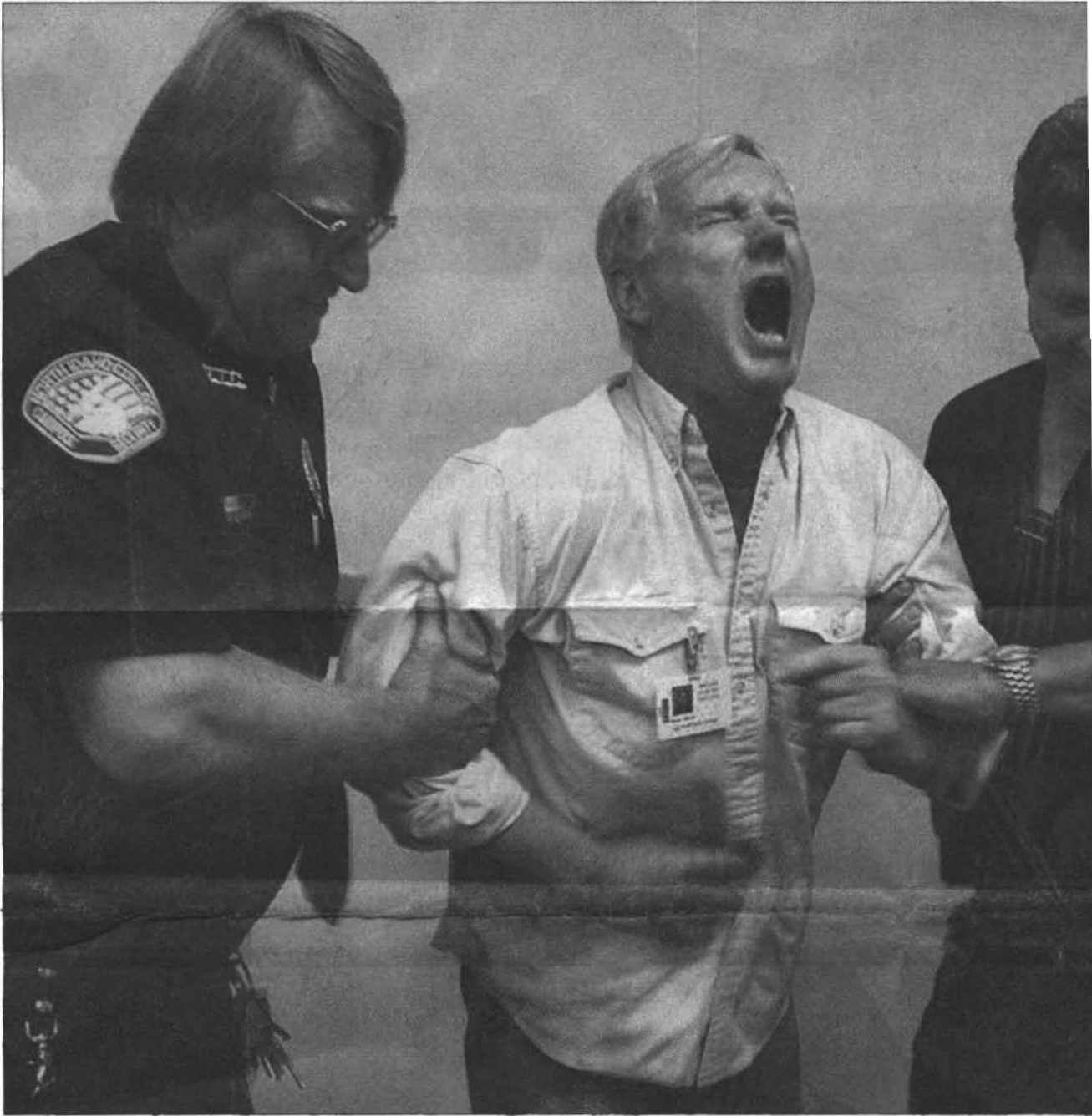
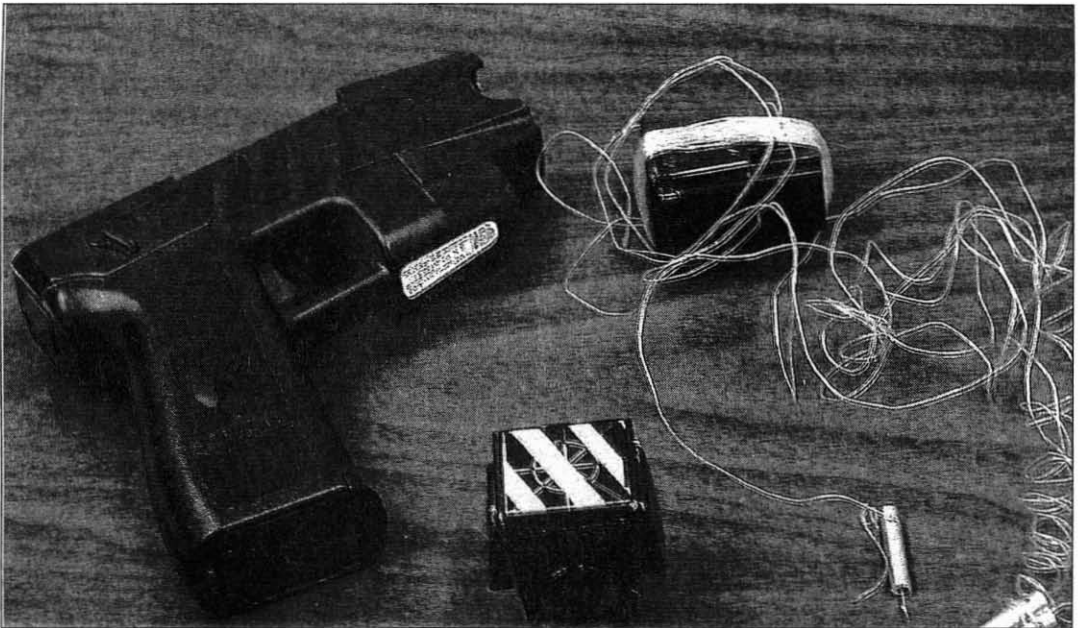


I'm Shocked!



North Idaho College security officer Roger Kehew feels the effects of a one-second gun. The non-lethal weapon fires two probes 21 feet that stun the central nervous uncontrollable contractions. Seven NIC security officers had to experience how the firsthand before being authorized to carry the Taser.



Mike Gretz/The Sentinel

Security officers now possess taser guns, which propel 21 feet of electronic wire once fired. The wire temporarily paralyzes its victim after hooking onto his clothes, digs into his skin and gives a severe shock.

Security officers trained to carry M26 Taser guns

Effort to better protect campus

by Linda Ball

- Staff writer -

Firearms are not an option for the campus security department. More often than not though, they are the first responders to potentially volatile situations. In an effort to better protect the campus and its security officers, nine officers have been trained and equipped with the M26 Taser.

The weapon looks like a gun. It is laser sighted, with a projection of up to 21 feet. The M26 is the most powerful of the tasers. There is a civilian model used primarily by private security agencies that fires up to 15 feet. The M26 is the same model that many police departments use. The M26 was introduced into use in 1999.

When fired, two probes connected to the taser by insulated wires are projected. The weapon affects the central nervous system by imitating the electrical impulses used to communicate within the human body. A hit anywhere on the body can do the trick.

"The electrical charge will go through up to two-and-a-half inches of clothing," said Lead Security Officer Bob Thomson. "The laser sighting is sort of an intimidating factor as well. Just having a laser sight (red dot) on them often makes them (the perpetrator) give up."

He said that if shot at bare skin, the probes only go in a maximum of a quarter inch. While a shot from the M26 totally incapacitates the perpetrator, recovery is almost instantaneous with no permanent damage. Thomson likened it to a bad muscle cramp in your entire body. Nonetheless, these are serious weapons and any violent

confrontation carries with it the risk that someone could get hurt.

All of the security officers trained to carry the M26 had to experience it themselves. Campus Safety Director Mike Halpern and Thomson were trained first, passing the certified instructors course at the Spokane Police Training Center this summer. They then trained seven other officers Oct. 4.

Watching a video of some officers being trained and receiving a shot from the M26, it seems pretty clear that it works. Every time the M26 is fired, it stores the time and date when it was fired, protecting the officer from claims of excessive force by providing documentation.

"While we have an excellent response from the city and county law enforcement agencies, our security officers are generally the first responders to an incident," Halpern said. "They need to have the proper tools to do their job and not be placed at risk."

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PRESS CLIPPINGS

College security orders stun guns

COEUR D'ALENE — Campus security officers at North Idaho College have ordered a batch of electronic stun guns as a way to use non-lethal force in some circumstances.

The school plans to issue eight Advanced Taser M26 energy weapons to its senior security officers as soon as they are trained in its use.

"This is a non-lethal weapon," said Mike Halpern, campus safety director.

The Taser is a pistol-shaped stun gun that fires a pair of wires up to 21 feet and incapacitates a person with a high-voltage electrical charge. Barbs are attached when the wires pierce the skin, and they can penetrate up to 2 inches of clothing.

The Tasers will be used instead of firearms, which are banned on the campus. Until now, the officers have only had pepper spray.