



I've made my share of mistakes in life but there's one that stands out, to me, as one of the biggest. That was purchasing, and attempting to use, a concealed carry purse.

As I've said many times, I've made some stupendous, gargantuan mistakes in life, but I've always tried to learn from them. The story I'm about to relate was one of the biggest.

At the time these events were happening I was totally new to the concept of carrying a weapon in public, but I was by no means new to or unfamiliar with firearms. My uncle, a Marine rifleman and proud member of the *Chosin Few*, taught me how to handle a firearm when I was eight years old. By the time I was nine I was a crack-shot with an M1 Carbine and he and I spent a lot of time at the range. Rifleman that he was, he swore by a philosophy based on the idea that *"the sole purpose of a pistol is to fight your way back to the rifle you never should have set down in the first place."* He taught me to be proficient with a pistol, but he made me an expert with a rifle. By the time I was old enough to apply for a CPL I was a safe and accomplished shooter, but I was greener than grass when it came to carrying a sidearm in public.

I'd passed my **Concealed Pistol License** course, I'd been fingerprinted and photographed, and I'd turned my application in to the County Clerk's office and paid my fee. Now, all I had to do was wait for my permit to arrive.

I'd spoken with a few other women, at the course, and they were fretting over what holster to use, what impact carrying a gun would make on their wardrobe choices, when they would be able to carry and when they wouldn't and how they would use the ladies room when carrying a weapon. I wasn't very outgoing in those days, so I listened, and nodded, and felt very comfortable in the fact that I had that problem solved. I mean I had that problem solved six ways to Sunday. This was one of those cases where it's easy to delude yourself into believing that you're easily the smartest person in the room. How could anyone fail to see the perfect option? My solution to every single one of those problem had arrived just a few days earlier. The UPS man had delivered my brand-new concealed carry purse.

I already carried a purse everywhere I went so why not just switch to one that carried all my normal accoutrements plus a Colt 1911 Officer's Model? This was a no-brainer. I always knew I was bright, but I was beginning to realize I wasn't just bright. I was, in fact, beyond any doubt, absolutely brilliant. I transferred the contents of my old purse to the new one and began using it, without the pistol, right away. Eventually, my permit did arrive in the mail and I was ready.

Something happens to a person the first time they step out the door of their home carrying a lethal weapon. A certain amount of paranoia sets in. You become highly self-conscious and you're positive everyone knows you're carrying. It's quite uncomfortable but it does gradually fade away. On my first outing I chose to go to one of our local *Meijer*® stores. They set the pattern for Walmart SuperCenters before there were Walmart SuperCenters. I had a lot of shopping to do and I had the day off. I finally realized that unless I began acting like I'd done something wrong nobody would suspect I was armed. I relaxed. I settled into a normal rhythm.



Soon I was absorbed in shopping. I was so absorbed that I became oblivious. I fell into old patterns and behaviors. I'd placed my purse in the cart's child seat and went about my business. That was perfectly acceptable to me. Had my purse been snatched I'd have lost a credit card or two and maybe a couple hundred dollars in cash and my keys. The chances of that were, I thought, rather slim and constituted a reasonable risk but circumstances had changed. That purse now contained an Officer's Model 1911 with seven rounds* of 185 grain Jacket Hollow Point ammunition in the magazine and one more in the chamber. The piece was in *Condition 1*, magazine and chamber loaded, hammer cocked, and thumb safety applied. This was not business as usual. I made an unforgivable error.

As I'd done thousands of times before, I stepped several feet away from the cart and focused my attention on my shopping. I was horrified when I discovered what I'd just done.

So much for that idea. I'd had the bag in true "hand-bag" configuration. If I were to have it under my direct control, as it now needed to be, I'd need to hold it in my hand at all times. That was unacceptable. I retrieved the shoulder strap that I'd placed inside the purse and installed it. I now had a concealed carry purse that was securable provided I didn't simply place the strap over my shoulder. I would need to wear it cross-body for it to be secure and as an added bonus it would also be "hands free." After a minor set-back I was back in business. With a little luck I could even convince myself that I was still a genius.

Then I came home, made dinner, and watched the news. I saw a story, similar to the pictures below. A local woman had been beaten and kicked into unconsciousness because she refused



to give up her purse that she just happened to be wearing cross-body. She still lost her purse and its contents and nearly her life, as well. Then it dawned upon me. If I were in that situation and I were struggling to regain control of my purse, my weapon, stored in that purse, wouldn't be available to me. My IQ just took a huge nosedive. Suddenly I realized my concealed carry miracle was a total failure much like most other panaceas.

That was a big day for me. I learned two extremely important life lessons:

1. I wasn't nearly as smart as I thought I was.
2. Concealed carry purses are a very bad idea.

This was the state of my knowledge when I failed to convince Harry and Marge that concealed carry purses were less than a good idea, as I'd related in the article [Intimidation and Harassment](#). Then the true reality came to me in the middle of the night and it gave me chills. I've been referring to this as "the nuclear option" as far as this being a one-shot kill for the concealed carry purse idea.



Purses get snatched. There's no doubt about that and it's happening more frequently. Let's take an objective look at exactly what happens when your concealed carry purse is taken away from you.

At one time I considered myself to be an average female. As of late I've streamlined my life somewhat but up until a year or so ago here's the list of important items I'd have lost if my purse were snatched.

Most of us would lose our wallet or whatever we use to contain or organize our credit and debit cards, healthcare cards, identification cards, driver's license, pistol permits, membership cards to social clubs etc. Most of us keep our keys in our purses and those could include our car keys, keys for our home and various places inside our home such as small safes or even gun safes. Some carry cards with security access codes to home security systems. Very few of us carry less than that so let's see what we have to offer the criminal who steals our concealed carry purse. We've quite possibly just given him, or even her:

1. The address of our home, derived from our ID cards and driver's licenses. They now have the ability to drive right up to our front door.
2. We've given them access to our home any time of the day or night. They have our keys.
3. If they weren't armed previously they are now, with our own pistol and ammunition.

In other words, the criminal that stole our purse has the ability to come to our home, walk into any door they like, steal everything we own or, should they so desire, kill our entire family, in our beds, while we sleep. After that they're still armed with the gun we provided.

I look at concealed carry purses as "Please, come rape, rob, pillage and murder my family," kits.

Is there anyone who still thinks a concealed carry purse is a good idea?

*Every single time I tell this story someone, who believes a woman can't be knowledgeable as far as firearms go, has to point out my "error." They always contend the magazine capacity of an Officer's Model is less than seven rounds. It isn't when one purchases [Chip McCormick Custom® magazines](#).



A pdf copy of this article may be downloaded [here](#).