

Fieldcraft Survival | Gun Fighter Pistol 1 | January 25, 2020



BLUF: RECOMMEND

Format

5 hours | 300 rounds | \$325 | Homestead Training Center

Instructor to Student Ratio

1:19 | Raul Martinez was the solo instructor

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Personal Kit

Colt Combat Commander 9mm | Vickers Combat Wilson Duty Magazines | Speer Lawman 147 grain TMJ | JM Customs AIWB holster | Dara AIWB mag pouch | Graith belt | Oakley eye protection | Etymotic electronic ear buds | **ZERO STOPPAGES OR ISSUES**

Training Day

Class started with introductions, paperwork, safety brief, and kitting up. With 19 students and 1 instructor, this took a while.

Class began with an in-test, so Raul could evaluate each student's skills upon arrival. Administered one student at a time, we would approach the 15 yard line, pick up our empty pistol and loaded magazine laying on the ground, and while aggressing toward our target load and fire 5 rounds. By forcing students to handle and shoot their gun *while moving*, Raul was able to see what skills the students have mastered to the subconscious level. Looking for a good in-test myself, I've now adopted this exact format into my own courses. *New training technique learned.*

Next, Raul focused on grip. Raul explained the goal for the grip is for the gun to track straight back rearward when cycling instead of flipping up the muzzle. This keeps the sights on target as much as possible and speeds follow up shots. As part of this process, recoil should end at the bent elbows.

He began helping us reach this end state with how to use the pinky. I've attended other courses where it was explained the pinky is the strongest of the five fingers, but Raul is the first instructor to actually teach how to use the pinky's strength to our advantage during the grip. Once we had the pinky nailed down, Raul then had us slightly cant the support hand wrist forward/down to further aide in control. These techniques he showed worked very well, and as students we spent a good amount of time partnered up as coach/pupil to develop and test these grip techniques. *New skills learned.*

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After working on the grip, Raul moved on to threat focused shooting. More specifically, Raul explained that at closer distances we want to be hard focused on the target and its active dynamic because this is both natural when facing a threat as well as necessary for decision making. This technique results in a blurry front and rear sight picture, but with development and practice, I was able to make accurate A-zone hits out to 15 yards. As distance grows and target size shrinks, however, Raul advised to go hard front sight focused. *New skill learned.*

We then moved on to shooting sooner while coming up onto the target at closer distances (10 yards and in). Raul explained that instead of waiting until your gun is all the way up to the high torso with a perfect sight picture before shooting, that we should start shooting as soon as the muzzle is indexed to the threat and after the first round or two as we begin to acquire our sight picture then shift to using our sights (albeit threat focused). I viewed this as an adoption of the zipper drill, but with more real world precision. This technique also reinforces the key marksmanship concept that the hands follow the eyes. *New skill learned.*

As if the aforementioned content wasn't enough for a 5 hour course, we then continued to moving while shooting, where Raul had us tightening our torso while moving naturally to steady our firing platform. This absolutely worked. We proceeded to spend the rest of our time on group and individual timed shooting while moving drills. *New skill learned.*

Reflections

This class was a lot of fun, and the 5 hour format kept focused learning to a maximum. I really dug Raul Martinez's laid back but professional and effective teaching style. He represented the Fieldcraft Survival brand extremely well. I ended up expending 225 rounds, but it sure felt like the full 300. Raul covered many critical topics and nuances and learning occurred.

I only have two criticisms of the course, one small and one big. The small criticism is lack of communication regarding which range bay we would be on (I ended up calling the range to find out), and what type of holster we should use (I emailed Raul who said most use OWB but as long as I was safe AIWB was fine).

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The larger criticism had to do with safety. There was quite a large range of experience levels across the 19 students, and frankly there were too many shooters over their heads. With only 1 instructor, this ratio created a definite safety issue. At least 6 times myself or one of the other seasoned shooters had to discreetly control unsafe situations because one person can't be everywhere all the time, and in fact he himself had to manage a number of safety issues. The solution here is simple: either add another instructor, reduce class size, and/or better vet the student experience levels. To Raul's credit, he listened to my remarks about this after class and fixed this issue going forward.