Subject: Founders roundtable podcast proposal

Victor,

I'd like to create a roundtable podcast at Founders that brings the Second Amendment community together to talk through real situations, hear different opinions and examine the responsibilities that come with carrying a gun. We'd put members, defense attorneys, law enforcement officers, people who have defended themselves, victims and witnesses at the same table. The conversation would come from their experiences, their disagreements and what they've learned. Each week, we'd take a different topic and bring people to the table who have something to contribute to that discussion.

The idea grew out of a discussion in the Founders WhatsApp chat about upgraded triggers, how members felt those changes helped them shoot, and their expectations about being justified in a defensive shooting. I raised the concern that how we see ourselves and our choices may be very different from how those choices could be portrayed afterward. We discussed how someone's firearm modifications, social media and lifestyle could be used to paint a picture of them that they would never have expected.

Mike G., a Founders member and an active SWAT law enforcement firearms instructor with his agency, joined that conversation and agreed that people often have preconceived ideas about how an encounter and its aftermath will unfold. We talked about walking quietly and carrying a big stick. He would like to be involved in the podcast, and with his permission I can give you his full name.

There's a lot of confidence in our community about being able to defend ourselves. But surviving a confrontation and protecting the rest of your life can be very different challenges. Physical injuries, criminal proceedings, civil lawsuits, public scrutiny, financial pressure and the effect on a family can continue long after the encounter ends. I want people to think about those realities before they ever have to face them.

Someone can be certain they were justified and still discover that other people see their actions very differently. Witnesses may have seen different parts of the event. A person stepping in may have misunderstood how it started. Public opinion may take shape before the evidence is heard. We'd bring in attorneys who have handled these cases and people who have lived through them to discuss how the facts, testimony, jury instructions and presentation of a case affected what happened.

The conversations would cover why people carry, how they judge their own abilities, when they escalate or de-escalate, and what leads someone to believe they should intervene. We'd hear how others at the table would handle the same circumstances, including people who chose to walk away. There would be room for the physical, emotional and spiritual consequences, and for family members whose lives were changed by someone else's decision.

Our role would be to listen, ask thoughtful follow-up questions and let people debate each other. I'd welcome members who consent to participate and are willing to share a story, offer an opinion or question an assumption. Founders and the local community already have firsthand experience to draw from, including people who have survived shootings and are still dealing with recovery and court proceedings.

This matters to me personally. I'm a former SWAT officer, agency firearms instructor and range staff member, and I've been a law enforcement certified firearms instructor for 32 years. I contract directly with local and federal governments, and with foreign governments through ITAR and defense services contracts. My work includes training, standard operating procedures, institutional and enterprise security, and work for politicians, celebrities and private clients whose circumstances involve high net worth, high risk and significant liability.

I also led U.S. security for Genesis Digital Assets, a company valued at $5.5 billion in 2022, with security responsibilities spanning more than 15 locations across three states. My background includes corporate security policy development, incident coordination and leadership of a distributed guard force. I've included a reference letter from the company's Head of Internal Control describing that work.

As a staff range officer and instructor for my agency, I served as an expert witness in more than 170 cases during my career, including officer-involved shootings and other shooting cases, including murder cases. I've seen outcomes go very differently from what people expected because of testimony, the circumstances, how the evidence was presented and how a jury understood it.

I've also personally been involved in police-involved shootings on duty and shootings off duty. My first shooting was while serving as a police officer in Baltimore. In the aftermath of departmental shootings, I was branded a racist in newspaper coverage. In connection with my own incidents, I've faced criminal charges and been exonerated, and been civilly sued and cleared. I've witnessed shootings and watched how families were affected.

A couple of years ago, I had to defend myself and my dog from two pit bulls attacking us on Fort Lauderdale Beach. It was alleged that I had shot a woman in the hand, when she had actually been bitten by her own dog. The allegation that I had shot her was false and was never retracted by the media. I received death threats and dealt with coverage that misrepresented what happened. Those experiences are part of why I write about these issues and want others to have a chance to understand what they could face.

I also know a federal agent who was involved in a shooting outside the Blue Martini in Fort Lauderdale that came under scrutiny. One person involved in our production was seriously wounded in a shooting here in Fort Lauderdale several years ago and is still dealing with physical recovery and ongoing litigation. He would remain unnamed at this time. I'd welcome other members in and around Founders who want to share how an encounter changed their lives in ways they had never anticipated. These experiences could help people understand what carrying a gun can and cannot prepare them for. These are just our own local examples. I'm sure there are other stories and lessons within the Founders membership that we could share and debate in good faith and good spirit.

I've been having these conversations with Founders members for about three months. Yesterday, I discussed the podcast idea with Lenny, Lilly and Chris. I understand Lenny and Lilly are handling the club's communications, and Lenny suggested I email you. I've copied Lenny and Chris here. I've also spoken with interested members, including Mike G., an active SWAT firearms instructor who wants to do it with me. I plan to invite Frank Adderley, former Chief of Police for Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, and reach out to other leaders, officers and attorneys.

I'd fund the initial pilot myself and propose recording it in the back lounge. I'd like to introduce you to Chris Hedlund, known as Chris Headshots, as the studio producer and editor. Chris is a professional photographer, videographer and podcast producer who owns his own studio and is willing to come in and handle production. Chris knows both Lilly and Lenny. He would handle recording and editing, and we could review the pilot together.

From there, I'd like to pursue sponsorship from USCCA, the NRA, legal service providers, attorneys, Glock, BUL Armory and other firearm companies and 2A businesses. Those companies are examples, and I'm open to any relationships you would like to involve as potential sponsors.

My longer-term goal is a national podcast that helps people discover Founders around the country. As the club grows into other counties and states, the show could give future members a reason to know Founders before a location opens near them. It could help establish the club as a leading resource for responsible, safe gun ownership, bringing people together to share knowledge and learn from experience.

Tactical U Firearms Training has been an NRA-affiliated agency since 2011. My eight books explore many of these issues. My resume and books are linked below, and I've included my capability statement, a Federal Reserve Police reference letter and the Genesis Digital Assets reference letter. Additional reference letters are available upon request.

My resume and credentials
My books

I'd like your blessing to put the first episode together at Founders and show you what this could become. I'd also welcome your involvement and introductions to people in your network who might want to participate as guests, contribute their expertise or help support the show.

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Cohen
Tactical U Firearms Training