

Podcast #288 Transcription: The “Contact Shot”

Jeff Anderson:

Hello, hello, everyone. This is Jeff Anderson, editor of Modern Combat and Survival magazine and executive director of The New World Patriot Alliance with another podcast to help you better prepare for any threat you may face in your role as protector and a patriot. This broadcast is all about the contact shot. Now this is something that we talk about in our Extreme Close Quarters Combat Shooting manual that's all really about the realities of a real gun fight which is that, most likely, you're not going to be shooting at somebody from the typical seven yards away or so that you see people training for down at the local gun range. It's most likely going to be within nine feet, that is when these types of attacks happen, that's when bad guys are going to hold you up, they're going to be in close because they want it to look like ...

If there's anybody out and about, if it's in public, they don't want it to look like they're holding you up from 21 feet away. It's most likely going to be right up and close and personal where they can intimidate you, keep their voice down, and they can get right there in your face and shock you, ambush you, and that's what it's going to be. If it's somebody that you know, it's most likely those attacks happen as part of an escalated argument. So for all those reasons, you're most likely going to be in very, very, extremely close quarters when you're attacked. Now when that happens, that's going to change the dynamics of that gun fight. Are you going to be able to get to your gun? Are you going to be able to use your gun? Can you even get it out of your holster? There's a lot that's involved with that.

It's topics that we've covered in other podcasts and as well as in our Extreme Close Quarters Shooting guide but this is specifically about one of the techniques for shooting that does work very well within the close quarters ... It actually, it's almost required, for you to be able to master this in extreme close quarters because of that, you most likely are going to have to be in that clinch or you might have to fight to your gun. There's going to be some sort of element where you're going to be wrapped up with the person that you're on. The contact shot, just to kind of tell you what it is, first for those that aren't familiar with it, a contact shot is where that muzzle of the weapon, the muzzle of your handgun is held up against the body of your attacker at the time of discharge.

So when you pull that trigger, your muzzle is right up against their body. Now what this does is, besides the bullet coming out of the end of the firearm, you also have everything else. You have the gas, you have the soot, metallic particles just from the blast itself, and potentially from the casing, you've got the primer residue, you've got the powder particles. All of that blast, basically that mini explosion, is driven out of the end of the barrel and if it's right there near the skin or right near the contact of their body typically if it's not there it's going to

expel outside. It's going to go off to the side and it's definitely not going to harm your attacker.

But with a contact shot, all of that gets pushed right there into the wound tract along with the bullet. So that mini explosion does push more of those particles into the wound itself but it also creates this, at the point of contact, it creates a larger entry wound as well. If it's right there it can rupture flesh, it can increase the size of an entry wound creating more trauma there which can give you a better psychological stop potentially and that person really ... Like having an explosion at your skin rather than a bullet entering the skin is going to be perceived different by your attacker, it could. But then also, you have that blast that could cause more blood, more bleeding, you can bleed out more, it's going to cause more damage at that wound point.

The contact shot from a damage standpoint, it can help you with that stopping power of your weapon but you wouldn't typically use it on purpose like you wouldn't run up to an attacker usually. Now I say that, usually, because your speed being able to get that bullet out on its way to your attacker is going to be the biggest thing you want to get done but there are some circumstances where you would run up to somebody and shoot. So when would you use a contact shot? I can tell you that what we talk about if you're going to have to fight to your gun or if you have your weapon out and somebody's trying to grab it and they're trying to get ahold of it, that's why this is called a get off me gun.

If you're wrapped up either in a clinch or you're ground fighting, then you put that weapon right into them and shoot so that when you are right body to body then obviously a contact shot is a very, very good way of getting your attacker away from you and inflicting damage that can potentially stop your attacker from hitting you. Also escaping from any sort of a hold, so if you've ever done any sort of martial arts or any self-defense classes, escaping from different types of holds that somebody might get you in that could potentially even be life-threatening, I'm thinking like a rear choke-hold or if you're on the ground somebody's choking you out. Those types of escapes can be very, very challenging especially if you're up against somebody that really knows what they're doing like anybody that's taken in mixed martial arts, any type of ground fighting, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, things like that they get you wrapped up in a headlock and they start putting that pressure on, you have like minimal amount of seconds before you are going to pass out or potentially even be choked out to death potentially even by accident.

Yes, there are self-defense things that you can do to get out of this but look, if you ever watch any UFC fights or anything like that where you see somebody gets a good wrap around the neck there, they're tapping out. These are guys that know how to get out of headlocks but, like I said, you only have a minimal amount of seconds to be able to get out of that. And if somebody really wraps you up, it's not likely you're going to be able to do that. So being able to get to your pistol and being able to shoot that person off of you is also going to help

out, is going to be a good use for the contact shot. Now another way that you would use this is if you are helping a victim.

Let's say that somebody is fighting somebody else and let's say they have a knife or it looks like it's going to be a life or death scenario, you try telling the person, "Hey, get off of them." They don't stop, if you feel that person's life is in danger and you have a firearm that you're going to be using to be able to stop that attacker then when it's somebody else that's fighting with them, they could be rolling around, they could be moving around so taking a distant shot, even a close distance shot, could potentially that person could spin around and all of a sudden you shot the person who was being attacked instead of the attacker. So that's, again, where a contact shot coming up to somebody and putting that right up to, whether it's their head or their body, but being able to shoot is going to be ... That's another way you would use a contact shot if it's not you. There are lots of uses for the contact shot especially as effective as it is.

Let's talk about some of the considerations that you need to keep in mind when you're looking at using the contact shot. The first is what type of gun works best for contact shots. We have semi-automatics and revolvers. There are pros and cons with both of these. For the semi-automatic, you're definitely more prone to malfunctions because of a safety feature that is typically built in to more of the modern semi-automatics where if the slide is being pressed on, in other words you go to push it into somebody, it's going to partially rack that slide back there's a safety feature built into most of these modern semi-autos where the firing pin won't drop if the chamber is open. Because if the chamber is partially open because the slide is partially back, then you can potentially be injured. It could potentially damage the chamber there causing it where you're not going to be able to fire another round so basically that weapon is designed to fire with the slide fully forward.

If you push it into somebody and it partially racks that slide back, that potentially could take it out of battery, that's what it's called and actually that's a safety feature, you kind of want it to so you don't want to press too hard. You might not even get a contact shot with a semi-automatic. There is a way around this, I'll tell you about that here in just a minute. The other downfall of the semi-automatic is that if you do get one shot off it's unlikely that you're going to be able to rack the slide for a followup because it most likely is going to be taken out of battery when that happens as well. However, there is a benefit of a semi-automatic over a revolver because a revolver you might not get that first shot off either. It's possible if you do it the right way, and especially the way I'll tell you about here in just a minute, you can at least get one of those rounds off with a semi-automatic.

Now with a revolver, it does have a lot of advantages over the semi-auto because it's basically point and pull the trigger, that's it. You don't have to worry about the slide, if it doesn't chamber another round like it would typically with a semi-automatic contact shot, with a revolver as long as you keep pulling that trigger and as long as that cylinder can move it's going to keep shooting. That

one round might not be enough to get that person off of you or to be able to stop them so you might need multiple rounds to be able to do that. A revolver is going to give you a better advantage there because you can just keep pulling that trigger. The challenge with the revolver though is it doesn't take much pressure to stop the cylinder from being able to turn so that you can get that shot off.

You can do this if you have any kind of revolver, take out, make sure you have all the ammunition out of it but a lot of people have never tried this before but go ahead and hold on to the revolver and then take your support hand and just hold on to the chamber of the weapon, you'll be able to see that it doesn't take much pressure for you to grip on to the revolver where you can't even pull the trigger back. It's not going to turn the cylinder, it's not going to fire that weapon. So when we're talking about contact shots now, when you're right up close to somebody it is possible that the gun could get wedged in between you if it's a ground fighting scenario.

You pull out your weapon or you had your weapon out but he's on top of you and you're struggling around, you might not be able to get that weapon turned to be able to get the contact shot and if you do there might be clothing or something else that, or even just the pressure of your two bodies, that would stop the cylinder from going and you're not going to get that round off either. You really have to be very, very cautious of that. One of the other advantages of a revolver though is in the handgrip itself. The handgrip on like a snubnose revolver is going to be easier to hold on to, it's more ergonomic for your hand than a semi-automatic pistol is. Why is that important? When we're talking about in close distances here, being able to retain your weapon is critical.

You don't want to lose that weapon, you don't want to get it taken out of your hand or lodged out of your hand because you're wrestling around, you want to hold onto that. Because of the round-type handgrip for a revolver, you're going to be able to hold onto it and retain the revolver much better than you would with the semi-auto. The other important aspect of this when it comes to the contact shot is that because you are doing damage right there at the skin surface, you are very likely going to get essentially blood blow back because it's right there and it's going to rupture that skin. There's going to be potentially even bone fragments that come back to you but you're creating this mini explosion at the skin and there very, very well could be this blow back of blood. Now blood is very slippery, and again we're talking about close quarters combat where you could be wrestling around with this person trying to either gain access to your weapon, not gain access to your weapon you'd already have it, but you're going to be kind of just wrestling around trying to retain that weapon.

So when you shoot and the blood comes back and it's very slippery, you need to be able to hold onto that weapon and the revolver is going to be much better at that than a semi-automatic. Considerations for choosing that, one I recommend that you do use a revolver. This is something that I've changed with as well. As

you've heard me kind of really analyze things, and that's how I operate, like I analyze real gunfights and what's really going to happen in a gunfight and so I've changed my mind over the years about what I carry and why I carry it. You might've heard me say something even a couple podcasts ago, and listen, I've typically carried a GLOCK 26 as my backup which I do like my GLOCK 26.

I've recently switched over to my Ruger LCR 9mm with an ankle carry for the purposes of it's going to be my backup gun for a get off me gun, if I'm wrestling around and I'm on the bottom there and I can't get to my appendix carry GLOCK 19, I might be able to get my ankle up there to be able to reach down and grab my snubnose revolver, and again that round grip on it is going to be easier for me to get to than that square grip so another reason why I switched over to that. When you do choose a revolver, if you do choose to go with a revolver as I have, you want to get one with a shrouded hammer. In other words, the hammer is not exposed as you would normally see on most revolvers.

The problem with the exposed hammer is, again, when we're talking about close quarters combat, that hammer can get snagged up on clothing. It might not fire at all if it gets snagged up or it could, if you are able to get that one round off, clothing or something else might get lodged in between the hammer, it might not even be able to get that round off so you might even be able to get the hammer back but it doesn't strike the firing pin because something gets snagged in between there. On followup shots, it can do the same thing. Every time that hammer goes back, you have another chance of it getting snagged up and not being able to shoot. With a shrouded hammer, that hammer is not exposed there and so you're not going to have to worry about that. This does make the revolver double action only but a snubby isn't best used for longer distance shots anyway so you don't have the ability to be able to pull back the hammer and lock it back so you can get that first shot accuracy.

But, again, we're talking about the purposes of this is really for like a contact shot gun anyway. Those are the considerations for the firearm itself. Now let's talk about how to employ it. You really need to know the limitations of the firearm. You need to understand that you may not get a second shot. You need to understand that you may take your gun out of battery if it's pressed too hard. So when you are employing it, you may not necessarily want to just shove that right into somebody. Now, again, with a revolver you have a better chance of that happening but if you're going to go with a semi-automatic and you shove that into somebody then you're going to typically take the weapon out of battery and not even be able to get that round off. You can test this with your own semi-automatic pistol.

If you take it and make sure all of the ammunition is out of it, you don't even have to have a magazine in it, so you clear the chamber, take out the magazine, make sure there's no ammunition in the gun, and just push it up against something that's soft. You can even just use like a mattress on the bed, when you push it in you'll be able to notice when you first make contact go ahead and rack the slide, pull the trigger, you'll be able to feel the hammer hit the firing pin

and it'll go off just fine. Now rack the slide again and now push in until the slide comes back some and try to do that again and you'll know whether or not your firearm has that safety feature built in where you're not able now to get that firing pin to drop to be able to strike the bullet to be able to make it go off.

You'll notice there it doesn't take that much pressure so this is one of the things I noticed on my GLOCK 26 that for contact shots it wasn't necessarily going to be the best there. A way around that would be to just make contact with the skin and not shove it in. The problem with that is that in close quarters when you're in a contact shot position, you don't even know your own strength, you're not likely to know how much you're pushing it in and you are more likely to shove that right into somebody because you're fighting with this person. That's a challenge right there. So if you do have it, you want to make sure that you do only make contact and don't push in as much as possible.

The other thing that you can do with a semi-auto, and this is what I was telling that because of that when you're shoving it in there, one thing you can do is to make sure that you're also shoving in on the slide itself. You can do this with two hands by taking your support hand and gripping it on the gun, and this is one of the things we teach with retention, oftentimes if you grip the gun with both hands, if somebody's trying to wrestle it away from you and there are ways that you can maneuver the gun around to be able to break free from their grasp but with a contact shot and just shooting that person off of you, if you hold onto that slide and you basically try to push it forward on a contact shot then that will help it to stay within battery so you can get that first round off.

Now that is going to take it out of battery, it's not going to typically chamber that next round because you're holding it forward there and you're probably not going to get that second round, you're probably going to have to rack the slide to get another round in there. That is one way you can get the contact shot off. Now if you do have a striker fired weapon like a GLOCK where it doesn't have an exposed hammer there, one thing you can do with one hand you can just take your thumb and put it on the back of the slide and then shove that in but you need to push in really hard on the thumb and that's going to help you be able to keep that slide from coming back and taking the weapon out of battery also.

Don't worry about it taking off your thumb if you do get that round off, you're pushing forward it's going to ... You're not going to have to really worry about that but it is going to help you to get that first round off there. That is one work around if you're going to continue to use a semi-automatic. Again, with a revolver it's going to take out a lot of those factors that could be a challenge for you that's why it is more reliable as a close quarters get off me type gun as a backup. The other thing you need to understand when you're employing it is you need to know what that bullet's path is going to be. So when you shoot a contact shot, it might not be in a place that's going to stop that round from over penetrating going out the other side of your attacker.

It could be like, let's say, an abdomen shot, let's say somebody's on top of you, there might not be any bone that's stopping that. You might not even have a whole lot of cavity that you're shooting into, it might not be like center mass where it's going through a ribcage, organs, and muscle tissue, and that strong torso that is meant to house your lungs and protect your lungs and your heart in that. If you shoot up and you're on the ground and you shoot up into somebody, that could go up and strike somebody else. I'm not saying that's your primary concern because you've got somebody on top of you going to kill you but you do need to understand what that path that bullet's going to be.

That's especially important if you are saving somebody that's being hit by somebody or being attacked lethally by somebody else, if you go and stick it into the back of somebody that's strangling somebody up against a wall and you shoot into them that bullet can go through that person and into the victim essentially. So the person that you're trying to protect, you could actually end up shooting that person also. You need to make sure that you understand that that bullet, assume that it's going to go through the person that you're shooting, and you're responsible for where that bullet goes. So definitely know what your backstop is. Now let's talk about the training of it.

You definitely want to test your gun to know its limitations. We already talked about a way that you can test to see if your firearm has that built in safety mechanism if it's a semi-automatic where if the slide comes back, you can just use a mattress for that test to see if your semi-automatic how well it's designed for a contact shot. If you find that it does have that safety feature built in and it's something like a 1911 type design or something with an exposed hammer, realize that you're going to need a second hand on that potentially just to be able to get that first round off. That is a big limitation if you're looking at that type of weapon for your backup gun. You can just use the mattress test there. Again, with a revolver, I want you to go ahead and grab the cylinder to make sure that you understand that it's potentially not going to budge if it's all wrapped up with too much pressure on it so you need to understand that.

When taking your firearm down to the live fire range, it's best to do this with an instructor, somebody that really understands contact shots and can show you the elements of it, how to train with it, the effects that it will be, maybe even potentially using like ballistic gelatin or something like a pig carcass or something like that that you can really see the effects of it. It's real important to be able to do that but this is really hard to come by. It's really hard to come by instructors that even teach the contact shot but try and find one if you can find somebody. It's one question to ask an instructor if you are looking for instruction out there.

If you are well-trained with a firearm, you can go out to a live fire range if they will let you, again, it's hard to find a range that you can do these types of things. If you can find a range, whether it's a private range or one that is more lenient, you can take something like a 2" X 4" that's out there and you can wrap some foam around it, something that will allow you to have some give there like

basically simulating being pushed into somebody's skin. Just make sure that the post, if it's one that's holding up their range targets then you don't want to start doing mini explosions of contact shots into that but typically it's not going to do that much damage to it.

Those 2" X 4"s are going to get hit by stray rounds oftentimes anyway but it is good to bring your own type of a 2" X 4" post or something like that that you can use out there, wrap it with some foam, just duct tape it there that you can push the firearm into it so that you can see the damage that it does to that foam that was wrapped on there. You can see the damage that it does to the 2" X 4" of course, always make sure that you're using proper hearing protection and especially proper eye protection because you are right there at the point of impact with it. It's safe, nothing is always 100% safe, but this is something that you can practice safely down at the range and you really should because you do need to get used to pushing that weapon into something and firing it off there. So definitely this is something that does require more than just knowledge, it does as with any firearm's skill taking it to the live fire range, practicing it in dry fire as well is going to be very, very helpful.

That is a quick crash course on the contact shot. If you want to know more information about this and extreme close quarters combat shooting in particular, then you can check out our website over at closecombatshooting.com. They'll give you some information there as well. And until our next Modern Combat and Survival broadcast, this is Jeff Anderson saying, "Prepare, train, and survive."