VOLUME 5 PROGRAM 4

Texas Officer Hostage/Backup: Low Light Shooting Training

DUTY SHEET & LESSON PLAN

Total Program Length: 39:46

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THE STOP (8:40)

Towards the end of a 4 p.m. to 1 a.m. shift, Texas State Trooper Barry Goines and his partner Trooper Jasmine Andreasen have decided to patrol some rural county roads in and around their Tyler, Texas base.

Trooper Goines is a 20 year veteran; Trooper Andreasen is still in her first year and is still on probation (s.o.p.) from the patrol academy.

Andreasen has never before been partnered with Goines, but her regular partner is not working this particular night.

The troopers have had a busy night including a sizeable interstate traffic accident and a difficult d.u.i arrest, also on a Texas interstate.

It is literally the last half hour of their shifts when they spot a car going 64 miles an hour in a posted 50 mile per hour zone.

They red light the vehicle, and although it pulls over with little fanfare both troopers notice the driver and passenger talking between themselves “as if they are planning strategy”, according to Trooper Goines. It’s a ‘warning bell’ for the troopers.

When the vehicle pulls over and stops, the driver (later identified as Bobby Joe Clark) literally jumps from the vehicle and approaches the troopers’ cruiser. This is another cause for concern, because Trooper Goines knows that, often, when a motorist has something to hide he/she will get out from their vehicle and quickly approach the law enforcement officers.

The driver is quick to point out he is driving on a suspended license and has a prior incarceration record. Trooper Goines becomes increasingly concerned.

Meantime, Trooper Andereasen has done a cursory check on the passenger and noticed the man’s “eerie” expression-as if he’s trying to remain “invisible” to the officers. He is sitting rigidly, looking straight ahead and only looks towards either trooper when he’s absolutely forced to do so.

Then, while Trooper Andreasen watches the driver (Clark), Trooper Goines begins interrogating the passenger. Driver Clark had initially been extremely hesitant when asked what the passenger’s name was, indicating it was “Sonny”. When asked the passenger’s last name, Clark was even more hesitant before finally coming up with the name-Clark (which was his own last name, further sounding alarms for the officers).

When Trooper Goines went to interrogate the passenger (while Trooper Andreasen watched Clark), the passenger (looking straight ahead and rigid), told Goines his name was--“Sonny Clark”. That made it obvious to the veteran officer that the two subjects had decided that they would tell the cops the passenger’s name was--Sonny Clark, although it was “obvious he was lying through his tail...”, said Trooper Goines.

The interior of the car didn’t reveal any obvious weapons or open alcohol containers to the officers, but when Trooper Goines ordered the passenger out (with the intention of handcuffing him), the passenger refused. Trooper Goines informed him that “we can do this the easy way-or we can do this the hard way...”)

Finally, with Trooper Goines keeping a watchful eye on the passenger, the subject alighted from the vehicle, and it was at that time he pulled out a .22 semi-automatic and shoved it to the base of Trooper Goines’ neck.
THE INCIDENT (10:30)

Shouting: “Don’t move, Man, Don’t move”, the subject and Trooper Goines got into a rotating tussle—as the subject attempted to grab Goines’ service weapon and Goines circled around to try to avoid that.

The subject looked towards Trooper Andreasen during these few seconds and hollered at her: “Don’t move, lady-don’t move”, and Trooper Andreasen quickly backed off-seeking whatever cover she could at the patrol cruiser.

As the subject momentarily took his gaze from Trooper Goines, Goines seized the opportunity and grabbed the subject’s gun. He was able to push the weapon away from his neck and concurrently reach for his service weapon.

Goines drew his service weapon from his holster, and as the subject began to flee, the trooper fired a full 13 rounds at him. Several of the shots were literally fired from a distance of 5-6’ or less.

Trooper Andreasen fired five rounds at the subject once Goines started shooting.

And, although the troopers fired a total of 18 rounds, only three struck the subject’s billowing coat; none hit the fleeing gunman.

The driver, Clark, offered no resistance during these terrifying 15-20 seconds and was quickly handcuffed.

Trooper Goines radioed for back-up and was shocked to look at his left hand and see that not only did he have his tie balled up but also he had the subject’s gun (a fully loaded .22 with six rounds, one in the chamber).

The officers were extremely fortunate. Both Clark and the subject Sidney Bird (an Alabama prison escapee) had planned to disarm the officers, and according to courtroom testimony later—not leave any prisoners alive. Bird had vowed never to go back to prison again.

EPILOG (2:05)

Sidney Bird had been serving a 25-30 year sentence for aggravated robbery, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated assault and had made previous prison escapes.

He had reportedly been a trusty at an Alabama penitentiary and had been able to make the latest escape by driving a truck off the prison grounds.

He received two consecutive life sentences as a result of this incident; one for aggravated assault on an officer and the other for possession of a firearm.

Also, he must still complete his sentence in Alabama.

Driver Bobby Joe Clark was given 30 years for aggravated assault, although he was not an actual participant. Still, the State of Texas viewed him as an accomplice.

It is believed Byrd and Clark were having a sexual liaison the night they were spotted by Trooper Goines and Andreasen.

The video camera had been installed in Trooper Goines’ cruiser just days before, purchased with seized funds from the district attorney’s office.

Byrd’s gun was a .22 calibre pistol with a hair trigger. It had six rounds; one in the chamber.
The troopers were armed with .357 Sig Sauer P-225 double action automatics-in Safariland holsters with a thumbsnap.

Both officers are still with the Texas Department of Public Safety, patrolling out of the Tyler division.

LESSONS LEARNED (3:35)

- Watch Body Language
- Check Out on All Stops
- Criminals Often Do Not Obey Road Rules
- Cons Practice ‘Getting Over’ on Police
- Cruiser Cameras Can Be Great Information Sources
- Get Backup
- Be Overprepared
- Keep Gun Hand Free
- Practice Shooting At Moving Targets
- Predetermine a Plan of Action

QUESTIONS (2:05)

1. How would you have reacted if the subjects were seen talking back and forth prior to stopping for your red lights? Would it have been a ‘red flag’?
2. Do you feel strict use of ‘contact and cover’ would have made any difference in this incident? Why?
3. Have you and your partner discussed every ‘what if’ scenario your collective minds can envision? If not, why not?
4. What tactics would you have employed to interrogate the subjects in such an isolated setting?
5. When the driver started giving suspicious answers to simple questions, how would you have changed your strategy in this stop? Would you have changed your strategy?
6. Could you see your fear turning to fury under similar circumstances as Trooper Goines under a life or death situation?
7. How often do you practice low light-or no light shooting? How often do you practice low light shooting at a moving target?
8. Trooper Goines pointed out in certain areas of Texas, officers ride alone with backup as much as 15-30 minutes distant. Step-by-step, if you’d been alone that night, how would you have dealt with this incident?
9. With what you now know, how would you grade the officers’ performance—be brutally honest—and then discuss why you gave them the grade you did.
10. Do you ever ‘drop your guard’ when dealing with intoxicated subjects? Have you ever regretted it?
11. Do you know exactly where all the equipment is on your duty belt and how to get to it quickly?
12. Have you been trained in weapon retention and firearms take away?
Most shooting incidents (such as the segment just viewed on Volume 5, Program 4) occur in low light or no light settings.

Officers in Corpus Christi, Texas are training under these conditions, and thanks to the innovative approach of their rangemaster Fermin Garza, they’re able to receive such training without spending thousands of dollars.

This segment will deal with Rangemaster Garza’s creative ideas which many agencies will find very useful, especially if they can’t afford a large, state-of-the-art firing range.

Also, in Backup, trainer Tony Kirkbright discusses combat shooting situations including the basics such as marksmanship and trigger squeeze.

Double tapping to center mass is scrutinized and the head shot when a subject does not respond to body shots.

Kirkbright analyzes his department’s philosophy that it’s o.k. to have rounds three to six inches apart—for increased hydrostatic shock effect.

The Backup segments can be easily broken into two short, powerful Roll Call training classes for not only new officers but also as refreshers for veteran officers, too.

We welcome your feedback and thoughts on either or both segments at: 1-(800)-462-5232 or via e-mail at: lineofduty@aol.com. Or, you may prefer to fax In the Line of Duty at: 1-(314)-647-0945.

Finally, you’ll want to take a look at our closing segment on a 2000 calendar published by the Florida Highway Patrol. Each month features a dramatic picture of a wrecked, crushed, or obliterated FHP cruiser and comments by the troopers who’d been driving at the time of the accidents.

It is one of the most powerful promotions you’ll ever see for mandatory seat belt laws, and that’s exactly what the FHP is using these calendars for—to try to convince Florida lawmakers to toughen seat belt laws.

At the moment troopers can only ticket for non seat belt use—IF they’ve made a traffic stop for another infraction.

That’s it for now. Don and I, again, invite you to visit our website at: www.lineofduty.com which is updated several times a day with vital law enforcement news and information.

And, whenever you need a good laugh or two—be sure to check out our “Humor” link. I think you’ll like it a lot—it’s edited by In the Line of Duty’s class clown—Don!

Comments? Ideas? Suggestions? They’re always welcome—via our website, e-mail, phone or fax. Or, if you’re Don’s age—fell free to use a stone tablet.

Be safe! See you next month—In the Line of Duty.

Ron Barber and Don Marsh
Executive Producers
IN THE LINE OF DUTY
SYNOPSIS:
This course highlights a lethal force incident involving two Texas Department of Public Safety Troopers. A rural traffic stop begins with “red flags” and ends with gunfire after an armed passenger catches one trooper off-guard.

In BACKUP, a Corpus Christi (Texas) firearms instructor assembles a low-cost but efficient shooting course to simulate low-light shooting situations. An Antioch (California) range instructor takes target shooting a step further, emphasizing combat techniques.

TIME: 1 Hour

OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of this course, officers should be able to:

Obj. A: Identify “red flags” that indicate a potential threat.

Obj. B: Discuss how training prepared the troopers to deal with an armed subject.

Obj. C: Identify how the officers’ emotional reactions influenced response.

Obj. D: Lessons Learned—Review events and discuss the troopers’ actions.

Obj. E: Backup—Identify creative approaches to firearms training. Identify ways in which range training can prepare officers for real-life situations.

INSTRUCTOR’S NOTES/LESSON PLAN/LAB GUIDE

Obj. A I. “Red Flags” that indicated a potential threat:
A. Troopers Goines and Andreasen notice the driver and his passenger continue an animated conversation after the officers indicate to pull over.
B. When the car does stop, the driver (Bobby Joe Clark) literally jumps from the car and hurries back to the cruiser.
C. Clark readily admits to having recently been in prison and driving on a suspended license. Trooper Goines sees this as an overeager attempt to appear cooperative and honest.
D. Trooper Andreasen notes Clark’s exaggerated movements as he fastens his overalls across his shoulders, slowly and deliberately.
E. The passenger, Sidney Byrd, remains in the car and maintains a rigid posture as Trooper Andreasen approaches the passenger side and visually checks the interior. The trooper notes Byrd’s extreme effort to appear calm and non-
threatening, which she calls “eerie”.

F. Clark hesitates, then obviously lies, when asked for his passenger’s name.

G. As Trooper Andreasen covers Clark, Trooper Goines approaches Byrd, still sitting rigidly and barely looking at the trooper. Byrd gives the Trooper the same name Clark has offered. When asked for ID, Byrd moves his hand to his hip pocket, then thinks twice before saying he has none.

Obj. B

II. How training prepared the officers for the events which followed

A. Trooper Andreasen recalls her tactical training in approaching the passenger, stopping and addressing Byrd over his right shoulder while visually checking the car.

B. While covering Clark, Trooper Andreasen notes her tactical position is not to her advantage. Clark is standing on the pavement, putting him several inches above her. This makes the trooper uneasy and she moves to reposition herself.

C. As Byrd draws a weapon from under his hip, Trooper Goines instantly turns to keep his own weapon out of Byrd’s reach.

D. As she realizes what is happening between Byrd and her partner, Trooper Andreasen shifts her flashlight from her right hand to her left and reflexively reaches to unsnap her holster. Trooper Andreasen then knows her only cover would be at the rear of the cruiser and begins to move in that direction.

E. Trooper Goines recognizes by Byrd’s posture and the angle of his gun at the Trooper’s throat, that Byrd is “coop-wise”, and has learned how to bypass body armor.

F. Trooper Goines’ experience and training tell him that Byrd fully intends to follow through on this attempt to take out an officer, and has nothing to lose by doing so. But Goines flatly refuses to hand over his service weapon.

G. The moment Byrd’s attention is turned on Trooper Andreasen’s movements, Trooper Goines is able to disarm Byrd, twist away and pull his service weapon and commence firing.

H. Accepting that Byrd has fled, Trooper Goines radios for backup while Trooper Andreasen handcuffs Clark.

I. Both officers maintain their focus throughout the event.

Obj. C

III. Identify how the troopers’ emotional reactions influenced their response

A. Trooper Andreasen feels uneasy as she notes Clark’s position on the roadway, and she moves to reposition herself for a better advantage.
B. Trooper Andreasen knows as she unsnaps her holster that she is committed to using her weapon despite the fact that she is in the open.

C. Trooper Goines frankly and graphically describes how his feeling of resignation instantly turns to disgust and anger toward Byrd.

D. With events unfolding instantly, Troopers Goines and Andreasen say they hear and see only bits of what is really happening, and are not clear on the number of rounds each has fired. Goines fired 13; Andreasen 5—none hit Byrd.

Obj. D

IV. Lessons Learned

A. Identify ‘red flags’ and body language, and anticipate subject’s potential reactions.

B. Communication is essential in every traffic stop, both with a partner or backup officer and with dispatch. Check out on all stops, even when the stop appears “routine”.

C. Dangerous subjects often break traffic laws because it’s a way of life for them.

D. Criminals study and anticipate law enforcement tactics. A subject often knows what an officer is likely to do when threatened. They are familiar with body armor and ways to get around it.

E. “Cruiser Cams” can be an important tool, backing up or clarifying and officer’s account of events.

F. Do not hesitate to call for backup when a stop goes bad.

G. Be prepared for any possibility. Complacency may neutralize the officers’ advantage.

H. Keep the gun hand free. Carry a flashlight or other equipment in the free hand, and stand with the weapon away from the subject.

I. Practice shooting in low-light and moving target situations.

J. Talk through “what if” scenarios, and know who plays what role in a tactical situation. Planning gives you the advantage.

Obj. E

V. Back-up- Real-life shooting simulations are the best range training

A. Corpus Christi firearms training Fermin Garza uses low-budget props and targets to simulate realistic shooting conditions.
   1. Officers on this range are timed, using multiple tools to identify their targets and take action in stressful situations.
   2. Participants approach the range and prepare their weapons as if “walking into a fight”.
   3. The officer draws a card on which shapes are stenciled, and at the tone moves through the range, firing only at targets with the matching shapes. Others are deemed non-hostile.
4. At the tone, the lights are cut or dimmed and the participant must move through the array quickly and efficiently, use flashlights to identify their targets, and shoot for center mass.

B. Tony Kirkbright of Antioch, California, teaches combat shooting technique, taking traditional range training a step further.
   1. Kirkbright emphasizes eliminating the threat.
   2. He recommends “failure drills”, simulating a target struck at center mass but still standing, due perhaps, to body armor or numbing drugs.
   3. In this case Kirkbright says if two shots to center mass don’t stop the subject, go for the head shot.
   4. Kirkbright recommends a space of 3-6 inches between shots on the target, rather than a closer pattern, to increase the potential for hydrostatic shock.
   5. Kirkbright emphasizes that a downed suspect should be treated with caution; don’t assume the suspect is dead. He may be lying in wait.