

How to Survive an Angry Mob when in Your Vehicle

By Tom Marlowe

There is little doubt that you have seen what people in the United States and elsewhere are facing in response to political upheaval, partisanship and the aiding, abetting and empowerment of subversive groups: Out of control protests, mass looting, pandemonium, rioting and arson- the first pavers on the path to destruction. Mobs are ruling the streets in several American cities and elsewhere in the world.

It might not be the end times, but it sure feels like you can see it from here, and if you are one of the people unfortunate enough to run afoul of these vicious mobs because they have blocked the highway, shut down an intersection or set up a roadblock, it is entirely possible your life and the lives of anyone else in the vehicle with you could it be in peril.



We have already seen time and time again that these vicious miscreants are more than willing to set vehicles ablaze, flip them over or drag the occupants out and beat them mercilessly, even kill them.

Plenty of people train for self-defense and responding to human threats while they are on foot, but too few trained to deal with the same threats when they are inside of or operating a vehicle.

This is a growing threat that shows no signs of going away in the near future. You must be ready, and that means you must have a plan and have to rehearse your responses.

Sitting in an automobile that is being swarmed by hostile belligerents on all sides is not the time to improvise. Procedures, tips and strategies for dealing with hostile mobs while operating a vehicle are all waiting for you in this article.

The Merciless Mob

Honestly answer this question: Have you ever trained for a self-defense response against any group of people larger than a handful? Do you know how to respond when facing a crowd of 20, 30, 50 or even hundreds of people when the majority of them want to see you beaten unconscious or even killed?

Chances are you haven't, because you like most of us never imagined that we will be in that sort of situation unless we are working as a police officer assigned to riot control duty or are perhaps a soldier deployed to some faraway city overseas.

Mobs have quite literally a pulse and a mind all their own. What is done to one person who is part of the mob is figuratively and almost physically felt by all the other members of the mob. It is an organism made up of other smaller, nominally independent organisms that act as one.

For these individual members of the mob, being part of something so large and seemingly unstoppable provides an even greater sense of anonymity beyond the masks, hoods and similar garb they wear is an

intoxicating feeling, one that leads to lowered impulse control, feelings of invulnerability and worst of all the righteous feeling of righting wrongs perceived or real through violence and destruction.

No matter why they are out there, no matter how you align with or against them, the mob is fickle and volatile, a cask of nitroglycerin ready to touch off at the slightest jar or bump.

A mob often seeks an opportunity to vent its wrath. This is not a threat you can simply shoot or pepper spray. If you stop one six more will take their place. Invariably you'll be overwhelmed and killed.

The Law Still Applies to You, However!

The chances you or someone you know will happen upon a mob in or around a larger city are as high as they have ever been and will only increase now that these criminals and savages know they can riot, roadblock, and occupy with impunity.

You must be prepared for encountering one in your vehicle, and reacting correctly and swiftly if you want to avoid a bad outcome.

But before we move on to the strategies and procedures now we recommend for dealing with this eventuality in the rest of the article, we need to get one thing perfectly clear: No matter what you are facing, no matter how terrifying, you can never forget that the law will always catch up to you in the end.

Daily I see dozens upon dozens of people comment in various threads around the internet that if they were facing a throng of people blocking the street or had angry, shouting and chanting "protestors" gathering around their vehicle they would mash that skinny pedal on the right and

mow the whole lot down with nary a second thought. Double-thump, no brake check, buh-bye. Sure...

Gut Check: You aren't allowed to run people down just because they are in the road, even if they are armed!

You may only make contact with them using your vehicle if they are presenting an imminent and legitimate threat to your life or the life of someone else in the vehicle.

Similarly, you are not allowed to shoot someone just because they are right up next to your driver side window or even banging on your car with their hand; once more they must be threatening you or another passenger or actively attempting to breach the vehicle and harm you.

We can all talk as tough as the blowhard internet tough guys can, and though it is the summit of foolishness to even say what they do I can empathize with their feelings. And make no mistake you *will* be in a very precarious and dangerous position if your vehicle is beset by a teeming and oftentimes armed mob.

You might rightly be in fear for your life, as scared as you have ever been, but regardless you must be able to rationally and clearly articulate the reason for every defensive action you take from within your vehicle or using your vehicle!

You can count on having to explain as much in a court of law so your explanations had better measure up.

With all of this being said, let's move on to the meat and potatoes of this article.

Take the Time to Track Scheduled Protests

I know it might go against your grain to give any of the yay-hoos perpetrating these riots the time of day, but it is in your best interest to use their love of publicity against them. The vast majority of the largest organized or “branded” protests are announced days or weeks in advance of when they kick off.

By keeping one eye on these groups using their social media profiles, as well as following watchdog groups that are concerned with gatherings of this type you can stay one step ahead of the mob.

If you aren’t anywhere near the mob, no harm will come to you at the mob’s hands. If you are in a city or region that is currently experiencing a considerable amount of partisan violence under the guise of political action, keep your ass as far away from it as possible.

Ignorance is no longer an excuse thanks to the pervasiveness of social media and the internet when it comes to relaying information. You might be caught unawares by a surprise roadblock, but you should never be caught flat-footed by the “usual suspects” groups operating in the area.

Also, it should go without saying but no matter how you feel about the riots and the purported reasons they are rioting stay far, far away from all rallies, protests, counter-protests and any other activities related to the above; as sure as the sun rises in the east violence and mayhem follows in the wake of these events.

“When in Doubt, Reverse Out!”

Huge mobs of people that you see participating in the rioting, looting and burning are not exactly discreet and not even in the same solar system as

stealthy. You should never, ever be caught unaware by a group of people of this massive size!

If the first time you notice a crowd this size is when they are a handful a car length ahead of you, you have done everything wrong from the moment you got up that morning. I mean to say your situational awareness is seriously lacking to the point of absence.

Whenever you are operating your vehicle your focus should be down the road some distance so you have more time to react to changing conditions, obstacles and hazards. A rampaging mob definitely fits into all of those categories!

As soon as you notice the telltale indicators of a mob- a huge crowd of people, burning trashcans or cars, flashing emergency lights or lasers, chanting- it is time to reverse course and go the opposite way by any means necessary.

If you don't want to get overtaken by the mob (assuming they are moving down the road towards your position) you need to get going the other way by whatever route is available to you.

This might mean running through a median, jumping over a sidewalk or literally just driving in reverse back the way you came. Don't get surrounded! That is always when things start to go bad for motorists.

These are techniques you will obviously need to practice beforehand for maximum confidence and also to best understand the handling limitations of your vehicle.

On that note, don't think you need to bust out a bootlegger, j-turn or any other fancy driving maneuver either; these techniques all have their place, but they have an increased risk of causing a crash or loss of control, so

save them until you really need them and know you can do them under pressure.

Much of the time, simply reversing out at a modest clip will allow you to put a ton of distance between you and any aggressor, allowing you plenty of time to make a leisurely turnabout and then drive away in safety.

Learn to Spot and Dodge Roadblocks

Our modern, politically-motivated rioters are employing roadblocks more and more commonly in order to stop vehicles and otherwise draw attention or police response to themselves through creating a traffic jam or, just as frequently, harass and beat drivers in order to intimidate and stifle those who would act out against them.

Roadblocks are particularly hazardous because they will get you to slow down or even stop with people who would do you harm by getting a jump on you and closing in on your vehicle before you can react to what is occurring.

Even more troubling is that the common roadblocks employed by the rioters don't look like the large, semi-permanent fortifications that you might see in a third world country or sci-fi dystopia.

Oftentimes, it could be a handful of people milling around near a car that seems to be stalled or parked in the road.

Once an unwitting motorist slows down or stops in order to investigate or render aid the rioters manning the roadblock close in and it is then that most people are too afraid of repercussions or lack the stomach to accelerate away from the situation.

Always be on your guard if rioters of any persuasion are planning an event, or have been active in your area as roadblocks of various types can be set up quickly and with no warning even a significant distance from the epicenter of the riot.

Whenever you see cars braking ahead of you or spot an obstacle that could slow you down or even get you to stop start looking for a way around it or through it, or failing that be ready to reverse out.

Stay in Your Vehicle and Keep the Doors Locked

This should hardly need to be said but several unfortunate recent incidents with motorists encountering agitated or violent mobs has underscored the need to cover the basics so that you don't have to think of them on the fly when encountering one of these situations for the first time.

Anytime you notice mob activity down the turnpike, ensure that your doors are locked and don't trust your power locks; visually verify all doors are locked. If you travel with small children in the car, make sure the child locks are engaged so they cannot inadvertently pop the doors when the pressure is on.

If you find yourself besieged by a crowd of people on all sides of your vehicle no matter what is happening, no matter what they are saying or threatening, stay in your freakin' car!

Your vehicle is not much when it comes to a shelter, but it does provide a degree of protection against commonly employed melee weapons and thrown objects, at least for a time.

Most importantly the power and torque provided by your automobile's engine will provide the best possible means for getting out of the situation unharmed.

It doesn't matter if people are climbing on your car. It doesn't matter if they are banging on it, or if they promised to escort you away from the trouble if you will just get out.

The moment you get out of your car, all is lost; you will be beaten and made the guest of honor at a boot party, along with everyone else in the car and don't delude yourself.

It is a mistake to think that dismounting from the vehicle to defend yourself even with a firearm is going to work as you will simply be overwhelmed and have your gun stripped from you. No matter what they are doing and what they are threatening, stay in your vehicle to defend yourself!

Unbuckle Seatbelt When a Mob is Near or Closing

It might sound counterintuitive considering you will need to make a high-speed get away and perhaps perform some deft maneuvers, but whenever you have a mob nearby or closing in you want to make sure your seat belt is unbuckled.

The reason why is very simple: it is much harder to fight back with weapons when you are buckled into a seat, and a seatbelt is a serious entanglement hazard should you need to bail out of the car in a hurry.

I know what you are thinking- "Tom, what gives? You just said above we should never, ever get out of the car when dealing with a mob!"

That is correct, reader, you should never get out of your car when dealing with a mob until you absolutely have to get out of the car, say for instance, when it is immobilized and on fire or your indecisiveness let a gang of people flip it over.

When that occurs, you will need to get out in a great big hurry, and your seatbelt is not going to be your friend at that instant. As soon as you get clear of the mob and start to gain speed, you can easily click your seat belts back on.

Keep Essential Tools on You

No matter what you do and no matter what happens, there always exists the possibility that you will have to bail out of the vehicle or potentially employ weapons to defend yourself from within the vehicle.

In case of a turnover or a crash you don't want to be forced to rummage around inside the passenger compartment trying to access containers that could be jammed closed or trying desperately to find your go bag with the tools you need.

You need to keep all of your most essential tools and weapons on your person, not stored elsewhere in the vehicle.

This means your pistol, knife, pepper spray and even your basic trauma kit should all be on your body somewhere. Having supplementary supplies stored in a bag or other container is fine, but you should think of all of your most necessary tools as a parachute; you don't wait to put your parachute on when you know you might have to jump out of a plane.

For you gun-carrying people this means no vehicle mounted holsters, no keeping your gun under the seat, no keeping it in the glove box or anywhere else. Vehicle mounted holsters as a rule completely suck, and are a total liability.

If you have a hard time accessing your holster from the seated position in a vehicle, either you suck or your holster sucks, and you can fix both of those problems through correct equipment selection, proper training and

practice and potentially losing some daggone weight. Keep it oiled, keep it loaded and keep it on you! No exceptions!

Understand the Difference between Attack and Harassment

Understanding the difference between deliberate attack and harassment by a group of people surrounding your vehicle is essential to ensure you react correctly and get your good outcome.

Unfortunately, plenty of good guys and good gals screw this up and start going down the wrong decision-making path leading to a bad day and potentially serious criminal charges.

Just because you are surrounded by a huge group of people who are yelling, screaming and calling you every name in the book does not give you carte blanche to mow them down or shoot them just because you don't like it or are afraid. Heck, you can't even do that if they are beating on your car, even climbing on it!

As with any other self-defense situation you must accurately perceive a legitimate threat against your life or the life of one of your passengers for you can react with an appropriate level of force.

To give you some food for thought, beating on the car, throwing water bottles at it, splashing paint on it, climbing on it and other activity that does not threaten to upset or overturn the vehicle or breach the windows or body work to gain access to the occupants is little more than harassment.

The ideal response is not to get into that situation in the first place, assuming it is unavoidable now you should drive very slowly through the crowd giving them enough time to move out of your way.

If you give the car too much gas and start nudging and bumping people out of the way (more on that later) it is far from out of the question that you could be charged with reckless operation, vehicular battery or vehicular assault. No joke.

Now, if our peaceful rioters (who all love their mommas and are all destined for greatness) decide to start smashing windows, trying to set the car on fire, brandishing weapons and otherwise trying to breach the car or pose a threat to the occupants directly from outside the car, you should respond with an appropriate level of force to extricate yourself and your passengers from the situation.

Cracked or broken windows definitely warrant bumping people out of the way. Having guns pointed at you could definitely justify an outright mow-down or return fire.

Overreacting to "mere" harassment actions will likely see you written up as the bad guy in the encounter. It is definitely a shitty thing, but "them's the brakes" in our wasted era.

Crack Windows to Avoid Cracked Windows

What the what?! The title of this section doesn't make any sense! Actually, it does if you know the trick that I'm about to teach you! But if I'm being honest it is a little play on words based on a technique that a switched-on buddy recently shared with me.

You don't need me to explain to you that you want to avoid having your windows broken by the mob which will allow them unfettered access to the people in the vehicle. Duh.

And it also makes sense that you would obviously want your windows rolled up to afford you at least a reasonably durable barrier between you and the animals outside the car. Also, true.

But check this out: A window that is slightly open is actually harder to break than one that is rolled all the way up and snug in its frame. Sound unbelievable? Maybe, but it's true. That is physics staring back at you!

If you are dealing with members of a mob who are pounding on the car very aggressively, or have objects in their hands that could potentially shatter or bust your windows as carefully and as under control as you can crack your windows open just a little bit, less than an inch.

This will make them far more shatter resistant, and hopefully stymie the efforts of the hooligans.

But...

Beware Chemical Agents

Anytime you are near a mob you must beware chemical agents, both those being employed by the mob and those being used against the mob by police forces or civilians who are trying desperately to protect their holdings.

Tear gas and pepper spray are going to be the Flavors of the Month, but you must also be cautious of smoke grenades and bottles or bags filled with human excrement that are commonly employed by the current crop of disgusting revolutionaries.

This is one situation where having the window cracked even a little bit could potentially let some of the nasty stuff into the vehicle. You will have to make that call yourself as to what is the bigger threat.

What you should do no matter what to help prevent intrusion of OC or CS gas is shut down the air conditioner or heater. This will not completely stop outside air and the agents that it carries from getting in but it will definitely slow it.

Nudge, Don't Ram

When things have deteriorated to the point that you are completely justified in using force with your vehicle to escape from the situation, make sure you don't go too heavy on the gas and actually ram someone or something.

All that is needed is a steady and moderated application of the throttle in order to push past people on the sides of your car and push people ahead of you out of the way. Trust me, they will start moving, although it never fails some idiots vainly try to hold a car in place by leaning into it when this occurs.

If someone is not getting out of the way in time and potentially may go under the wheels you will have to make a decision whether or not you slow down a little more to give them an extra try or keep going and let them deal with the consequences of their fooling around in the road.

Remember, running over anybody is certainly lethal force and you can only use lethal force in response to a threat of like-kind.

Another reason you definitely don't want to run into anyone at speed is that the majority of modern cars have sophisticated crash sensors and passenger safety systems that will activate in case of any significant

collision, and oftentimes a collision that is far less intense than you might be thinking.

These systems include the airbags, seat belt locks and engine kill switch. It would not do to plow into some anarchist rioter only to have your car or truck left dead in the water in the middle of a crowd that will now be baying for your blood. That is the makings of a bad day!

When the time comes to get on the gas, remember: Nudge, don't ram!

The No-No's

For every helpful article making the rounds on the internet about this very topic there are half a dozen more posts and potboilers that are espousing tactics and procedures that rate anywhere from "dubious" to "counterproductive".

I have assembled a collection of my favorites below along with my commentary. Suffice to say, you should not do them or at best think long and hard before attempting to employ them.

- **"Deploy a tear gas/O.C. gas grenade when your car is surrounded."** Yeah, honestly, I think not. While this might seem like a good idea on the surface and everyone is in love with the cool-guy image of pitching a grenade through their sunroof into the roiling crowd, this idea is a non-starter mostly because opening any window or other hatch in the vehicle wide enough to deploy the grenade makes you vulnerable, and also because rioters have become very astute at defeating these devices when used by police through such cutting-edge techniques as throwing the damn thing back and wearing gas masks of their own. Plus, these devices are expensive and not commonly available. Forget about it.

- **“Be prepared to shoot and drive if you must.”** Just so we are entirely clear, the operator of the vehicle should focus on driving the vehicle, and leave the shooting to repel boarders to someone else, but if you are the chief protector or only person capable of doing so in the vehicle you are to be shooting or driving, but not both at the same time.
- **“If you live in ‘X’ state and see rioters in the road you can legally just run them over.”** Good grief, where do these people come from? No, no you cannot and it doesn’t matter what legislation is being floated or by what party. If you run someone down with your vehicle and cannot articulate (to say nothing of convince a jury) of the imminent, realistic, lethal threat against your life you are going to be going away for a very, very long time.

Folks just because things are getting really spicy out there, and the 2020s are shaping up to be a tumultuous decade does not mean it is open season on the idiots, scumbags and savages who regularly attempt to block our roads and interfere with traffic.

You definitely have to be on your toes and you must be prepared to react with whatever level of force is necessary, but self-defense is still a thinking man’s game and if we are to be the good guys, we must conduct ourselves appropriately and appropriately entails a certain level of accountability.

Conclusion

Believe me, riotous mobs aren’t going anywhere for the foreseeable future, and it will be increasingly likely that you will encounter a throng of violent actors or an impromptu roadblock when travelling through or near hotspots.

Knowing how to correctly react and if required escalate force while operating a vehicle is paramount to success in such an event, as is knowing how to adequately defend yourself from within the vehicle. This is a terrifying thing for anyone to go through, so you had better be prepared!

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