you can get shots on the vital areas of the threat/target as quickly as possible.

By not having to visually verify where the gun's sights are at the time you fire, you save valuable time. Visually verifying that the front sight of your handgun is on a threat takes 30-50% more time for the average CCW carrier based on students' experiences in the classes. Time is one of the key factors you must have on your side of the reactionary curve in order to survive a gunfight. In other words, you just don't have any time to spare under such duress. So, anything that reduces the time needed to make combat accurate hits is a bonus. This is really where threat focused shooting skills come into their own for all but the most advanced and practiced sighted fire shooters.

**Bruce: What are some important considerations for those of us who carry a super small auto-loader, a sub-caliber "mouse gun"?**

**Brownie:** Practice at distances no greater than 12 feet. Use a sub-caliber gun to your advantage to control your immediate environment. And the key word is "immediate". These little guns are not going to allow you to control your extended environment. They are solely for close defense of your person. When I carry my Glock 26 or Glock 17, I can control my environment at considerable distances if necessary. However, if I am carrying my Kel-Tec .32, I am not interested in attempting to control my environment much beyond 10 feet unless absolutely necessary. You have to use the weapon platform you have to its fullest potential and not stretch its potential to unreasonable distances.

People who carry "mouse guns" must recognize their guns' limitations and act accordingly tactically. If I am caught in a bank robbery and I am carrying my Kel-Tec, I would choose not to engage. Remember that threats can't be relied on to cooperate and fall down with one shot in them.

You have to use your handgun to its full advantage and at the same time know its limitations. When the mad gunman is coming up to you and it's your turn to be executed, you can empty the little gun in his face, but you wouldn't want to attempt to engage the gunman when he's killing people down at the other end of the restaurant. You would want to extricate yourself and your companions ASAP if possible. If that is not possible, prepare to use the small pocket gun you have when and if the opportunity presents itself by having it in your hand and ready to use instantly. The gun will be in my hand and I'll shoot the gunman in the head if he comes near us. Here we are talking about tactics. Know your carry gun's limitations. With a Glock 26 or 19 or 17, on the other hand, I am going to engage as soon as possible if I have an opportunity because the Glock weapon platform, as well as most larger firearms allows me to do that. They have more inherent accuracy, controllability, horsepower, and not the least of which, more bullets usually.

Irrespective of what pistol platform you carry, you should practice extensively with your handgun and know the limitations of the weapon based on your own personal skills.

You have to know specifically what YOU are capable of doing with the weapon YOU carry primarily. If you don't practice in a dedicated manner with your carry weapon, you are at a disadvantage.

People need to practice one handed shooting skills up close. That is where it is going to happen. If you have to use your gun at ten feet or less, there will be no time to get into a two-handed stance and verify a sight picture.

People need to learn to use their handgun one handed to hit reliably at typical self defense distances of 10 feet and closer. This should constitute the majority of their realistic training.

### **Bruce: What is Pistol Quick Kill (QK)?**

**Brownie:** Pistol QK is a refined threat focused point shooting system that allows you to know where your rounds are going to strike, and just as accurately as if you took the time to use your sights. It is the most refined point shooting system I've seen out there in use today. With QK, you are using a peripheral reference point from the weapon to the threat and you are threat focused. You fire as soon

as you acquire the reference point in your peripheral vision.

Traditional point shooting uses various forms of body indexing, hand-eye coordination, and training the position of your body and arm in relation to the threat at realistic distances which can be extended even further with enough time in training. There is no visual verification of the guns alignment or sights in anyway as it relies on your natural ability to point at objects you are focused on using your natural eye to hand coordination skills.

With QK and our ITFTS training, people use the basic core skills to effect combat accuracy – that means getting "center of mass" shots on the attacker's torso fast, and these individual one handed skills/techniques can be used in concert with one another as the situation dictates or changes in a dynamically evolving encounter. The objective if you have to use a firearm to defend yourself is to put as many bullets on the threat as quickly as possible before anyone can get rounds into you. We are talking about combat accuracy hits to save time to make the shots. Remember that if you have to use your gun to defend yourself, you are in a very bad situation.

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Bruce is also the co-author of the "Essential Guide to Handguns: Firearm Instruction for Personal Defense and Protection."

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