

INVITATION TO BE A GUNFIGHTER

By: *Quick Cal*

CFDA, along with many of our CFDA Affiliated Clubs, have been conducting what we called “Town Folk Alleys” since 2006. There are several positive aspects about conducting these events, such as, public exposure of our sport and having the opportunity to provide a very positive, fun and safe shooting sport experience to numerous people. In fact, by our calculations, together we members of CFDA have introduced over 100,000 people to these positive experiences not only to our sport, but on behalf of all shooting sports. And, for a very high percentage of these, a number of them children, it is their first experience with any firearm. We should all be very proud of that.

BUT, what is the main reason we go through the considerable effort to conduct these events? We all know the answer to that, and that is to promote our sport and recruit members for our clubs across the nation.

A few years ago we came to the realization that advertising our events in print, broadcast, and social media outlets as “Town Folk Alleys” did almost nothing to give name recognition to the sport of Cowboy Fast Draw. Sure, we know who we are, but the general public was not making the connection. So, we changed the name of these events to “Try Cowboy Fast Draw”. While this is helping the general public know who we are, we are still actually recruiting a very small percentage of these participants into our clubs. We have been trying to convince our clubs to gather names, phone numbers and emails in order to follow up with folks who tried our Try Cowboy Fast Draw events. But, that is a lot of contacts to make with people, of whom a majority just wanted to try something fun and new, but never have any intention of anything more than that.

NEW IDEA!

Last year one of our newer members, Concho and I were brainstorming on promotional ideas to help build clubs. Concho has a background in sales and I’m always interested in finding ways to attract folks to our sport. We decided to book a gun show known as the “Big Reno Show”, which is one of the largest gun shows in the Western U.S.. We had a television showing videos about our sport, plus some other items to demonstrate how wax bullets are loaded. We also had a CFDA Gunslinger Timer on the table with a Reaction Trainer, so folks could test their reactions, which was a real interactive attention getter.

Concho also came up with an idea to have a “Prize Drawing”, the Prize was a Free 2-Hour Lesson with a Gunslinger. With a simple cardboard box, he created a box to insert cards into that contained names, phone numbers and emails of people willing to enter the contest. We also had one of our people actually filling out the cards on behalf of the drawing entrants, just to make sure that we could read them later. The results? In a 3-Day show, we had about 50 cards filled out, of which about 30 were from the Northern Nevada area!

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Invitation to be a Gunfighter - Drawing!</u></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Phone # (_____) _____ - _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p>

The Fortune is in the Follow Up!

This is a very well-known sales term. You can have all of the great leads in the world, but if you don’t follow up and contact them it just doesn’t matter. So, I waited for the holiday season to pass, and since I believe that everyone who entered this contest deserves a chance to win, I contacted all of them.

I began every call like this, “Howdy my name is Cal from the Cowboy Fast Draw Club, and you entered a drawing at the gun show in November.” As soon as they realized that I wasn’t a phone marketer “cold calling” them in an attempt to sell them something, they ALL responded very positively. In fact, these were not “cold calls” at all, they were very “warm calls” because these folks are interested in what we do, or they would not have entered our contest.

Next I said, “You’ve won an Invitation to be a Gunfighter, and it’s FREE!. We have two dates available coming up very soon where you can collect your prize.”

Our club had a meeting and agreed to pick a Saturday and a Sunday one week apart, in February. So, I knew what dates I could offer, this is very important. Some accepted immediately and picked one of the two dates. Others were very interested, but could not make the dates, but wanted us to call again when we had the next choice of sessions. Which we are preparing to do soon, since we have since done another gun show and collected another 45 prospects.

After they accepted I said, "Great, we are going to supply everything you need, a single action revolver, a holster, the wax bullet ammunition, an instructor, and a veteran gunfighter for you to team up with." I then gave them the location of our club's shooting range and directions how to get there.

Everyone who agreed on a date, all had very interesting and happy responses and were really excited about the opportunity. I usually said something like, "I guarantee you're going to have fun and a great time, or if this wasn't already free, I would double your money back." Which usually got a laugh from them. Then I told them, "I'll check in with you during the week prior, just to confirm that you'll be there." Which I would do by mid-week before that weekend. Some that I did this second confirmation call with even asked if they could bring a friend.

Event Agenda

It's important to have a clear agenda for the Invitation to be a Gunfighter Session. Here is the agenda we used, with some comments on why we did things in this order.

Invitation To Be a Gunfighter

Session Agenda

- I. **Greeting Arriving Guests (Greenhorns), fitting them with holsters, pairing them with Veteran Gunfighters.**
- II. **Introduction to the Sport of Cowboy Fast Draw (approx. 30 minutes)**
 - A. **Safety First, Fun Second, and Competition Third - CFDA Motto (Short Explanation)**
 - B. **Safety First (Safety is really first, last and always)**

Explaining CFDA Safety Rules and Why We Must Uphold Them.

 1. Only 3 Places a Gun Be Out of a Holster.
 2. Explain Range Rules Poster.
 - C. **History of Fast Draw. *(This information can be found on CFDA Website)***
 1. Spirit of the Game & The Cowboy Way.
 2. Old West transition to Hollywood.
 3. Hollywood's Transition to Radio and TV
 4. Sport Created in the 1950's
 5. Evolution of the Sport & Equipment
 - D. **CFDA Founded in 2002 (Deadwood, SD - The Reformation of the Sport)**
 1. Based Upon 1800s Equipment
 2. Elimination Format (Man vs Man) vs Index (Lowest Aggregate Scores)
 3. Target Sizes & Distance Emphasize Balance of Speed & Accuracy.
Wyatt Earp Quote, "Fast is Fine, Accuracy is Final"
 4. Inclusive Formats: X Counts in Major Matches, But Still Inclusive through 2nd Chance Matches, Bracket Shoots, etc. Club Formats: No X Out & Bracket Matches.
 - E. **Equipment**
 1. Guns - Based Upon Availability in the 1800's.
 2. Holsters - Based Upon 1800's Patterns, but With Additional Specifications.
 - F. **Wax Bullet Ammunition**
 1. Shotgun Primer Loads - Most Common
 2. Cowboy Fast Draw Cartridges - Used Only in Major Events (Supplied y Host)
- III. **Hands on Session (Approximately 90 minutes)**
 - A. Reaction Demo & Tests (Greenhorns)
(Show's how holding an unloaded revolver against a target will record a reaction time)
 - B. 3 X - Reaction Contest (All Greenhorns and Veterans)
(Inspires the Greenhorns, that they have better reactions than they may think they have, and really gives them experience in how the six-guns and a contest scenario actually works)
 - C. Learning a Basic Draw
 1. Demonstrating the Basic Draw
 2. Dry-Firing Practice *(Greenhorns, with Veteran Gunfighter Coaches)*
 3. Command & Clap *(Veterans should give individual commands and have the Greenhorn draw when they clap their hands, this readies them to draw on the start signal better.)*

4. 1st Shooting Drill 1/2 Distance Greenhorns (With Veteran Gunfighter Coaches)
(Best to do this at ½ distance at first to promote confidence.)
5. Run a 2X Contest at 1/2 Distance Greenhorns Only (veterans Gunfighters Do All Loading)
(Gives them the real feel of an actual contest.)
6. Learning Loading and Unloading, How to Practice with Empty Casings. *(All new shooters should be taught to practice loading and unloading empty brass, so they have more confidence on the line.)*
7. Shooting at Full Range. *(This instills the reality of how hard Cowboy Fast Draw really is.)*
8. Demonstration of Advanced Draws (Circle Lock Draw) & (Hip Shot) *(This is just a short introduction to what they can learn in the future.)*

IV. Present Gunfighter Certificates *(This makes them feel part of the group)*

V. Invite Them to Practice. *(You are all Gunfighters now so practicing together for a while will be fun and they will have a lot more questions to ask the Veterans.)*

The Results So Far

Out of the 10 people we ran through out initial events, all of them said that they had a great time. 6 of them have joined CFDA, the club and have purchased or are purchasing guns and holsters. They are regularly attending club practices and already competing in club matches, even if they have to borrow equipment, which we are glad to provide for them. Of the 4 who haven't joined yet, they are still extremely interested and I feel eventually will get involved. Two of those who attended the session live about 90 miles North of Reno in Susanville, CA, which is 2 hours from our club, so distance is a factor in coming to club events, but they have expressed interest in getting a club established in Susanville.

Benefit to All Club Members

It's good to have your newer club members participate in the ranks of your Veteran Gunfighter Coaches, because teaching also reinforces the personal knowledge that they have learned too.

Conclusion

The "Invitation to be a Gunfighter" program, should be used by all of our clubs, whether they are conducting a "Try Cowboy Fast Draw", or just have a table at a gun show, or any show or fair for that matter. This is perhaps the greatest hands on recruiting tool for our organization that I have ever seen. It creates an opportunity to really show interested people what our sport is truly all about, rather than just rushing them through a Try Cowboy Fast Draw event, where they really don't learn that much about us.