



SHOOT-N-IRON Academy



BIG BORE HANDGUNS

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The weather had turned off cool and the north breeze made sleeping quite comfortable on this early fall night. Jack was now living alone as he and his now ex-wife had recently parted company. Their divorce was not an easy one and tempers and hard feelings were quite apparent during the court proceedings. Outside the courthouse threats had been made against Jack's life by her relatives. As a result a new Colt Anaconda in 44 Remington magnum, loaded with Winchester 255 grain jacketed hollow points, rested in a gun-belt and holster hanging from the bed post. Jack had indeed taken the threats seriously and was taking what he felt were necessary precautions, as he believed the brothers of his ex-wife meant the threats that they made.

Jack was temporarily living in a small upstairs over a garage apartment instead of the large accommodations he was accustomed to. The court gave the ex-wife the four bedroom house and all of the fixtures. Jack said he got out with only the clothes on his back and his pickup truck.

The evening was quiet and peaceful and promised to be a good night for getting some sleep. Jack suddenly sat straight up in bed as an unusual sound filtered through the night and into the bedroom window. There it was again. Somebody was slipping up the outside stairs and the wood was making a squeaking noise with every step. The big 44 magnum slid silently out of its holster and Jack slipped over to the doorway between the bedroom and living room, which gave him a full view of the front door. He saw the doorknob turn slowly but the door was locked and did not open. Two shadows appeared across the living room window, which was also open wide.

Jack saw what appeared to be a long barreled shotgun coming through the window curtains and it was followed by the dark figure of a man. The tremendously loud booms made by two shots from the big magnum must have awakened everyone for several blocks in all directions. The shotgun also fired narrowly missing Jack. The four ought buckshot pellets slammed into the wall just to the right of Jack's head. Three more quick shots from Jack's 44 magnum shattered the night's tranquility. The man with the shotgun pitched forward and landed in a heap in the floor, his gun sliding across the room and against the wall.

Jack saw a second shadow cross in front of the bedroom window, descending the outside stairs. Not knowing whether or not the fracas was over, Jack quickly reloaded and waited.

After a couple of minutes which must have seemed hours passed, a very scared Jack phoned the police and requested an ambulance and law enforcement officials. It was a little late for the ambulance crew to do anything for the intruder on the floor. A search of the area was made to see if any trace of the other would be assailant could be found. There was blood on the stairs and could be seen on the driveway leading away from the apartment. He was apparently behind or at least very close to the other suspect when the shooting started. This suspect was found about a half a block away lying on the sidewalk, writhing in pain. A large portion of his right buttocks was missing. He also had dropped a little .380

semiautomatic pistol. It was found a few feet back down the blood trail which could easily be followed back to the apartment.

Further investigation revealed that two of Jack's 44 caliber rounds had scored a bullseye in the center of the dead assailant's chest. Another round struck the other man in the rump. The remaining two shots passed through three walls of the house next door ending up in the outside wall on the opposite side of a neighbor's home. Luckily no one but the bad guys got hurt. One live round from the 44 was found among the ejected cartridges that were dumped when Jack reloaded.

The big 44 magnum certainly did the job in this case. Jack is a very experienced shooter and was used to the heavy recoil that the big Colt produced. The deceased suspect had been hit twice in the chest and lost his life. The second man sort of lost his butt or at least a goodly part of it. I will be the first to say that the big magnums are stoppers deluxe. I am also reasonably certain that at least the same result could have been obtained with other big bore calibers without the obvious amount of overpenetration that occurred in this instance.

We read and hear about needing more power, higher velocity handgun rounds to produce more knockdown power. Having been there and done that, lethal confrontations, I have come to the conclusion there is no such thing as knockdown power from a handgun. Bullets for handguns are relatively small in diameter and some are pretty light in weight.

They penetrate the body of the shootee and pass on through unless they strike a bone. They are still expending energy after leaving the body. Not all of the bullet's energy is expended on or inside the person shot. A good right hand fist to the chest delivered at short range produces many more foot pounds of energy than does a pistol bullet, and all of the punch energy is expended on the torso of the person hit.

It is doubtful that the bad guy will ever know the difference if shot in a vital area by either a big 44 magnum or a SW 40. Either will do the job and do it well. The 40 SW, 9 MM, 38 Special, 44 special, 45 ACP, and the 45 Long Colt all make excellent defensive cartridges. Back in the old days, the days when this country was being settled folks were stopping bad guys with black powder rounds. Their sixguns were chambered in caliber's ranging from .36 up through .45 and used a lead bullet that expanded at low velocities.

I met a man many years ago that advocated large, soft, slower moving lead bullets for defense in handguns. His name was Elmer Keith. He was also the father of the big 44 magnum cartridge and he dearly loved the round as I do. However he designed the round as a hunting round intended for use against large and dangerous game. True, if you can handle the recoil and are not restricted by your neighbors close proximity, there is not much better than the big magnums. I have carried all of the magnum rounds as a police officer at one time or another. I still feel that the .357 magnum is the best all around police cartridge ever designed.

I simply do not believe that any of the magnums are totally necessary for defense today for non-police personnel, especially when taking into account the vast improvement in modern day bullet design and performance. Magnum recoil is too much for a lot of folks to handle, and recovery time for second and subsequent shots prove to be a little too slow.

The rounds that I normally carry now days are large bore lead bullets traveling at moderate velocities. Soft cast, 230 to 255 grain 45 ACP or Long Colt rounds with a muzzle velocity of about 800 fps are my first choice. This fine round performs equally well whether fired from the automatics in the ACP configuration or from the revolvers in the Long Colt or Auto-rim. These cartridges have been stopping bad guys since around 1900 and doing it very well. The old 44 special in the 240 grain semi-roundnose, at about the same velocity comes in at a very close second place. My third choice is the relatively latecomer, the SW 40. It seems to fill the bill real well and you can find it in a large number of handgun brands and

designs, including both an assortment of semi-automatics and revolvers chambered for 10 MM, SW 40, or the relatively new Sig .357.

Accuracy and bullet placement is much more important than power and usually can be achieved more easily without the excessive recoil. As stated earlier, if you like the big magnums and I do, then by all means use them if you are not in danger of shooting into the house next door because of over penetration. I recommend that you practice a lot like Jack did, and do it often. Shooting practice is fun and your chances of surviving a lethal encounter will grow with every practice session.

The Courts cleared Jack of any wrongdoing and ruled the incident was a clear case of self defense.
