



When Does Awareness Become Paranoia?

The key is confidence. You must truly be confident in your abilities and skills to detect, react, and stop an attack. Did you ever think that your constant gazing may make you a target because you see things that the bad guys do not want you to see? It has happened. Someone who was not a threat to the bad guys was suspected of witnessing a drug deal and was instantly identified as a target.

We talk a lot about awareness. We outline traits that bad guys look for to identify easy victims. We talk about color codes to classify these levels of awareness. We never talk about going over the line and becoming paranoid. Paranoia is defined as a mental disorder marked by delusions and irrational suspicions. Being aware and prepared is not being paranoid.

To the unprepared, the shock of sudden and unprovoked violence has a tendency to paralyze the victim with fear or cause doubt in their mind that violence is being committed against them. "I can't believe this is happening to me." Violent crime is committed by males and females of all age groups, races, religions, and occupations.

If you carry a firearm or have a firearm in the house for protection, you **must** consider the following questions:

- Are you prepared to shoot and kill?
- What if it is someone you know?
- If you do not make the decisions in advance, I guarantee you that you will hesitate. That hesitation may be the difference between you living or dying.

If you shot too soon or if you shot for reasons that do not warrant use of deadly force, you will face serious criminal and civil consequences. In any shooting, your actions will be scrutinized by a police investigation, the District Attorney's office, the Grand Jury, or in a criminal jury trial. **Are you in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death?**

Following the criminal investigation, whether charges are filed or not, whether you are acquitted or convicted, you may face the civil lawsuit filed by the grieving family of the person you shot.

General rules to consider:

- If it is not worth killing or dying for, it is not worth fighting for.

- If you must think about whether or not you should shoot, you probably should not shoot.
- It is always better to have a gun and not need it, than need a gun and not have it!

Remember: You make split second decisions with a firearm that have life changing consequences.

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