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**Highway Drug Interdiction**  
with Sgt. Andrew Hawkes

## Female suspects: They CAN hurt you!

We have all done it: felt way too relaxed when dealing with a female suspect. We're big, bad, tough cops right? Whether we are male or female, we often tend to let our guard down when dealing with a female. Male officers in particular are likely to think that a woman won't be able to hurt them. We are the ones in uniform — that makes us ten feet tall and bulletproof.

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At least, that's what I thought. Let me take you back to a dark winter night on a desolate stretch of country road. I had pulled over an intoxicated driver, a lone female driver. I was all of 185 pounds, in shape, and I had an obnoxious 240 pound drunk country girl on my hands. The time came to take her into custody and you know how it sometimes goes downhill quickly? Well, the next thing I know, I'm getting jumped by this intoxicated woman. The first thoughts that ran through my mind were "I can't believe this is happening... I don't want to hurt her, she's a woman."

While I was preoccupied about "not hurting her" she commences to strike me a few times in the head and by the time I realized that I was indeed in a real fight, we were already rolling around in the bar ditch.

An intense 92 second fight incurred, complete with me screaming for back up on the radio. After I was able to get her pinned down, I still couldn't get her hands free from under her 240 pound frame. I finally managed to get them free and was able to handcuff her.

It was after I rolled her over and sat her up on her rear end that I saw it. There it was, lying on the ground where only seconds before her hands were in the same location: A .25 caliber Beretta handgun, chambered, cocked, with nothing but the safety on that had fallen out of her clothing.

I came within seconds of potentially losing my life because I had hesitated to use my training on a female suspect. Luckily, I survived and have never taken another female suspect's potential to hurt me for granted ever again.

Always remember a criminal that wants to hurt you can, no matter what gender they are. We are trained as police officer's to prepare for this, but until it actually does happen, the light switch in your head might not come on. So remember your training, always. Whether you are a young, new officer on the street or a seasoned, street hardened cop, don't think a suspect can't hurt you because of their gender. I look back now, despite all of the jokes from my buddies about getting my rear end "whooped" by a female, and I laugh about it too, but deep down I am glad that I am alive.

Stay safe out there and go home at the end of you shift.  
Andrew G. Hawkes