On occasions our undercover officers have to work in environments where it is impossible to conceal their duty or undercover firearm. Also, experience tells us when an undercover officer is assaulted by a suspect it is sudden and unexpected. Even if the undercover officer is armed with a firearm they must first physically respond to the assault in an effort to “buy them some time” to retrieve their undercover firearm. Sometimes the severity of the assault itself never allows the undercover officer to retrieve their firearm. Or in worst case scenario’s the officer does not have a firearm.

Based on the above, we recommend that undercover, as well as plain clothes and even off-duty officers be allowed by policy to use whatever “weapon of opportunity” that is within their grasp or to use any type of non-conventional weapon they may have on their person to prevent bodily harm or death. These unique weapons should be allowed until such time as the officer can effectively retrieve their issued weapon, if they are in fact armed.

As to a force continuum for undercover or off-duty officers, there is no such thing. They typically are not being assaulted because the suspects thinks they are a law enforcement officer and because the assault is so sudden and violent they rarely have the time or wherewithal to identify themselves as such. Even if they are the exception and verbally identify themselves it will be rare that the suspect can even understand and accept such an announcement as being the truth. They must be allowed to fight by whatever means necessary to survive.

Charlie Fuller

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