

20250521 Shooting at Styx

What a Beautiful Day to be Anywhere but Home!



Why? You ask... Only to be initially ignored because the answer is obvious. However, because you insist.

Primarily because there was work to be done. That's right, actual work. Well, "work" of sorts. The work at playing kind of work, which is the only kind of work a sane retiree (such as myself) actually, enthusiastically, performs. Specifically in this instance: The unresolved issues with a [SAVAGE PRECISION 64](#) that had been left on the back burner needed to be resolved. This means videos, photos, ammo, targets, targets with holes (or probably without holes in this instance), signed and notarized witness statements, and (mostly) an adventure at our favorite outdoor location: [Styx River Range](#).

Strolling Down Memory Lane Because You Probably Forgot

This is graphic, indisputable evidence of the performance achieved and expected capability realized in December 2024, when the SAVAGE PRECISION 64 was taken to the range, outfitted with the [VORTEX DIAMONDBACK FFP TACTICAL 6-24X50](#) with EBR-2C (MOA) Reticle, properly zeroed, and permitted the opportunity to demonstrate its fierce, feral, ferociousness...

Note the tight group (accuracy and precision) in the red square obtained when using bulk ammo. Witness the accuracy when targeting the centers of the two lower boxes. Observe the placement of the bullet aimed at the vertical yellow line midway between the two thinner horizontal lines. All this during windy conditions, if you can call 5 MPH "windy".



Unfortunately, the next outing in April 2025 was quite the opposite. I didn't bother removing the pristine targets after completely missing every shot. Magazines struggled to fit into the chassis. Rounds would not feed up the ramp; those leaving the magazine usually jammed or stove piped. If they fed, the loading process shaved or distorted the lead bullet. Even worse: The majority of firing pin strikes for the measly few rounds successfully seating in the chamber were light strikes and did not fire. The few successfully firing missed a 50-yard target so badly that they were completely off paper, which is to be expected with a shaved, flattened or distorted bullet. I was completely out of my mind with anger...

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Three different types of ammo were used and failed. (Federal, Winchester, and Aquila.) A total of eight different magazines were tried during testing, with identical, failing results. Four experienced gunsmiths were stumped and humiliated after failing to solve this Chinese Puzzle. Nothing worked, literally and figuratively, as the rifle was repeatedly disassembled, cleaned, inspected, reassembled, and test fired.

The only recourse was to call SAVAGE. (It would be crude, untoward, and obscene to state the specifics of what we repeatedly called SAVAGE.) After a timeout extending for several days, we phoned SAVAGE and explained our plight without using those choice words. To their credit, SAVAGE stated they would examine the rifle and make necessary repairs if sent to them at our expense. They stated any available photos or videos would assist with troubleshooting...

All of which explains the rationale and necessity of a range trip.

Arranging a Range AM Sojourn—Couldn't radio this in

Admittedly, the circumstances sucked and were stressful, beginning with opening and holding the donut shop door for a lady who ordered six-dozen of the finest delectable delights available in Mobile AL. In point of fact, she ordered and paid for seven-dozen but played magician and disappeared the first dozen faster than you can say **Bob's your starving uncle**. Completing the order took time for the terrorized employees. This delay increased the amount of morning traffic, precluding a speedy trip to our goal.

Opinion: Giving young people the opportunity to obtain a Driver's License at age 16 has many potentially positive possibilities. Sadly, the vast majority of these blessed youth fail to avail themselves of these opportunities, though somehow survive the prospective learning experiences unchanged. Learning experiences for others, that is. Apparently, the survivors never learn from their many near-death experiences and only tend to acquire additional bad habits as well as stretch health and safety violations well beyond the limits of sanity and reasonable probability of surviving.

This means the drive took twice as long as it should have taken because these zealous youth were exercising a tradition of delinquency and absenteeism to celebrate the last week of school. The only difference between attendance and absence? These budding astronauts would not be taking up space in school. Assume: Inexperienced teens. No sleep. Probably drugs and alcohol in the blood. Cars. Speed. Distractions. Unrealistic ~~thoughts~~ fantasies of first-time coupling for the INCELS amongst them. Friends blazing "music" through overpowered stereos as the car first blazed down the interstate, intersected other cars, then blazed on the interstate creating a bonfire not part of their wild imaginations. Plus side? Personally witnessing the conflagrations obviated the need to view the videos on YouTube or nightly news. Gawd how I hate watching repeats. Don't you? Um, BBQ anyone? Darwin Award nominee forms are on the table in the back.

Arrival

Not to be confused with any number of cheap Syfy movies or books with similar titles

Upon arrival, the range was pretty much deserted, which is my favorite flavor of shooting.

Happily, a considerable amount of post-flood rehabilitation and other improvements had been accomplished since my last visit. The ground was dry. Best of all, thanks to their recent watering, the berms had grown several feet in height and were now fully mature.

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It took but a few seconds to obtain permission from Charlie (Owner) to video. One must always seek permission. When it is not given, do what you want. If someone objects, claim there was a misunderstanding because of your service-related hearing loss. The disabled vet trump card—never leave home without it!

Setup

My SAVAGE PRECISION 64 was placed on my range bag in Lane 7 with video equipment placed and configured in Lane 6.



Why a range bag for support? Where is your [MDT ORYX Bipod](#)? you might ask. Well, I took it off and put it on my RUGER PRECISION RIMFIRE last week.

Your what? You exclaim!

To which I innocently and sweetly reply: *Take notes if you can't keep up...*

This, ladies and gentlemen, was definitely a setup designed to place you in this exact, precise situation. It was starting the story in the middle and creating the need to explain basic economics.

Basic Economics

It being the more temperate months, it is reasonable to expect me to STYX at least every two weeks. The express purpose of such trips? Shooting. (Duh!) Hopefully at least 100 – 200 rounds per trip.

Shooting is expensive. The primary reason for shooting the smaller caliber rounds is economy. You get almost the same thrill with less noise and kick as when shooting the larger calibers. Approximate costs per round?

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| • .177 pellet | \$0.05 | • 6.5 Creed | \$2.00 |
| • .22LR | \$0.08 | • .308 | \$2.50 |
| • .223/5.56 | \$0.60 | | |

Boss Lady showed wisdom, understanding, and economic acumen beyond the reach of elected politicians sporting the **D** behind their names. She asked how many trips it would take to cross the break-even point after purchasing another precision rifle. Can we say: MUSIC TO MY EARS! The numbers justified the acquisition/investment.

We welcome our latest, um..., *economically driven* and justified addition: A [Ruger Precision Rimfire](#).



What can I say? Though difficult on a personal level, the team demanded this sacrifice from me.

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Satisfying SAVAGE

We loaded two magazines with Federal and Winchester ammo, then attempted to fire these. The disappointing results did not disappoint as we expected failure. One could honestly state that the magnitude of the failures exceeded expectations.



Of the 20 rounds loaded into the two magazines, 14 failed to feed, stove piped, jammed, or experienced light strikes insufficient to ignite the primer.



Nine-of-ten brass from the first magazine were recovered. Only three ignited and fired. The other round disappeared into another dimension, probably in embarrassment and shame. Some usually reliable sources claim space aliens were involved in the disappearance. Others claim drugs and alcohol were

involved and swear it is hiding in a homeless encampment in a blue state, collecting welfare and entitlements, too ashamed to show its face in public.



Regardless, the second magazine suffered similarly embarrassing results. Some rounds were recovered, horrifically mangled with deformed noses. Others demonstrated the savagery of the SAVAGE rifle that sliced their sides. *O, the humanity...*

Only a few rounds from the second magazine were recovered. These additional disappearances fueled more speculation, feeding the failed feeding mystery.

The only verifiable fact? In total, only 6 rounds of 20 actually fired. All of these hit the 8" target hung at 50 yards. All went high. Others spun a bit high and left. For those who were wondering, I assure you, the results wouldn't have significantly improved had I kept my eyes open.



The Savage Precision was taken down and packed away. But not in the sense of a cheap mobster movie. Thankfully, the events were captured on video and published on YouTube, where they are available for your inspection.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45qrcR94Uec>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igNjg9BZVVA>

Admittedly there was a considerable amount of latitude taken with—and slight deviation from—the strictest interpretation of range safety. However, the RSO was standing with gun drawn behind the shooter, who was the only civilian on the range. The greater concern was maintaining camera focus and framing to ensure maximum benefit for the SAVAGE factory gunsmiths. This behavior is not customary

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and certainly not recommended as “best practice”. Yet, it was appropriate. Well, maybe not the drawn pistol, but I am well known to the RSOs. Can’t say that I blame them.

More Issues—What Else?

This time with the RPR

The RPR received the benefit of the bipod and scope. The M-LOK rail took the bipod as a fish takes to water—unless it is the polluted water adjacent to an ecologically hostile factory discharge outlet.

The scope was an entirely different story. The VORTEX 30 mm rings (1” height) were attached to a 20-moa rail on the SAVAGE. The RPR features a lower, 30-moa rail. The difference is not without consequence. Why else would I mention it?



The front end (objective lens) and shade of the scope impinged against—and rested on—the handguard. The angle of declination was such that the top of the front scope ring could not be placed and tightened. This is known as (forgive the technical term) suboptimal. It degrades performance.

Did this stop us from shooting? [Shirley, you can't be serious...](#)

We hung a sight-in target at 50-yards and endeavored to find an acceptable “mounting system” for the scope. The kluge involved “torquing” the rear scope rings to “finger tight”—read this as incredibly loose to the point where the scope freely rotated. The bottom of the front rings were torqued to the pic rail while the top was “mounted”, but only with partially engaged threads. Rubber bands were employed to “secure” the front of the scope in place. In addition, a piece of shirt cardboard had been placed between the front scope ring and the scope in order to raise the scope above the handguard...

Eye relief? The term didn’t apply to this Frankenstein’s monster. The results were quite interesting. It took a bit of fidgeting to true horizontal and vertical. (Maybe True in the sense of a politician under oath answering questions under threat of perjury.) It took a bit more fidgeting to figure out how to modify pressure from the rubber bands to hold the scope in place—well, relatively secure and in place.

The lower half of the target displays results of the trial-and-error mounting process. These were considerably better than expected. Especially when considering these were the first shots from this rifle and the barrel had no prior break-in. The pattern was generally low (left-to-right), then up while maintaining off to the right.



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A rough order of magnitude attempt was made to zero using a real target—the diamond at the top right of the target. From an initial high and right, a few tweaks put us right on an approximate zero within several moa of desired. Unfortunately, this didn't quite hold because the rubber band slipped a bit and moved off the turret cap. *C'est la vie*, which is a fancy way of acknowledging that sometimes life really sux-ez.

The rubber band was repositioned and attention shifted to the upper-left diamond with incredible results. It took a few rounds to reset zero, which was initially quite high/left. After emptying a 25-round magazine into an expanding hole, another 15-ish rounds made the hole slightly larger. The scope was painstakingly dialed down 1 moa and about ½ moa right. This produced the 10-group at the lower right of the bullseye.

Yes, admittedly, there were a few flyers. Not making excuses, but this was phenomenal performance under the conditions and given the circumstances.

RUGER 10/22

Next victim, please

Someone borrowed and shot my 10/22 on a previous outing. I know. Really atypical behavior from me, right?

The supposed shooter complained that the rifle or scope had to be messed up because he couldn't hit the target.

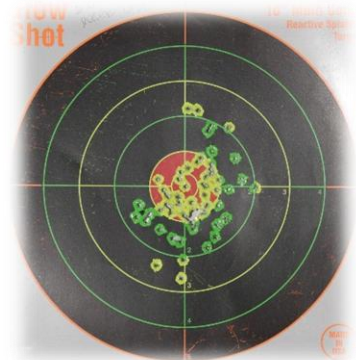
Troubleshooting this was a lower priority than dealing with the SAVAGE, but we got to it after we got to it.

My suspicions were confirmed after 50 rounds of 100-yard semi-rapid fire—it was him, not the rifle. Imagine my relief...

Taurus TX-22

Shifting attention to pistols, we began with the reliable TX-22, though eschewing the laser in favor of the iron sights. It could have been better, though the results are marginally acceptable. Again, we obtained permission and practiced low-ready, fire, return to low-ready, shifting position between shots. The rate of fire wasn't exactly rapid fire, but a close approximation.

The only disappointment was that others were now ~~polluting~~ populating the range and I was not permitted to avail myself of moving target practice. Bummer...



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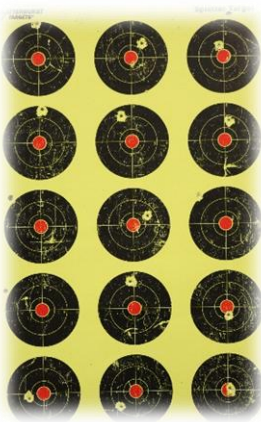
Taurus TX-22 C(ompetition)

The next pistol was our reliable and accurate competition model using bulk ammo.

The group began to spread out as the hole got larger because it was hard to find something to target on the target.

Initially firing high and left, the reflex optics were adjusted a bit. They still need a bit more fine tuning on the next outing, yes?

Significantly, this was actually rapid fire from low-ready, fire, return to low-ready with changing position between shots.



I had one remaining magazine and decided to again try a true rapid fire, moving from one target to the next.

Beginning top left, I shot right.

I then dropped down and shot the next row to the left.

The zig-zag pattern was repeated for 15 rounds with acceptable results.

The final round targeted the letter “T” barely visible at the upper right of the target.

This shot was not rushed but was a bit low.

Again, acceptable but nothing heroic with two flyers.

Helicat—Tritium Sights

The next pistol was my EDC 9mm with a 2” barrel using the OEM iron-sight.

I fired two magazines, each containing 10-rounds. Once again, low ready, fire, low ready—but with a magazine swap.

It took a few to settle down. Acceptable but nothing to boast about.

I obviously need to spend a bit more time with the dry fire laser down our 35’ hall. The grip necessary to control a micro-frame is substantially different from that necessary to control a full-frame. Thus, you could probably opine that I am out of practice and had lost my grip.



Casualty

There was a range casualty while I was there, resulting from a tragic accident. As I was walking to hang targets, my shoe exploded—literally—and the soul separated from the upper. May it have floated up to Heaven to be with the Master Cobbler in the Sky...

Imagine being 100 yards downrange. Now imagine doing a clown impression, mimicking the movements of a red-haired, white faced ~~hellion~~ comedian with size 36, narrow, shoes. Carefully lift foot very high. Slowly step forward. Carefully transfer weight to ensure you do not face plant. Repeat.

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It took longer to walk that 100 yards than I typically take to walk ½ mile.

At least the RSO appreciated my efforts and got a good laugh at my expense. It didn't upset me at all. Still, as luck would have it, he declined my attempts to pay him to hold my targets. But there is always next time... Revenge can wait...

Thank gawd for duck tape. Double thanks for it not being duck hunting season with this crowd.

Addendum

On Sunday, June 1st, Academy Sports accepted possession of the Savage. They sent it back to the factory on Monday. Savage accepted delivery on the morning of June 4th. They won't return my emails or phone calls, so I know nothing. (Apologies to Sgt. Shultz.)

On Thursday, June 5th, the replacement cantilever mount arrived and was installed onto the RPR.



The base rings are properly torqued at 20 inch-pounds, but the barrel is finger tight. I can't properly set horizontal and vertical until I get some distance—at least 100 yards. This requires a range trip on Saturday. Sigh. Another sacrifice demanded.

One final item: Gun Bag.

As luck would have it—unless it is a multistate lottery with the potential to win real money—COSTCO had a range bag almost exactly what I had envisioned. I dreamt it would be free, not come with a \$60 price tag.



Can we say it is a good fit?



Even better: It has backpack straps on the other side and holds two rifles. Now, where did I put that SAVAGE PRECISION?

For the record: I won't be donning this and running through the hills playing [Red Dawn](#), 1984 version.