

POLICE PISTOLCRAFT

The Reality-Based New Paradigm of Police Firearms Training

By Mike Conti

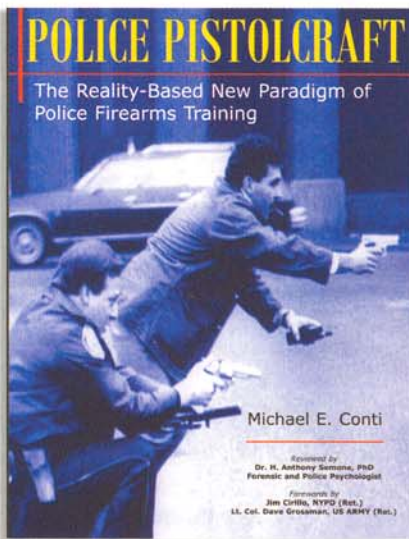
Reviewed by George Williams

Although a proponent of sighted fire, I've always had a problem with the theory of modern technique (with its emphasis on front-sight only employment) and the real-world, as experienced by officers who say they never saw their front sight during their shootings. Therefore, for almost two decades, I've evolved a bastardized version of interrupting the eye-target line at close range, while moving and hitting, with positive results from students. I've also had a negative opinion of point shooting. In fact, I've always considered point shooting to be a hocus-pocus-faith-healer-snake-oil-sales belief—just thought I'd get that out of the way at the very beginning. That said, my reaction to Mike Conti's book, **Police Pistolcraft: The Reality-Based New Paradigm of Police Firearms Training** could not be more enthusiastic!

Sgt. Mike Conti of the Massachusetts State Police has written a book that every police firearms trainer should read. This book contains everything needed to create a cutting-edge firearms program, from explanations of shooting methods to complete courses-of-fire. More importantly, Conti provides a history of his journey from a serious supporter of the modern technique, to his creation of a foundational text that is likely to revolutionize police pistol training.

Conti relates that during a SWAT call-out, he had his front sight on a suspect who was reaching for a shotgun when his eyes "felt like they were ripped off the front sight." Even though the incident ended well, he questioned what happened and why he had that reaction. This began decades of research, finally leading to his belief that point-shooting, as originally described by Col. Rex Applegate was, in fact, how to prepare police officers for deadly force events. To prevent misunderstanding, he refers to his method in the text as the *new paradigm of police pistolcraft*.

Conti asks a simple question: If officers are qualifying at a 70% score in training, but achieving only a 20% hit rate in real



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world encounters, doesn't this indicate a serious training failure? His answer is simple: Instead of using marksmanship training to solve combative problems, why not discover what police officers actually do in real life conditions, and train them to survive based on science and real-world experience?

Especially at close distance, humans focus on the imminent threat right in front of them, rather than on their handgun sights. Police officers have the need to observe suspects at gunpoint. Universally before an officer shoots, he must identify what the suspect is doing and why there is a threat resulting in the use of deadly force. Under this threat, with eyes focused on the suspect, is it realistic to expect the officer to look away from the offender and attempt to focus on the front sight? The vast majority of officers who

have been in shootings will say, "No, that's not what I experienced." Those who hit the suspect consistently brought the handgun up to their eyes as they focused on the threat and hit the suspect until he ceased being a threat.

With a foreword written by Jim Cirillo and Dave Grossman, any firearms instructor and law enforcement officer who is interested in the latest research and particularly, those who are not afraid to question their beliefs of how handgun training *should be* needs to read this book. There were a couple of times it challenged me to the point that I tossed it on the table. But each time, I took a breath, got back into it and read, and reread until I understood what the author was saying. I finally came to a point where I realized that Conti was explaining what I'd heard officers for 25 years say about their shootings.

This is not another book about point shooting. It is an explanation of the new paradigm of teaching officers to shoot a bad guy when they need to. Conti follows the correct approach of:

- Researching how police officers react in shootings,
- Using the latest in research on how to best and most effectively train police officers to function in critical, high-stress events,
- Combining these with a training program that has proven itself many times over in the real world.

Even if your beliefs about handgun training are set in stone, it will still be worthwhile for you to read this book. Individual books - \$29.95 plus shipping & handling. I highly recommend that anyone who carries a handgun for a living or who teaches law enforcement officers read this book. **Police Pistolcraft** will have a dramatic effect on how officers are trained in the future.

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