

INSTRUCTOR ZERO

The cognitive challenges in a new area of tactical training

KRIS PARONTO

How to get to a more effective training by becoming a mentor

JACK CARR

Former Navy Seal and author of "The Terminal List"

PAGE 37

Fred Mastro



PAGE 32

Chris Dutch Moyer



PAGE 87

Tony Blauer





The Magazine

Jan. 2021



05 Thomas Lojek



32 Chris Dutch Moyer



09 Instructor Zero



37 Fred Mastro



15 Kris Paronto



45 Jack Carr



23 Ralf Kassner



50 Scott Usry



27 Daniel Rocca



53 James Stejskal



Jan. 2021

GTI *The Magazine*



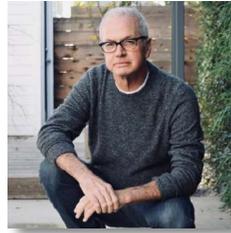
57 ATAC Review



82 Clay Martin



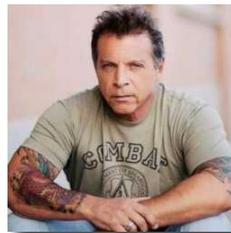
61 Walter Bizzarri



84 Chris Hauty



67 Nick Drossos



87 Tony Blauer



69 Brian Bewley



92 René Gaemers



75 Trevor Thrasher



96 Neil Held



GTI

The Magazine

Jan. 2021



99 Varg Freeborn



109 Mark Human



101 Paolo Simeone



112 Paul Bonnici



102 Tom Buchino



114 Ken Witt

THANK YOU:



Instructor Zero

The cognitive challenges in a new area of tactical training



“Virtual range scars“ and intellectual bias form counterproductive pattern in your training and your shooting habits!

In today’s information age, emboldened by the modern internet, the line between what makes sense and what is utter nonsense can be thin. This is especially true for the tactical training industry.

On one hand, we are living in a very blessed time: internet, YouTube, and social media have spread the importance of our profession around the

globe. Meanwhile, new technologies, give us access to highly specialized information. We should truly be grateful for this. This is the modern, exciting world we are living in.

However, on the other hand, we face a very dangerous and counterproductive phenomenon that I call “The cognitive bubble of YouTube.” What I mean is, if the brain watches

something, it takes that information in and creates its own reality. There are those out there who watch shooting videos. Those same people then think they are trained, simply because of what they have seen. Or, they just feel better by what they have seen.

This visual stimulus gives them an adrenaline rush because it seems exciting and it seems like it may have some logic. The brain takes this visual stimulus, accompanied by the physiological response to the stimulus, and makes its own



reality, simply because of what was just seen.

The immediate and on demand access to this stimulus creates the illusion of being able to perform what the brain has just processed due to the accessible visual stimulus. People are creating a false sense of professionalism and security when they take this information in and then turn it into their own reality, whether consciously or subconsciously.

The end-result is “virtual range scars” sneaking silently into your thinking as intellectual bias or, as a counterproductive pattern in your own shooting habits. This one day may result in very dangerous outcomes for those who act overconfident. It may also be just plain wrong, simply because their brain has consumed information out of context and created its own reality.

Do not fool yourself, it’s not just “kids with a keyboard” syndrome. It can even happen to seasoned professionals because it is very easy to overlook a small error in your thought process or

a dangerous bias. This can be especially true in today’s climate of information overload when we are trying to evaluate certain techniques, while simultaneously, wading through the overflow of too much information.

Especially, if you live and work in the echo chamber of such a highly specialized profession such as tactical training or firearms. Any information can be good and bad at the same time.

We must learn how to handle this constant flow of information while at the same time, being able to recognize when bias and bad habits are overtaking what really makes sense. That will be a huge challenge for our industry. It is very easy to take the opinion of “The internet is bad”, “YouTube sucks”, and so on. We must recognize this reaction is narrow-minded, especially, for a complex profession like tactical training, firearms, or close protection.

We must master the information, not become enslaved by it. Understanding this concept will make a huge difference in how and what we train, for a very long time.



Instructor Zero



That leads me to another point that must be considered based on where we, as an industry, stand today.

If our industry really wants to deliver on what it is promising, then we must instill into the general populations mindset that all information, all training, and all drills, are solely based on context and context alone.

You can train your mind and body to shoot incredibly fast. On the range and in competition, this is beneficial.

However, as a professional in the security business, if you shoot faster than your brain can process information, it could mean serious trouble for you. Mechanics, shooting, and tactics are applied based on context.

The key to discovering what makes sense in your personal training regimen will come only after you have evaluated your environment, purpose, and desired outcome. The context is everything.

In an active shooter situation, a person who can process chaotic

and random information in a highly effective way has an advantage over a shooter who is three times faster.

Instructors must understand, that the human brain, not the mechanics, is the key. We must of course master the fundamentals. However, fundamentals only give us the certainty to act appropriately in a constantly changing or challenging environment.

Fundamentals are the road map, but your brain is the driver. The driver has to

Instructors must understand, that the human brain, not the mechanics, is the key.

understand the road he has taken. Driving Rally Dakar is different than driving New York rush hour. In both environments, a driver can fail and die.

The same can happen to law enforcement and military operators if they do not understand the very specific parameters applicable to their





given situation in a certain environment. The brain must be your ultimate advantage, not the trigger.

Remember, it can only be to your advantage if you train your brain to understand, learn, and process information while countering various environments and conditions. Although practicing on a shooting range is good, it does not necessarily prepare you for real world situations.

Instructors must be fully transparent with this gap and explain to students on the range, the differences between what students think they do while being with us, and what really awaits them in the real world. If you are threatened with the real possibility of imminent death, you will act

completely different than in a fun and “Hey, Bro“-environment of the shooting range, on Sunday. Instructors must educate their students about this gap of what they think they do and what really awaits them should they have to draw their gun. It also means, we should always teach the simple fact: “If we return home without drawing our guns, we have done our jobs right. “

So, in this age of information in a highly connected world, what could be the ultimate advantage for instructors? The very simple answer is, we need to learn from each other. There is so much “My Tactical Kung Fu is better than your Tactical Kung Fu“ going on in the industry. We must ask ourselves, why? Are we not in this to train good people to

step up against bad guys and dangerous threats? We are not a competitive shooter, where only one person can win the championship.

If I think that a team or a student could learn a specific skill better in the presence of another instructor, I will always pass them on to the one who can best serve their needs.

Why not? If you think you can cover all aspects of such a highly complex task like firearms training, CQB, or tactical training, then you are delusional. There is no universal ninja, there is no universal answer.

The very nature of what we do as instructors in tactical and firearms training, obligates us to be constantly learning.

TEAM ZERO



I see myself as a part-time instructor, but full-time learner. I can't stop learning. If you stop learning in this profession, then you are either dead, will be soon, or you simply don't care about your job anymore. If that is the case, then honestly, you should quit.

Constantly learning is the most crucial ability we need to have and maintain in our profession. You stop learning, and you will die. This death can be figurative, meaning professionally, or personally. It can also be literal through the hands of a bad guy who fights you in a manner you didn't understand in the moment, because you got lazy.

The truth about our profession is very simple: Get back home in one piece! That's it. Then, as instructors, we must teach others to come back home in one piece. That's the meaning of our profession, plain and simple. If an operator returns to his family, we have done our job. In order to be successful, it requires constant learning. Not only for the operators we train, but also for us, as instructors. The responsibility we shoulder is too high to become lazy or ignorant.

Because the risks and the responsibilities are so high, I would like to see more cooperation between instructors worldwide.

More openness, more "Come over here, let's see what we have, and let's get things done". This attitude would be a big step forward for our industry. No instructor has a secret ninja box. However, all true instructors share a passion for learning. We should share this passion to get better every day, because in the end, we create better students who come back to ask for our services or recommend what we do, and that will grow our industry in general.

I would like to close my outlook with some thoughts about best practices and ethics. Like all industries, we have some bad apples, and we all know it. These companies offer services without background checks. They teach civilians advanced CQB tactics when there is no need for civilians to learn room entries, team tactics, or hostage rescue, because simply put, they will likely never need and or use it.

If a civilian gets into trouble, it will most likely happen on the street, around his car, or in his own house. Sorry to crush some dreams, but if you are a civilian in a defensive situation, know that there will be no team, no good-looking room-entry, no rescue tactics. To put it bluntly, you will have to deal with a rough and unexpected outbreak of chaotic violence that may, cost your life, your car,

or your money. No Medal of Honor or a higher ranking in Call of Duty awaits you, thereafter.

It is important that we get this information out into the minds of the public audience. Because we are dealing with too much false information about the truth of our profession. That false information harms our reputation collectively as an industry.

We should be very clear in 2021: No advanced tactics in social media! No courses like "hostages rescue" for civilians, no asymmetric team tactics for civilians. We can teach CQB to civilians, yes, but if we want to truly be honest, real, and serious on what we are doing, we should teach them only individual CQB tactics related with home defense and eventually, introduce strategies to include our family.

This will help us to create a cleaner and more serious business environment where we can prosper in what we want to stand for..

Security and responsibility in a world that wants to make a big step forward to becoming safer and better while being less afraid of certain elements who threaten our people because they don't share our values of taking care of others and living a honorable way of life.



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Kris Paronto

Owner of Battleline Tactical

**Stop talking and start moving!
How to create a training
environment that is structured to
improve the students and not the
instructor's ego.**



Kris Paronto

Thomas Lojek: Kris, you are very active in the training sector. Could you explain what you are doing and what your focus regarding your training business is?

Kris Paronto: I served with 2nd Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment, and later as a private security contractor for various private security companies to include Blackwater Security, SOC, and direct hire for the CIA long before the Benghazi attack happened. I spent a lot of time in beautiful countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, etc.... And they are beautiful countries, really. It's savage beauty, but beauty nonetheless.

I worked overseas for over 10 years, gaining a lot of experience in and out of combat zones. In between deployments I would come back to the US and work for Blackwater's High Threat Protection OGA program as a Lead Instructor. This allowed me to apply the tactics we were teaching in the US to real operations. I was able to see that tactics that may work in a controlled environment may not work in an uncontrolled environment.

I learned so many valuable lessons during these years... learning from other operators and instructors, and then being able to practice my craft as an instructor in between deployments and at times during deployments as



some required us to teach and train Afghans on firearms, force protection and tactics.

I started Battleline Tactical in 2017, approximately four years after I left the CIA's GRS Program. I had not been actively deploying or active in the training sector and felt the draw to get back into training others. Battleline Tactical was started in the hopes of passing on knowledge that had been passed down to me, but also for me to get back into the firearms community.

We originally started three years ago. It was myself and a former GRS Teammate, Dave Benton. Since then, Dave has since departed, but the team gained Former 1st Batt Army Ranger Ben Morgan, Former MMA Fighter and multiple black belt holder Benny Glossop and Former Army MP Jeremy Mitchell as lead and assistant instructors.

We also partner regularly, teaching joint firearms courses with outstanding fellow instructors Daniel Lombard of Davad Defense, the Mauer Brothers of Treadproof Training, Paul Braun of Maxim Defense Academy and Brad Dillion and his crew of excellent instructors at Red River Gun Range

We do have an excellent team, and as of right now, we primarily conduct mobile training. In the past, we have



looked for ranges and facilities around the country to conduct our courses, but we now primarily use Davad Defense's facilities in Crete Illinois and Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, Defender Outdoors in Ft. Worth, Texas, Treadproof Training in Nunnely, Tennessee and Red River Range in Shreveport, Louisiana.

We are also hoping to be a regular at GTI in South Carolina, as we are having our first course in August, 2021 there.

We do a wide range of training, from stress fire training to basic pistol or basic rifle, which is great. All of them are satisfying, but I have to say my favorites are still the novice classes. It's especially rewarding to see the confidence grow in a new shooter.

During my blackwater days as an instructor and student, we traveled to many training sites around the country, and I always felt that there was a lot of standing around talking.

There was too much talking by instructors about themselves, long drawn-out Powerpoint presentations, and most times, instructors talking, not so much about the lessons they learned from their experiences, but trying to validate their credibility. However, the instructors that I learned the most from got us in, briefed us on course

expectations and course curriculum, then got us out on the range. They demonstrated tasks and had us work on the tasks right there on the range making spot corrections when necessary. So, at Battleline we wanted to expound on this latter.

Yes, we need to talk to instruct, and sometimes that means you have to stand up on your soapbox and tell the participants what we have done or explain why we conduct a tactic in a certain way to provide the example as to why that tactic did or did not work in real time.

But I felt that it always went from instruction to "Hey, look what I have done... Look how cool I am... I got all these experiences..." As a student or fellow instructor, I didn't want to hear that.

That was the part where I started to tune an instructor out and learning suffered. When the motivation to be mentally present in training drops, the quality of the training always suffers, and in the end, we have become ineffective instructors and failed the student.

So we, at Battleline Tactical begin to apply training another way. I used my experience playing varsity sports throughout high school - football, basketball, baseball and track which led to playing NCAA Football - as a training model. I thought to myself that firearms training and tactics is nothing more than a sport, and an instructor is nothing more than a coach.

Coaches are there to teach, lead, motivate, mentor, and bring the best out of an individual. Football practices are also constantly moving, going from training station to training station with little, unnecessary talking by a coach, unless it's to make a spot correction or demonstrate the task to be completed. There was little standing around.

And I took this experience and made it the fundamental principle of the training courses at Battleline Tactical. We generally have fairly big classes, but they can fluctuate. Thirty people or more in a firearms class is a big number of participants for a training class.

So, we split them into separate groups of 10 people, conducting the training that is associated with that course. For example, for our gunfighter course, we'd divide a group of 30 up, putting 10 people into combatives, 10 others at the pistol range and 10 at the carbine range. And we rotate every two hours.



Photo: Kris and Daniel Lombard of Davad Defense

Courses. Make sure safety is 100% and then have the student's carryout the training.

Let them make mistakes. Let them learn through their own mistakes and let them learn with their own hands, with their own eyes, with their own heads while they are thinking and moving. I guess you could call it dynamic learning. It's the most effective form of learning.

Thomas Lojek: How do you come up with this training style? Does it have something to do with your career in the military and your years of contractor work?

Kris Paronto: It was straight pulled from football. My dad was Division 1 football coach for the 1984 BYU National Championship team. I grew up around football legends like LaVell Edwards, Mike Holmgren, Steve Young, Jim McMahon and Robbie Bosco.

I saw how Head Coach LaVell Edwards mentored and how his assistants like my Dad, Mike Holmgren and Norm Chow taught players that would later become greats in the NFL.

It was mentoring, not instructing, trying to bring out the best in the player. The mentoring culture from an early age stuck with me, along with my own years as a player on the field. Then one day after a course, I was doing my own self-assessment and I realized: As firearms instructors, we aren't instructors... we are coaches and mentors. We are there to motivate and bring out the best of those who are coming to our courses. Changing ourselves from being an instructor to being a coach, and becoming a

You have two hours, now focus on the task, self-correct when you make mistakes, and don't forget to smile and have fun. We don't rest too much between the rotations because, as a Ranger or football player, we didn't take many breaks until the training day was complete, so it's just my style.

It makes our classes highly dynamic, focused, but most of all enjoyable for everyone, from the novice to the experienced. Everything and everyone are constantly moving. Instruct, demo, train..... not over talking.

Thomas Lojek: How is the reaction of your students to your more dynamic training style?

Kris Paronto: It is fantastic. After the course people are tired, but they have a sense of accomplishment.

People love challenges, even when they don't think they do. We challenge them. We push them enough to make them realize that they have accomplished something for themselves, and their confidence grows. There is not a lot of downtime, not a lot standing

around, because I think this is the death of many courses: too much talk. We lose the attention of the student.

Bring your students on the line, demo, train, assess, correct, re-demo if necessary, train, assess, correct, etc.....

Because it's my belief we learn more by making mistakes, figuring out why we made those mistakes, fixing the mistakes, than by doing it correctly. We learn more by doing, learning and doing again.

Let students learn valuable lessons by what they do in your course. Don't replace their hunger for having a unique experience with what you think would make a good story about yourself, unless that story can add to the training module at hand. Challenge them to act, to move, to try out, to solve problems and to fail as well as to excel.

Of course, you have to make sure that everybody is safe, especially when you give your students room to make a few mistakes during a class. Safety is a hugely important factor in Battleline



the most simple truth in a warrior's life: There is always room for improvement.

So, we play it differently in our courses. And what we do works wonderfully! We get a lot of new people into our classes, who turn into enthusiasts, and that is humbling to us at Battleline. We do also have a lot of seasoned pros, coming from law enforcement or highly experienced military veterans, who respect the training environment we create by our individual approach and also provide their own lessons learned and training point to the class, which we encourage.

For me, it is so great to see how it works: The beginners leave our courses with confidence. And the pros with respect. And that is what we want to see. We want to see somebody smiling, because they feel that they have learned a little that they can improve with or provided a teaching point that will help someone down the line.

Thomas Lojek: It sounds like your training style gives students more freedom to learn... to try, to fail, to figure things out for themselves. But isn't the nature of combat training, especially in the military, somewhat more dogmatic? Where is the line for you between effective freedom in training and the pragmatism of dogmatic rules in training?

Aren't there always a few things that have to be handled with: "That is how it has to be done. Period."

Kris Paronto: The thing with freedom vs. dogma in combat training is it's always somehow like having our good old military kit bag with you: We want to throw so much in your kit-bag that we can pull it out when the situation arises.

mentor for those who look for our advice keeps the ego out of the training. It is about our students and how they improve and not about our stories and our experiences, unless they reinforce a technique or tactic.

We create an experience for them, based on what we have done before, but not by what our status is in the firearms community. There is a lot of arrogance in the world of firearms training. Truth hurts, but it's the truth. And this arrogance is intimidating to new shooters,

which stops those interested in firearms and tactics from getting into firearms classes.

Even in the professional sector and on a highly operational level this arrogance of a "tactical ego" creeps into training and causes damage. It stops those on all experience levels from getting into or continually learning firearms and tactics and affects their true dedication to getting better every day.

At one point, the arrogance of having a rank or name replaces





And we want to learn many different things and ways to do it so we can handle any situation effectively. But the only way to do this is to learn multiple ways and methods, so we can get into your kit bag and pull “a way” out to accomplish a task.

So, the essence of combat training is dogmatic per se, yes. When carrying out an individual tactic or technique there normally is a most efficient way to do it. For example, pressing the trigger with our index finger on our dominant hand is better than pressing the trigger with our pinky on our non-dominant hand, lol.

What we are saying is that having different methods to employ the weapon is beneficial, but one way may be the best. However, we still need to learn different carry positions, different ready positions, various retention positions, when to be dynamic with our movements vs methodical, because different situations will require different ways of completing the task. The most effective operators are those who know this and who can employ different tactics

habitually when various situations present themselves.

This cannot be done if we only learn one way or constantly train on one method. Sometimes, the best way to clear the corner is to be methodical with your movements, enter with a high ready and pie the room methodically... but on other days, maybe the best way will be just to enter a situation dynamically at full extension, get in and dominate it, adding the element of surprise by your action.

But the only way to know the best way to do it right is to learn multiple ways and relearning them over and over...until they all become habitual. And that is not dogmatic... It is learning

different ways to accomplish a task. Fill your kit bag to the brim, then train and retrain everything you have in your kit bag until they all become habit-forming movements.

So, as an instructor, I am both. Yes, sometimes one way is the best way to handle a situation or to complete a mission. But the best tacticians know several different ways to complete missions and are able to choose the best way for that moment.

So again, it is like you opening your kitbag, you look in it and you have all this stuff there... and then you say: “That is what I need right there!” You grab it and start moving! You don’t use a paring knife to cut steak.



You use a steak knife, but how would you know that if you've never held a paring knife or steak knife in your hand?

Here is one thing we really have to understand when we want to be more effective tacticians while under duress: When I started in the military, it was all about being instinctive... And I never liked the word. I never liked the idea behind it.

If we are instinctive, it tells me that our brain is not working. That's incorrect. Our brains are always working.

To me, it is "habits!" It's developing good habits. Example - We continually put a car key into the ignition to turn it on (well we used to). Over years of continually repeating this action we can do this with our eyes closed.

It is not instinctive, though. We have learned it, because we have repeated those actions many, many times, so we know what to do without much thinking about it. But it is a habit, not an instinct that leads us through that action.

It is the same thing with any marksmanship fundamental or firearms presentation. The best



option of using a high gun or low gun as we clear a building should become habitual, once we've completed the task 100s if not 1000s of times, because our brain is virtually moving you through the situation recognizing unknowns, building architecture and threats.

Our eyes are passing on to our brain what is around us, telling us "There is a window. I need to retract. There is a corner. I need to clear it. There are "friendlies."

I need to be aware of my muzzle and keep my finger off the trigger, indexing it above the trigger well and below the slide, etc.... All this is not instinctive.

Our brain is telling our muscles what to do. How efficiently we do it depends on how many times we've completed the task correctly. So we train, doing it correctly over and over and over again. Under duress, we all fall back to our highest level of training. This is not because of instincts. This is because our

brain can only process split second movements we have continually trained as our senses become overwhelmed with our own thoughts and exterior sights, smells and sounds surrounding us in that moment.

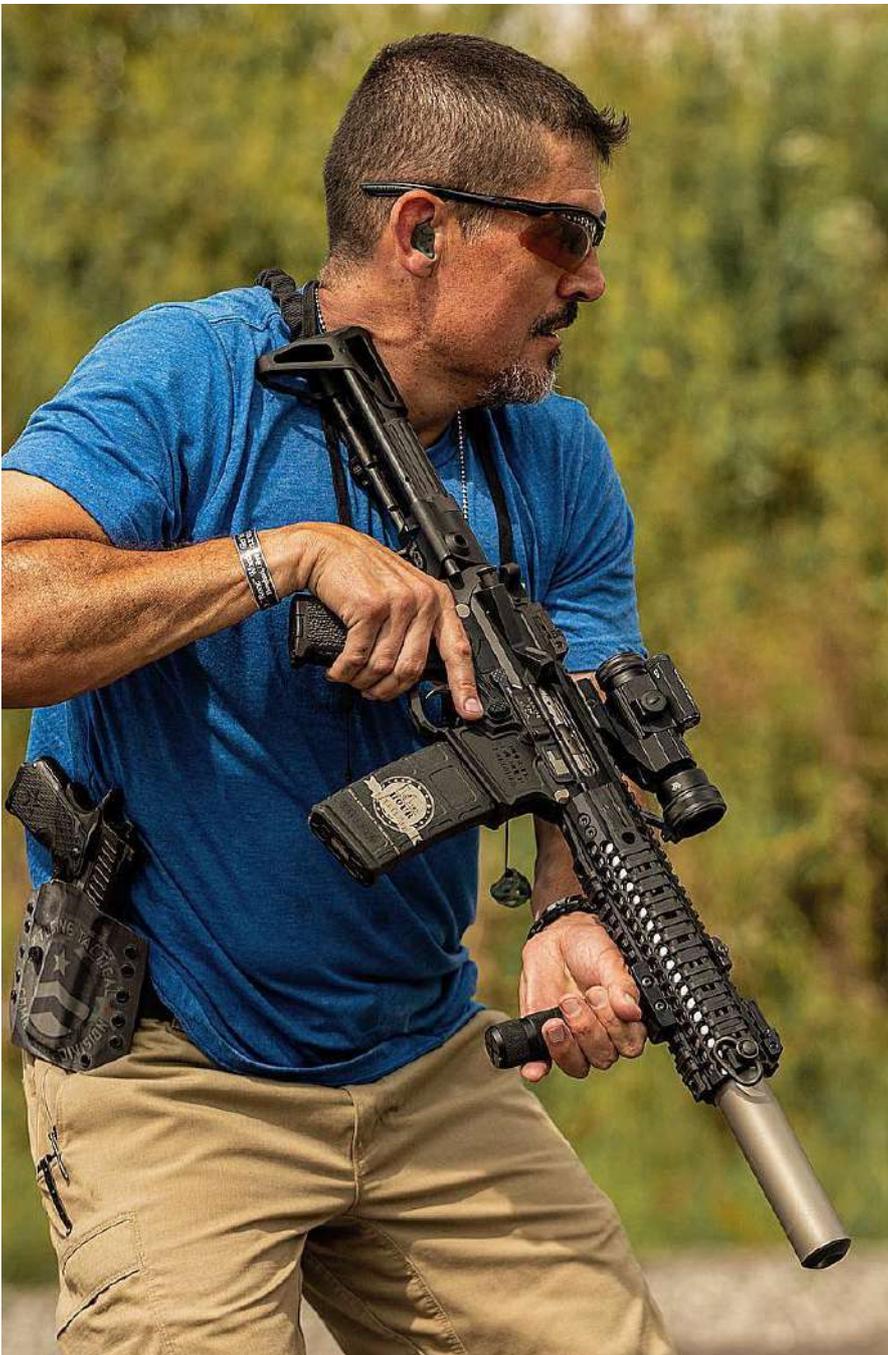
We learn dogmatic pieces that are proven effective for us individually and as a team. Learn as many pieces of dogmatic lessons for situations that demand flexibility and a choice.

Without the dogmatic learning process, you don't have the freedom of choice to adapt to the dynamic situation later.

So, yeah... we have to look at both ways in good training: We have to train dogmatically to get the basics down... but we also need to be flexible when applying them...

It sounds contrary, but it's not. It fits into the true nature of combat or any stress filled situation.





So, coming back to your question: Yes, we have to be individually dogmatic, learning how to do something that is most efficient for “YOU” and then having it in your kit bag as an option. Because the worst thing that can happen is us questioning ourselves when time is a factor.

The “What should I do? What should I do” countdown adds to the stress. We cannot sit and wait our way for a situation where our lives may be in danger. The worst thing to do is to make no decision. But before that, we have to learn the basics, the fundamentals, and then continue to apply to those fundamentals in movements and continue to apply those movements to situations.

Then we train and retrain all situations, no matter how ludicrous it may seem at the time... Then, when the happening that you hope never comes happens... We’re ready for it. We have learned all these different ways to actively respond, and now we have the options to act, whether it be methodical or dynamic, by inputting variables according to what is going on.

We cannot learn one single thing and use it in every single situation. If we do we are setting ourselves up for failure. But we can learn many single useful “ways,” applying them to the situations at hand and coming up with the best course of action, all in a split second if we’ve made them habits.





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Step 1

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Step 2

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Step 4

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GTI has created a new Asset Trading Program to benefit underfunded law enforcement agencies by utilizing their forfeited-seized assets, and surplus law enforcement equipment to provide funds for training.



Ralf Kassner

CEO Wodan Security • Former GSG9

Kill House Training For Close Protection Services



Ralf Kassner

Kill House Training for Close Protection Services • Interview with Ralf Kassner, CEO of Wodan Security, Part 1 of 3

Summary: An in-depth interview with Ralf Kassner, CEO of Wodan Security and former GSG9 (Germany's elite counter-terror unit), about the essence of great kill house training and 360 degree live fire training in close protection services!

Thomas Lojek: Ralf, as a former SOF unit member (GSG9 and SEK) and CEO of Wodan Security, you are a leading European expert in kill house training and 360 degree tactical training.

What tactics and scenarios do you have in mind, when you set up a kill house training session for close protection professionals during a Wodan Security training event?

Ralf Kassner: First of all, kill house training is not so much about cutting-edge shooting skills and heavy live fire action, as someone might think.

A good kill house training, especially for close protection services, is very much about coordination, communication, speed and building up operational pressure.

The training should make you able to build teams and then operate effectively within these teams, even with people you may just have met for the first time. Because this will be a situation that you will face very often during your field operations as a close protection service professional.

It happens all the time. A company puts you in a new team, maybe one of your team members got hurt, another one leaves the company, or the overall operational parameters are just changing – whatever it is: The most reliable constant in the close protection service business is change.

The grade of your professionalism in this business is your ability to make yourself comfortable working with strangers under tremendous pressure and in challenging or even lethal environments.

We do not talk about SWAT or Military SOF training here, where unit members have time and significant resources to study their team members operational behavior... often for months and sometimes for years.

Close Protection Services - especially in the free market - is a different category of specialized operations and has to deal with limited resources, restrictions and a lot of unknowns.



Therefore, a 360-degree training for close protection should be about flexibility - operational and individual flexibility. Teams, operational parameters and objectives can change very quickly. Your training should reflect that.

Thomas Lojek: Let's take a common scenario. There is a business meeting of Fortune 500 CEOs. And the worst case is happening: An active shooter is in the building. How do you prepare your trainees for this kind of incident?

Ralf Kassner: Interestingly, in most cases the biggest challenge, especially in the first crucial minutes or even seconds of the incident, won't be to deal with the threat, but to have a fast and effective coordination of all close protection service professionals at the scene. Somebody has to take the lead: Building a team!

Your scenario implies an incidence at a bigger business conference. That means there will be various close protection professionals at the site, all with different backgrounds, skill levels and experience.

They will differ in their training and in equipment. Some have a military background, others come from law enforcement. A few, maybe, have no professional background at all.

You will have a lot of people around who counter this situation with different tactics and with different field experience. But they all will be in a rush to protect their own VIP. This can be quite a challenge.

Thomas Lojek: Could you give us a concrete example, why this could be such a challenge?

Ralf Kassner: Sure. Let's talk about something that might seem insignificant at the first place but can have a huge impact

on the outcome of the situation: What if you have to run up several storeys or through a long corridor before you will get to your VIP?

During some conferences the close protection teams are ordered to wait in a different part of the building. It is a very unprofessional conduct by an event management but it still happens on some occasions. Even your VIP sometimes asks you to wait somewhere else while he meets his business contacts.

So, somehow you are not close to your VIP when the shooting starts. Now, we have a bunch of hired guns in high-alert. And even assuming that we are





talking about well-trained individuals here, we still will have different levels of fitness, reaction time and speed in this group. And an uncoordinated armed group under stress and with significant gaps in experience, fitness, reaction time and stress resistance, can turn a few seconds of running over a long corridor into an endless nightmare.

Because now, you do not have to just to worry about the active shooter somewhere in the building, but also about several armed individuals under stress around you - individuals you don't really know - and who maybe have a much more nervous trigger finger and a lesser tactical skill level than you do.

Thomas Lojek: So, frankly spoken: In close protection services the individual backgrounds and differences in training and fitness levels within a random group of professionals at the site of an ongoing situation is nothing less than an additional risk factor?

Ralf Kassner: Yes. Small differences in individual experience and training of operators at a situation can add up to big problems in close protection, especially, if you

haven't met these operators before. If you don't know them, and if you don't really understand their background it can be hard to gage.

The new guy next to you could be just an ex-bouncer with a gun. Another one might be a highly skilled Army SOF operator. But his background in military operations doesn't mean that he is also a great close protection service professional.

In this situation, we are just a bunch of individuals with a gun and with different skills and backgrounds who have to solve a big problem very quickly. And most likely, we have to solve this problem in a lethal and distressing environment full of panicking people, fleeing crowds, maybe in smoke, fire and with bodies around, or very badly hurt people, while blood and screaming seems to come from everywhere.

In this environment, a group of hired guns without coordination are only adding risk to the situation, the risk to get shot by one operator who acts unprofessional or too nervously.

Or the risk to miss the threat, because keeping the uncoordinated group in check means too much distraction for

you. Or the risk to harm innocent bystanders. Or getting into trouble with arriving police units who also don't know who you are besides that you are carrying a gun in a building with an active shooter.

If you cannot handle this type of situation effectively and at least with a basic structure of essential team work, the presence of a randomly-built group of close protection service members will make things only more complicated.

Therefore, a good kill house training or any form of 360-degree live fire training should not only be about precise shots at bad guys, but also about challenging your team-working skills and your ability to reach a professional level of flexibility in any form of tactical coordination.

You have to read and to understand people. You have to anticipate their reactions and their ability to deal with a threat. Or with innocent bystanders, distraction and tremendous stress.

It is people skills. If you are getting good at it, you will be able to team-up with different individuals at any incident and in a best case to establish a life-saving 360-degree team securing your operational progress in a mission even with strangers. But you have to train for it.

This is a three-part series. This is part one. Don't miss part two in our next issue! Subscribe now!

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BASIC



SWAT



TYPE I

ADVANCED

SWAT



CUSTOM



SWAT

Chris “Dutch” Moyer

DCM Consulting LLC

The better your training, the more effective is your controlling position in your battlespace!



Thomas Lojek: Would you share a few thoughts with us about the ongoing public discussion on “defund the police” and the fear that a “militarization of the police” that has gone too far... at least for the taste of certain groups of politicians? Honestly, what do you think about all that?

Dutch Chris Moyer: There should be more funding for the police, not less. I will explain it to you from a military man's perspective.

If I am in charge of an area, it becomes my battlespace. This is my definition of every area that I move in or that I am in charge of.

Thomas Lojek: And a nice American village? A few quiet streets, and a few clean houses and everything seems so peaceful... so why call it a “battlespace”?

Dutch Chris Moyer: Because as a professional soldier, we see more than just the community/battlespace.

We integrate with locals in order to become trusted agents inside that particular community/battlespace.

Active patrolling/ observing/ interacting allows the law-abiding citizens to garner trust in our presence. Active patrolling also

allows us to observe the population and gather information.

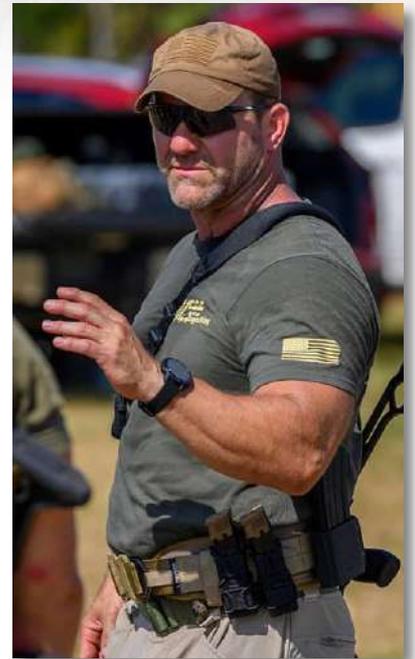
It is very similar to the law enforcement officer's community as he/she needs to be part of it and work with it just like a military element does when in charge of the battlespace.

Even if it seems that there are no open or imminent threats for the moment, nevertheless, I have to control the area. If I don't, then I put everyone in danger. Not just for what we can see, but for what we can't see and don't know yet.

If I am in charge of an area, it becomes my battlespace. This is my definition of every area that I move in or that I am in charge of.

Therefore, the element must have a dedicated interest in that battlespace. We have a presence in this area, and it allows us to know the area and how it works. If something happens, then we should know how to react.

Even if our dominating position of the battlespace is won through non-direct actions, like showing a strong presence, maintaining an effective operational preparedness or just in a good understanding of how our



area works and how we can use that knowledge to our advantage.

But to get there, it needs certain skills. And these skills, you will only get through training. The better your training, the more effective you are at controlling your position in your battlespace, even through non-direct actions. And the more successful you're likely to be. A small group can control an area very effectively when they know what they do.

Now, let's transfer this military thinking to what our police forces are going through these days.

Each police officer, each department/constabulary has a battlespace: the community they are responsible for. And inside that battlespace, they need to take care of the people who live there. It happens in direct action, as force-on-force in the case of facing violent crime, or in non-direct action like, patrolling and maintaining a good relationship with their community. Both need a level of personnel, training and experience.

It is a very simple equation: The more our police officers train, the better they become. The more police patrols, the less crime will happen in their community. The

more effectively trained, the better they will be. With this better training, the more effective they will be at preventing crime or intervening in an ongoing situation. There is empirical data for that.

But getting there needs support. Public support in funding. An effective level of numbers in police personnel and hours in training.

You cannot take the money and public support for our police forces out of this equation and expect a positive outcome on crime prevention and public safety. It won't work this way.

We are already seeing the devastating effects in Seattle and Minneapolis. It just doesn't make sense.

I will give you another example where this "defund the police" movement has lost its touch with reality completely. Let's talk about direct action. There is a situation, and a police officer needs to pull his gun and go to work. In this situation: do we want to have the officer more training or less training?

Really, think about it. Especially, think about it in a way as if you were somehow involved in a



situation, where one or more police officers pull out their guns around you, for whatever reason.

In this moment, do you want them to be well-trained to handle the situation that is now evolving around you? Or will you be more worried about the funding they get for political reasons? Let's just be real. What matters more, now? Well-trained officers or defunded officers?

Make your choice.

And it better be the right choice in the seconds that could decide if you and your family will live or die. You can't have both.

And this is where we all are missing a good answer from the politicians, who are demanding to cut the funding for our brothers and sisters who patrol our streets every day.

What if these politicians were involved in an incident? Do they want well-trained experts standing at their side or amateurs with guns or even their so much beloved social workers?





If any politician can answer this question to me, then I will be all ears to listen to what they have to say. Until then, this “defund the police” is utter nonsense to me. Sadly, it is dangerous nonsense. And many will pay the ultimate price for it.

Thomas Lojek: Where does this all come from?

Dutch Chris Moyer: This goes back so many years. Do you remember when these “sympathetic shootings” happened and became a big thing in the media? These situations occur when one officer fired his weapon and other officers fire without identifying the threat. Maybe 15 or 20 rounds are fired and only one or two hit the target?

Of course, the public started to ask questions. I understand that. But they never asked “why” these things happen and especially, they did not ask for the right “why.” And this is when it started to get worse.

The truth is: Barely-trained people get barely-optimal results. That is a general rule in life. It is broadly accepted in every industry. Only police officers don’t get the fairness of a balanced view and a common understanding of the simple rule of “good training leads to better performance.” Especially these shootings in the early years of the last decade left a public image of an incompetent and overly-aggressive police force when, in fact, the



reason why these things happened was because of a lack of training. And the public doesn’t know that. It sees only the dramatic outcome as shown in these terrible shooting videos in the media, without an understanding of the “why” behind it.

Remember the Ferguson riots that happened after the Michael Brown shooting? Right away, the Obama administration jumped on the train of public outrage. They targeted the removal of military-type armored vehicles: BearCats, any armored vehicle that drove our police forces into these towns where the riots happened.

And suddenly the militarization of the police force was all over the news and became a thing in the public opinion. It was a big thing, and the demilitarization of the police started to find roots all over the US.

And yes, they looked like “military guys” with their multicam uniforms and helmets. To the public, they may look like “soldiers.” And maybe this wasn’t the best piece of publicity for our police.

But let’s get real here, because I have never heard one of these public critics talk about the men. And yes, there are humans in these multicam uniforms and helmets and armor. If this equipment helps police officers to survive in a very hostile situation, then why not give it to them? Why not give them tactics, techniques and procedures to survive?



the job done and then get back alive and well to their homes?! Let's not forget: It's the badge. It's the flag, and it's the uniform that we serve.

Thomas Lojek: I give you unlimited funds and unlimited power to build a police force that you always wanted to have for the United State: What would you do?

Dutch Chris Moyer: First, I would double the number of officers.

And we would train in cycles. One half of my police officers would be patrolling and doing whatever job they are assigned.

And the other half would be training. And my training would be: stay focused on the fundamentals: pistol, rifle, close quarters battle. And then dealing with non-combatants and dealing with an escalation of force.

Just like you escalate breaching. What do you do, when you come to a closed door? Do you throw a bomb and blow it all up? No! You see if it is open or closed. You use your head and determine what to do based on the mission.

So, what do we need to do? This for me is one of the biggest things. Tough, realistic training based on scenarios from past experience and tough training developed by experienced officers.

We need force-on-force training in difficult situations. Our police officers need someone to help them to train realistic scenarios with simunition, using opposing forces (OPFOR) .

OOPFOR is primarily made up of other officers in a training department.

And the helmets/armor/rifles, why not give it to them? It helps them to get back safely to their families when the job is done.

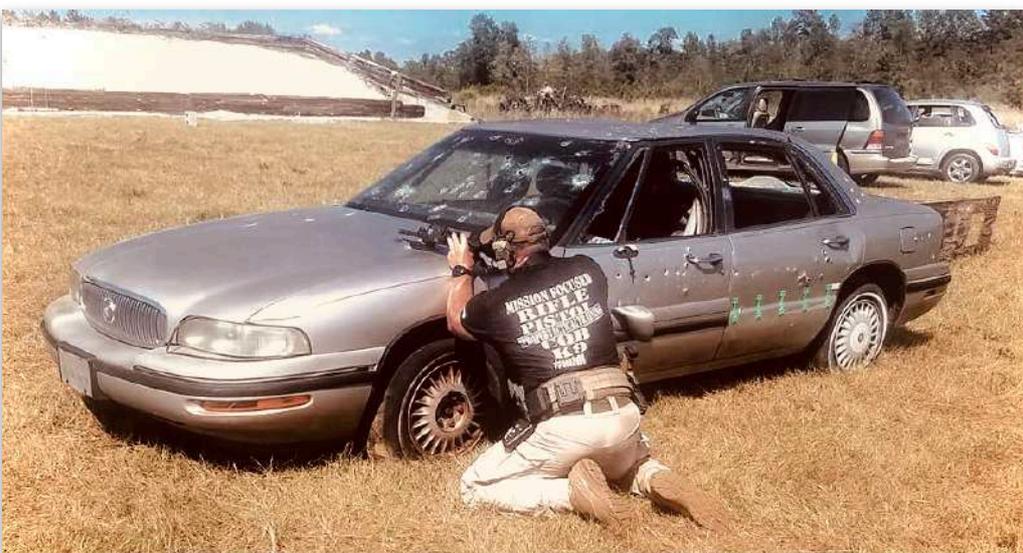
Maybe police forces don't need that multi-cam, fine... make it black, make it blue, or whatever the color of your department is.

Does a small-town patrol officer need a tactical helmet, tactical gear? Maybe, maybe not, but it should be available to them. And if there is a non-permissive/semi-permissive environment and an inherent threat of lethal

force against our guys, why not give them what they need to survive that?

And I would like to hear from the politicians, who became a public voice against giving police officers what they need to survive. What is the real reason to demand police officers in these missions and violent environments should not get the right tools?

Why should our brothers and sisters in blue not be properly equipped and well-trained to get





I will tell you the hard truth: We want the training harder than it is in real life. That's what we want.

Sweat in training saves lives in combat. We want more and harder training so that when our officers go to the battlefield, then they can feel confident. Our officers need to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations: We can do this!

Everything comes down to true leadership. This is key. An officer who is calm and always keeps his/her head in a situation is demonstrating his trained qualities that came from good leadership.

In many situations, a calm and cool demeanor can avoid conflict. Or it can keep use of force to a minimum or use only when necessary. The trouble starts when there is not enough experience on the ground to accomplish the task at hand.

And inside our agencies, I would like to see a culture of true leadership growing from within: We have to look for leaders who are more experienced in order to train the newer officers. Men/women who have already gone through these evolutions of training and operations is what I am talking about.

We need a culture of officers who learn to trust their fellow officers, because they went through the same hard training. And they know that fellow officers will make the correct decisions.

Or those leaders who can identify what they need to accomplish the mission.

Leadership is essential. Good leaders make good operators. Both will get us better performance and a safer environment for everyone: our officers and the public.



Fred Mastro

MDS Mastro Defence System

Having the initiative is what rules the fight



Fred Mastro

Thomas Lojek: Fred, I don't think that you will need much of an introduction to our readers, because I am sure most of them already know you and your work as a highly sought-after self-defense instructor. But for those who might never have given much thought into learning modern hand-to-hand combat: Could you give us a little insight about your background and how you got into this profession?

Fred Mastro: My family has Italian origins, but I grew up in Belgium. Very early, I started to learn Judo and a bit of Karate, but I was too young, honestly, to understand the full concept of martial arts, including respect, honor and discipline. As a young man I was trouble. Hanging out in the streets, wasting my time, getting into fights and so on.

Then, something happened that changed the course of my life. A friend asked me to work as a bouncer for a night. It was a private event and I really enjoyed the experience: people treated me with respect, I had a position of authority, and I was able to use my experience as a former troublemaker of our town to solve conflicts. It felt good to me.

Just a few days after the event, I got another phone call: A club wanted to

hire me to work at their door. Suddenly, everything changed. I developed a professional attitude for the job and I was very serious about it.

Before, I was the guy who meant trouble. Now, I had to avoid trouble, protect a business and solve conflicts. And I got paid for it. For a young man, that was a great experience. I became one of the good guys, learned to act highly professional and got very serious with my training. It changed everything for me.

Thomas Lojek: I guess as a bouncer you have seen your fair shares of fights and uncommon attacks?

Fred Mastro: Yes, I learned very quickly that I had to adapt to survive not only the violence that awaits one in this line of work but also as a professional. We cannot just beat up people to protect a private business, like a nightclub. We will lose our job and go into jail if we do so.

We have to read and understand the dynamic of a situation and we have to read people. Who is dangerous and who is not? Who is just talking and who is going to attack? We have to anticipate when things are getting real and when it is just dealing with angry or drunk people who can be annoying but are harmless.



I had to learn the reality of real violence. The door can be an ugly place. Bouncers get killed. You can lose your life in a second when the wrong people get mad and things get out of control at the door or during a fight inside the club.

When the action starts, there can be some really heavy-hitters involved, and honestly, you will find at least a few dangerous criminals around in every club. Nobody hands out his criminal history to you at the door. Every guy can be just a good customer or a dangerous criminal, who is willing to kill for even low motives.

Of course, over time you learn to read hints and the hidden signals of people and their true nature. But honestly, you never know who you are up against until the trouble starts. You would be surprised how many good and harmless looking guys are able to attack you with a bottle from behind or even with knives and guns. Never allow an image to fool you: Many of the most dangerous people are running under the radar. They can act quiet and friendly. Until it gets real.

So, you have to learn how to read people. Early on, I had to learn to really understand my environment: the social dynamics in clubs and when and why they escalate. The dynamics and rules of crowded spaces. And I had to be aware of a possible rise in tensions between random groups or the random character of aggression by individuals in night clubs. And of course, I had to learn quickly about the chaotic nature of a real fight.

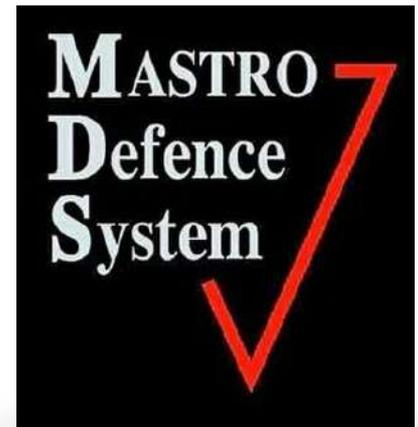
I had some experience in martial arts when I started my job as a bouncer, but many of the techniques that I had learned before weren't really helpful when facing real-life violence in a crowded place like a club. These places are full of distractions and sudden attacks that you can only master with time and experience.

During these days, developing my mindset and trusting my fighting spirit by learning that I can handle anything, if I stay alert, open minded, and simply by never giving up, were what helped me the most. My newborn fighting spirit taught me more about being a good fighter than all these years of martial arts before.

Thomas Lojek: That sounds interesting. Can you explain to me a little more about it? What do you mean: Your fighting spirit? And your mindset and how it helped you to become a better fighter... and a better professional?

Fred Mastro: The line of work that I got into and fairly young, isn't exactly about rules. The street has no rules. And the night clubs have even less rules, because there are so many random people and so many unknowns in a crowded nightclub. And the place itself, often messed up with alcohol, drugs, tensions between different groups, aggressive individuals, and all this happens in a kind of caged situation, because a night club is nothing else than a small confined space. It is a jungle.

It doesn't take a lot to turn a club into a violent mess: Just a guy looking at the girlfriend of another guy can start a mass beating, very quickly. Or even more dangerous: an armed confrontation. These were the '90s in Europe. We had no metal detector at the front door. Only us. The bouncers. Our instincts



and our people skills. And people can get very creative to get their weapons in a nightclub, if they want to.

So, if things escalate in a club, and it is the wrong kind of people who are involved, you can end up dead very quickly. The only way to survive this was to learn to never let your guard down. You had to read your environment all the time: the people and the signals of their social language like gestures, their looks, their body language.

And this is important to understand: nightclubs are confined and highly crowded spaces, full of distractions. If something bad happens inside of a nightclub, then in reality, you have to counter three very different enemies at the same time: first, the real troublemaker. Second, the crowd around you.

And third: all the distractions that you have in this kind of environment: loud music, intense lights, shadows, maybe gyroscope lights and artificial smoke, or furniture like tables, chairs, banks, seats, and maybe the friends and girlfriends of those who meant trouble and who are trying to intervene or just attack you as well. Every

single one of these things can cost your life, if things went really bad and weapons or heavy violence were involved.

And even outside, at the door, you are exposed to threats like groups, sudden attacks or weapons very often. The reality is as a bouncer, you will face a lot of random attacks, dirty fighting tricks, groups of attackers, crazy girlfriends attacking you while you are dealing with their boyfriends, groups coming back for revenge, hidden weapons, attacks with bottles, bats, glass, liquids, furniture, knives, guns. Honestly, over the years, you will see attacks with nearly everything. That is the reality of what we have faced during these days.

And in this “no rules environment,” you can’t counter violence with drills and techniques that come from rulebooks, like many martial arts still teach it. That’s why I learned to trust my fighting spirit early on, because it was just necessary. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have made it.

People shot at me several times. I was in gun fights. People were dying in front of me. I was stabbed three times. Once, a

bullet hit my leg and I showed up at work the next week. And really, I didn’t care. If you fight, you fight to finish. That’s the only rule that I follow strictly and that’s what made me good at my job, during these days.

I never was the strongest or tallest guy around. There were a lot of guys around who could beat me in weight, cardio, strength or experience in martial arts. But I was the most vicious fighter back in those days. That is where I got my reputation. I wasn’t the strongest, but I never backed down or gave up.

That is where you learn to be creative, open-minded, flexible and ruthless. Fighting spirit.





Homepage Fred Mastro

That helped me to develop my real skill set: I learned to read my environment as well as my opponents or possible threats. This is more valuable than drills. Because drills are always reactive. Understanding your environment and learning the art of anticipation is proactive. It will give you the invaluable power of having the initiative in any situation.

And having the initiative is what rules the fight. Anticipation of what can or will happen makes 80% of the fight. When I can anticipate the first move of the guy in front of me, I will have an advantage over him, even when he is stronger than me. That's why my training seminars always include lessons about situational awareness, today.

Read your environment. Read your opponents. Anticipate the threat and learn to focus on their first move or attack. When their first attack fails, you got them half-hearted. The sharks, the predators, are in for a quick kill.

Even a strong fighter doesn't want to get into trouble. He will wait and assess and attack you when he feels it is the right moment. You take this away from him and he finds himself in a situation where he has lost the initiative. This can turn every fight. That's what I have learned during these years as a bouncer.

And the most important thing: Why am I alive after all these years as a bouncer? Because I worked with my heart, my head, and with respect. Many bouncers don't respect people. But my way was to respect all people. Always. You have to be

aware about everything, every possible threat, but you always have to respect all the people.

Thomas Lojek: Sounds like you don't really believe in drills and techniques?

Fred Mastro: No, please, don't get me wrong here: drills are essential and they are necessary to hand out a basic skill set to you.

But drills and techniques are just tools to make you understand fundamental principles. What you should avoid is the dangerous tendency in training and martial arts to think that drills and techniques are dogmatic rules that always apply to reality... because they never will.

True violence, a real-life violence that can cost your life, is different. There is no way to mimic its real conditions in a drill. Especially not because crucial factors of a fight, like fear, pain, hate, blood, and just the madness of real-life violence will never be really part of a drill. You can simulate a few factors, but it is not the same as fighting for your life.

If you lose your sight, because blood is running into your eyes after being beaten with a bottle, while some crazy freak is stabbing you with a knife, because you talked to his girlfriend, then the power of the drills that you were admiring for so long in the safety of your dojo will go overboard very quickly, I can assure you that.

See, the right thing to do is: Use drills to learn! Use drills to understand basic concepts of self-defense. But don't get caught up in them when



things turn out different in real life. That is the risk of most drills and martial arts when they become too dogmatic. Tools are made to help you, not to define your reality of violence, because real violence is a crazy beast that shows up different every time. It changes, evolves, surprises you.

Drills give you tools, but you win the fight from the inside. It is you. Your fighting spirit, your mindset, your flexibility to understand and adapt to situations and opponents.

A guy who simply does feel less fear and less pain than the average person can beat you drills easily. And while he keeps coming, you will start to second guess yourself, why nothing seems to work and what to do about it... and that is when your guard goes down.

Or you become tired and he will exploit that by simply not giving up... until he gets you. And then your 5th Dan of any discipline has become worthless and you will end up beaten or

dead. Simple things can beat you. Never become so arrogant and self-assured to forget that.

Drills sometimes have that effect. They make you feel secure, while reality is more dangerous than you knew and before you find out how dirty and chaotic real life violence can be.

Learn, but stay open for everything that goes beyond drills. Accept the randomness and the chaotic mess of violence. If you do so, drills become a useful tool. But if you get caught up in them with a false sense of security you will be at risk to be beaten by somebody who simply does not care for your drills. That is the reality.

And what we need to consider to understand the context of how I learned real-life self defense: European bouncers, especially in Belgium, aren't allowed to carry weapons.

Our fights are only empty-hand. No pepper spray, no baton, no

handcuffs. It is illegal to use these tools or any weapon as a bouncer in most European countries.

People bring all kinds of weapons into the fight against us, but we can't use a single one. You go to jail, if you do so. Therefore, you have to learn to defend yourself against these weapons with empty hands techniques, only. That is how you learn quickly and to stay highly altered and creative during a conflict.

Thomas Lojek: What about martial arts? Are they useful for becoming a real fighter or are they a waste of time? When real-world violence is so different, is there any reason to learn them?

Fred Mastro: I studied and trained martial arts for decades: Silat, Kali, MMA, Judo, Karate, Brazilian Jiutsu. I tried nearly everything. And every single martial art is fine. It is fine within its own context. Every martial art has a few good things.

The trouble of martial arts vs. real life violence lies in people... in their thinking. It is the mindset of people that doesn't work. They follow dogmatic rules. They put theory over reality. They train in the safe environment of a dojo and in respect of the safety rules within their martial arts schools.

And then they get hurt when they face people who don't care about safety and rules, because they are just reckless and fearless criminals who want to hurt you.

But this dilemma is not the fault of martial arts. It is the fault of teachers and masters who are



not willing to adapt and move on to reality-based training. And most don't move on, because they never faced real violence or they are just fine with what they do. It pays the bills. Everybody feels good. They are popular and respected to be a good person.

But the reality out there is ugly. And it becomes worse every day. You have to train for these crucial moments when your life is at stake and not for being a respected good person within the rule book of your martial art.

The more tools you have, the better you will get along. So, learning martial arts makes sense. But don't get stuck in one single martial art or in the dogma of a single school. This is where things go wrong in your training. That's why I tell my students that they should go out there, join other dojos, and learn other forms of training. I tell them to learn.

My teaching is very simple: Learn, learn, learn. Adapt. Stay open-minded. Visit other schools, other instructors, try new styles and teachings. Learn something new. Move on. Don't put your training and your fighting skills in a box. Because a real fight will push you outside the box. Always. Your ability to move on when things get dirty and chaotic and go beyond what you have learned so far is what makes the fighter.

This is the real school. Sometimes you need a technique, sometimes you just have to get random, brutal and dirty. Everything depends on context. This is where martial arts fail their students. They become dogma. And their masters become a living dogma.

Nobody really attacks a master once he has a certain status and his own schools. Really, nobody attacks his master honestly and with full force. It doesn't happen. In a dojo there is always a secret line of respect around the master. But not for the idea that he is unbeatable, and nobody is, but for the idea that he is the master.

And this is counter-productive for learning how to handle real life violence. Because this secret line of respect doesn't exist when somebody with a knife wants to kill you. It is just raw energy. And this is why I go out and study other teachings or visit

other dojos and even tell my students they have to attack me without hesitation. When I visit another instructor or seminar I am just a student. People get "Oh Oh... But you are Fred Mastro.." and I tell them: "No, I am nobody, I am here to learn. I am a student, a nobody, a blank page... now attack me and make it real... I want to learn something. If it hurts, if you beat me, I am fine with it. I learn. Forget who I am and teach me."

The same way I urge my students to attack me without holding back. It is okay. If they beat me, if I get hurt, that's part of what we do: Nobody wins 100% of the time. We all pay our student's debt of becoming a good fighter in blood, pain and humiliation along the way. That is life. That is the reality.

And martial arts have moved away from this reality. The master of a martial art has to maintain the image of being unbeatable to be credible and to stay in business.

The dojo creates a sense of security for everyone, and teaching becomes dogma. Until their students face a real bad guy who doesn't care about dogma, honor and who you are. He just wants to





get you hurt and most likely he will succeed just because you have never learned to get out of a dojos comfort zone of dogma and security and into what it really means to fight for your life.

Don't get me wrong: I love martial arts. They are my life. I studied them all my life. But they have some troubled concepts that I never get used to. That's why I started to teach Mastro Defence System. For people like me, who put learning over dogma. For people like police officers, counter terror units and body guards, who need to put learning over dogma, because their lives depend on it.

These guys know how real-life violence looks like. And they know that they can not train in a false sense of dogma and security for what they will face out there. I cannot fool them. Many of them have seen worse things than I did. That's why they like to train in my schools, because they know: I won't fool them with things that don't work. We train for real-life.

Thomas Lojek: What is your personal worst-case scenario, real-life threat in the streets of our modern cities, today?

Fred Mastro: My worst-case scenario is always the one that would involve my family. I can handle an aggressor or even a small group. No problem. Maybe they can beat me. No problem. Nobody wins all the time.

But protecting my family while dealing with a threat is really the most nightmarish version of all self-defense situations.

See, I don't care about myself. If something happens to me, well, it just happens. That's life. And if I die while protecting my family, I will have no problem with that. Because that is what men do for their families.

But knowing that I have to get them out of the situation, without any harm, while the threat in front of me needs my undivided attention is the single one situation that really scares me. Because it is really difficult. And it is so difficult, because you are emotionally attached to the situation.

The thing is if your wife, or your kids, or any one you really care about, will be involved in a situation, you will act different. It's not the same. Believe me. You will act different. And here is another thing: most drills and trainings are made for one-on-

one situations. Or a few for group training. But they never involve the stress that you will feel when the life of your family is at risk. And this is why I tell my students that they have to include their families in their self-defense training.

You can be the best fighter in the world, but if your family doesn't know what to do when you are facing a violent threat in the street, the years of your individual training will go overboard, simply because you are distracted by your family.

Your wife has to know that she cannot pull you away from an aggressor, because that is the moment when he will beat you while you are immobilized by your own wife.

When kids start to cry or just to freeze, it can make it all worse for you, because the number one goal is to get them away from the threat and doing so without attracting the attention of the attacker while they move.

Your family has to understand at least some basic rules and have emergency plans if something like an armed attack happens to you while being all together in the street or at home.

What is your thirty years of training worth if you lose your family, because they never learned to act accordingly while facing a lethal threat?

You can play the hero, sure, but if you lose them anyway, because you are the only single trained person in this situation, then you are nothing other than a tragedy, wasting your life for training and losing it all when it really counts. Include your family in your training. It is a crucial skill for today.

CONQUER
ARMY CHALLENGE
ARMY TIME



FOR FIRST RESPONDERS + MORE

- ▷ EMS
- ▷ LAW ENFORCEMENT
- ▷ MILITARY
- ▷ OUTDOORSMEN
- ▷ SELF DEFENSE
- ▷ TRAINERS

Jack Carr

Bestseller Author of "The Terminal List", "True Believer" and "Savage Son"

About the evolution of the thriller genre, new threat scenarios and future battle plans



Jack Carr is a former Navy SEAL who led special operations teams as a Team Leader, Platoon Commander, Troop Commander and Task Unit Commander. Over his 20 years in Naval Special Warfare, he transitioned from an enlisted SEAL sniper to a junior officer leading assault and sniper teams in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He went on to become a platoon commander, practicing counterinsurgency in the southern Philippines. He eventually commanded a Special Operations Task Unit in the most Iranian influenced section of southern Iraq throughout the tumultuous drawdown of US Forces.

Jack retired from active duty in 2016 and lives with his wife and three children in Park City, Utah. He is author of three New York Times Bestseller List novels: The Terminal List, True Believer, and Savage Son. His 4th novel, The Devil's Hand, will be out 13th April, 2021.

In this interview, he talks with thriller author and GTI Magazine's editor in chief Thomas Lojek about the evolution of the thriller genre, the future battle plans of our enemies and what scenarios we have to be prepared for in a chaotic world facing complex threats and many unknowns.

Thomas Lojek: Last week, I had an interesting conversation with Tom Buchino, a retired Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Special Forces. He is the founder of Tactical Ranch in El Paso, and he is also a thriller-novel enthusiast like me.

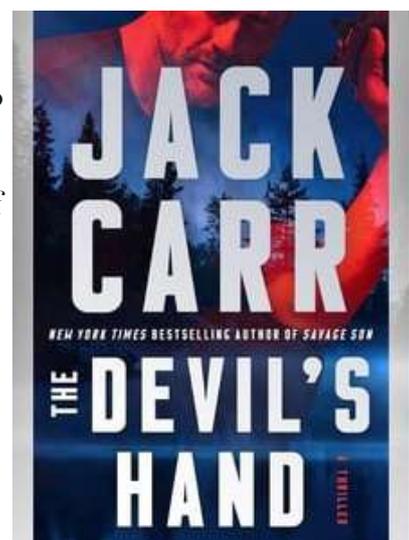
And we were talking about how much the genre has changed during the past few years. These days, there seems to be a significant shift from threats with origins from outside the USA to domestic threats and conspiracies inside the USA. Lines are blurring. In the 70s and 80s, there was a very clear rule within the thriller-genre: the Russians are the bad guys. Then, after the end of the



The thriller genre is always evolving. My goal was always to move the ball forward.

cold war area and the 9-11 attacks, the jihadist threat took over the role as the global enemy. Now, it seems to become an even more uneasy world where you can't trust anybody anymore, not even the genre rules of who should be the bad guys.

Jack Carr: The thriller genre is always evolving. My goal was always to move the ball forward. I am a student of the genre and have been for as long as I can remember. My mom is a librarian, so I was introduced to reading very early and





grew up with a love of books. And I think you are right. There are these different periods you can identify in the genre with distinctly different threats.

In incorporating what is timely or even just over the horizon, you give readers a touch point through which they can relate to the narrative, so I think it makes sense for thriller authors to incorporate real-world events into their fiction.

There are commonalities to the thriller regardless of timeframe. One of those is conspiracy. It hasn't been in every thriller, but it is a very familiar theme to fans of the genre.

So, whether the enemy was the Soviet Union back in the day or it was a drug cartel or if it was a super-empowered individual or a jihadist – the element of conspiracy is one that I believe readers enjoy. Sometimes they expect it to be woven into the storyline regardless of who the bad guys are.

Another familiar theme is that that often times politicians are

bad guys. In real life they give us a lot of material to work with. Incorporating them into a conspiracy, making them corrupt, certainly seems probable to those who follow the news.

So, I think today, you are right, we see a transition. It is interesting to see how the genre is shifting a bit from the jihadist terrorism of the first two decades of the 21st century back to Russia again.

I incorporated the Russian mafia in my second novel as well as in my third novel. It is so interesting that we see things

coming full circle while also incorporating threats that didn't exist back in the 70s and 80s.

Of course, today it is not the 1980s Tom Clancy type of Cold War Soviet threat. Nor is it the 60s and 70s type of espionage, but we see do Russians involved in many plots again. Having them as antagonists has evolved.

They are not portrayed as a country that wants to destroy another country. Now it is far more complex. We have Oligarchs. We have Russian government officials. We have international corruption. We have the Russian mafia, and we have them all over the world. It is really interesting to explore.

Thomas Lojek: What makes a great villain for you? A bad guy that makes your novel great and your protagonist suffer. Because being a writer myself, I truly know: Writing a bad guy is not an easy task. If he is just plain evil he becomes one dimensional and readers will find him boring. If he is too nice to be a full scale adversary who is able to hurt your hero on all levels of his life the readers won't hate him enough to get involved emotionally in your story. Can you tell us something about your approach to writing a great bad guy?





Jack Carr: First, I have to write a likeable protagonist. That is very important to me, and it is not always the case in novels. It was important for me to create a genuinely likeable protagonist in James Reece because in my books he has to do things that the readers have to forgive him (for).

And on the flipside, there is the antagonist, the bad guy. And you have to make the reader despise the bad guy and want the good guy to do something horrible to him (when the story reaches its climax). But I also have to make him someone who seems like a real person, not just a James Bond movie villain. I want to write him or her as a person who could possibly exist.

Today especially it seems we have been given so much material by people in power. We have seen things happen that would have seemed impossible just ten years ago. Now, some of the events that would have required the suspension of disbelief in years past have actually happened!

So now, as an author, you get to work with that as well. I think it is fascinating. It is fun to develop these characters, especially the bad guys. I think it is important to have character-driven books, regardless of genre, to have

characters who people can relate with. Either it is cheering for the protagonist. Or it is wanting to see how the scheme of the antagonist turns out.

I think my approach has a lot to do with the books that I read growing up. I read Tom Clancy, Nelson DeMille, David Morrell, J.C. Pollock, A.J. Quinnell, Marc Olden, and they all had protagonists with backgrounds that I wanted to have in real life one day. I identified with their protagonists – they had certain skills that I wanted to have one day. I still remember their characters – maybe that’s why I focus on character.

That is my approach to writing my novels, including the bad guys - creating memorable characters who could be real people. Luckily, through my life experience I have a lot to work with...

Of course, I also remember the plots, but I remember building a relationship with the characters the way you would with a friend. That built life-long relationships with the authors through their work. A great setting is important as well as it can work just like the characters in a novel. You can place the action in an area that people have a connection with. Maybe they have a personal

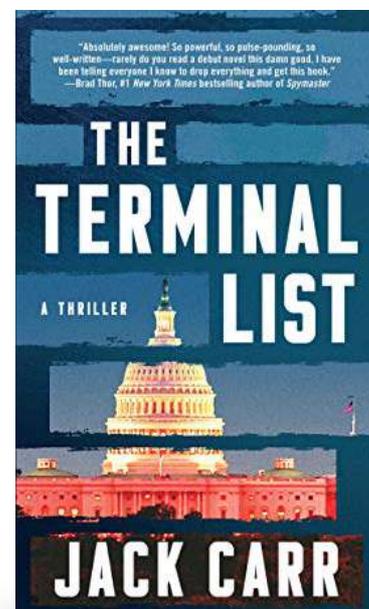
connection to the location already or perhaps they want to go there one day. You can transport them there through the narrative.

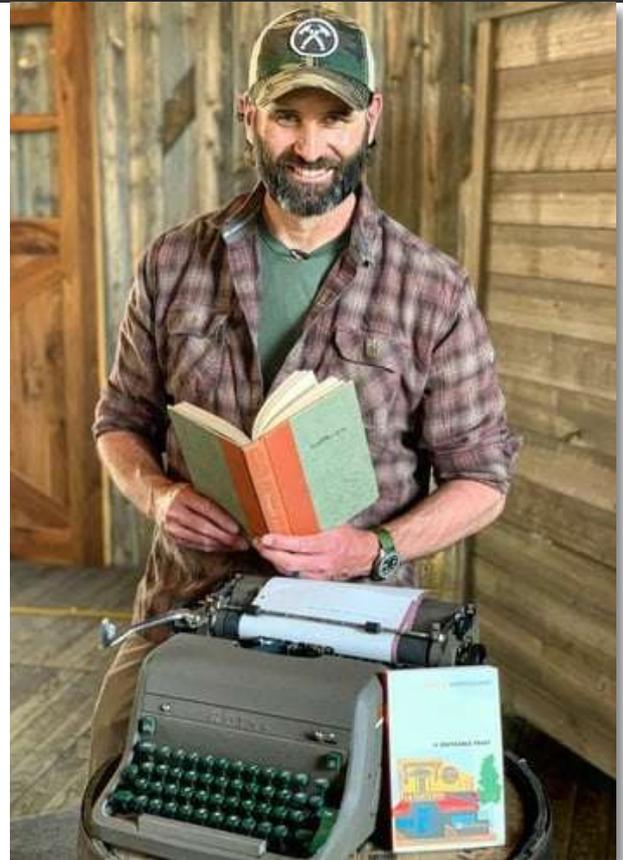
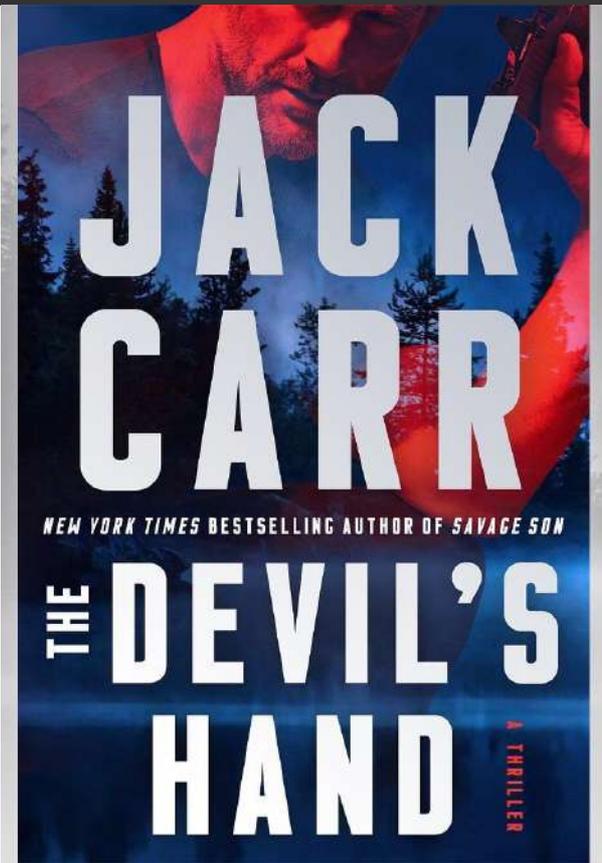
Thomas Lojek: Do you think we will have a hard time as thriller writers after 2020?

I mean, this year in retrospect reads like the sum of all thriller novels: from riots, to unrest, to stock market crashes, to governmental crisis, rising international tensions, and of course COVID-19... the virus that works like it came directly from one of these biotech thriller books we had read for decades.

How can we impress our readers after the year 2020 with a plot that scares them as well as entertains them with a scenario that feels like “that might happen”?

Jack Carr: I think, authors will do different things because it was such a tough year. I heard a few authors talking about writing more for “escape” now, which I understand. They want to give readers an escape from 2020 in their next novels.





But for me, COVID, the riots in the United States, having a tenuous political situation - it was all so front and center, it would be hard for me not to incorporate those events into my latest novel.

People are so connected to it and it has impacted their lives in such drastic ways and has changed the course of history.

Jobs, health and the direction of the country are in the forefront of the people's minds. And I understand jumping into a novel to escape.

But I am writing about events that are so current I couldn't not incorporate the events of the past year into THE DEVIL'S HAND coming out in April.

I feel that I not only have to acknowledge these events but also incorporate them into the storyline. I cannot discount what has happened in the United States.

And what has happened around the world and continue along, because our enemies are also studying our response to the events of 2020 and applying those lessons into future battle plans.

My next novel, THE DEVIL'S HAND, really takes a deep look into what the enemy has learned by watching us in Iraq and Afghanistan

over the last twenty years along with what they learned prior to the 21st century evolution of terrorism; and how have they applied it to what they learned in the 70s, 80s and 90s. They have been studying, adapting and applying all those lessons to future battle plans.

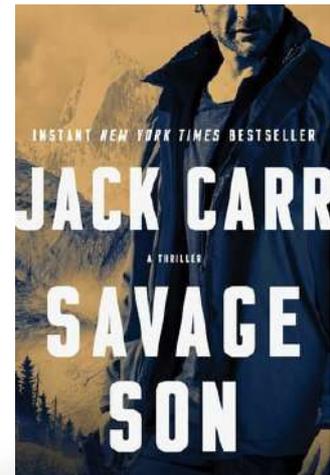
I also was researching bioweapons well before COVID. I was reading about the history of bioweapons, particularly from World War II to present day. What the Japanese did in World War II and what happened to their research at the end of the war.

When COVID hit, I was particularly hypersensitive to it because I was so immersed in the research for my fourth novel. As I wrote and continued to study, I recognized that the enemy will incorporate our response to COVID into their plans.

They have watched the riots of the past summer. They understand the political divisions in the United States between parties and ideologies.

They have studied our reaction to COVID. They will use all that knowledge to their advantage, and I incorporated all this into my 4th novel.

But you are right, 2020 is quite the year when you think about it in terms of writing a thriller and thinking in terms of making it believable.



Thomas Lojek: Ten years fast forward... About what scenarios will we write in the thriller genre?

Jack Carr: That is an interesting question. One can go back to see how things have evolved until this point in history and what the internet and social media have done to the security landscape.

One of the most relevant impacts of the internet is not being as dependent on a physical location for planning and training purposes. In many instances that can now be done electronically.

For example, to train or to figure out how to build things containing explosive materials, that sort of thing. Today, we don't have to go to Afghanistan into a cave, or set up an obstacle course, have people running around to teach them how to shoot an AK.

Today, we can do all that online. We can go to YouTube and learn how to break down an AK, how to fire an AK. We can learn how to make bombs online. We don't have to go somewhere for that kind of training like we did up

until the late 90s. Now, we have this digital medium out there to not only to recruit and influence people but also to train and then to execute.

And then of course we have seen over the past few years how powerful private companies have become in order to influence politics and economies, not just in a certain region but around the world. We haven't seen that before. As more and more people connect, the tech giants are not getting any less powerful, that's for sure.

I think that is really something to explore, that you have a very small group of people accumulating levels of wealth unheard of in modern history.

You have people with so much power and wealth being able to control information.

Their power is not based on oil, an engine, a plastic, or something like that - it is based on information - on controlling the flow of information.

I think this will be the forefront, not only in the thriller genre, but in our lives and our children's lives in the decades to come.

Jack Carr's new novel will be out April 13th: "The Devil's Hand"! Follow Jack Carr on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook @JackCarrUSA and visit his website: OfficialJackCarr.com



Scott Usry

Director of Training at GTI

Two Rounds: The Difference Between Qualification and Combat



Scott Usry

As law enforcement officers we receive many hours of instruction on the use of firearms over our careers. Starting with the basic mandate, we are taught how to draw our side arms and fire the rounds into targets to stop threats.

We are taught that we should fire a standard defensive response or two rounds to the center mass of the threat target, and if that does not stop the threat, then we should fire one round to the cranial vault as a failure drill.

We are told over and over again...

We are told over and over again to watch our front sight and not to jerk our triggers. We are told to pin the trigger to the rear, and once we fire the round, then we are to slowly release our trigger until we feel and hear a positive click or trigger reset.

While this is all good information if you are shooting in a sterile environment, we work in a tactical, ever-changing world.

Where Theory Meets Practice

So why do we train this way? Why do we teach our new officers to shoot this way? How can we fix some of the training scars that we are incorporating into the training of our officer?

Why do we teach officers to only fire two rounds? The answer to that question is multi-faceted. One of the main reasons we teach the standard defensive response is for qualification purposes.

Agencies have to ensure that their officers are proficient with their weapon systems. There must be a standard to do this.

Officers will shoot a set number of rounds during a set time limit from a specific yard line. When this is done correctly, then an officer can be said to be proficient with their weapon.

Why is this important?

The short answer is, there is a difference between qualification and combat. In training we need to expose our officers to the possibility that two rounds will not be sufficient to handle the problem, but a failure drill is not possible.

Therefore, as instructors we vary the numbers of rounds that we have our students shoot at the targets during training to break the habit of shooting just two rounds each time.

This ensures that the officers are thinking the incident through and not just going through the motions.



“What does your body do prior to any training? Does that movement have a protective response? If yes, then why aren’t we integrating this into all our training?”

Training Equals Officers Who Think on Their Feet

We want the officers to be able to evaluate the incident and act accordingly, with the appropriate numbers of rounds. We want “thinkers that can shoot and shooters that can think” not just officers who are robots. The only way to develop this type of officer is through proper training.

We teach our officers not to jerk the trigger when they shoot and pin the trigger to the rear. We tell them to slowly release the trigger until they feel and hear a positive click, then start to squeeze the trigger again.

While this is great for bullseye shooting, combat may require a rapid deployment of multiple rounds in order to suppress the threat that you are facing.

In light of that, we should be training our students to not move their weapon while firing, then pull the trigger however fast they need to. They can jerk the trigger as long as they don’t move the gun.

We are looking for combat effective shoots to stop threats in order to protect the public.



As Law Enforcement Officers we are accountable for every round shot, so we need to be better trained with our firearms.

Finding Credible, Real-World Training

How do we combat the issues with firearms training? We look for training from credible experienced instructors. We seek knowledge from qualified people who have been where we want to go. We continue to be students of the game and always looking to better ourselves and our profession.



GTI Joint Operations Center in Barnwell SC





CUSTOM



SWAT





Photo: Practicing a 2-man entry with the Walther MPK. We followed strict uniform and haircut guidelines too.

Special Forces Berlin and the Beginnings of CounterTerror Ops and CQB in the US Army

By James Stejskal

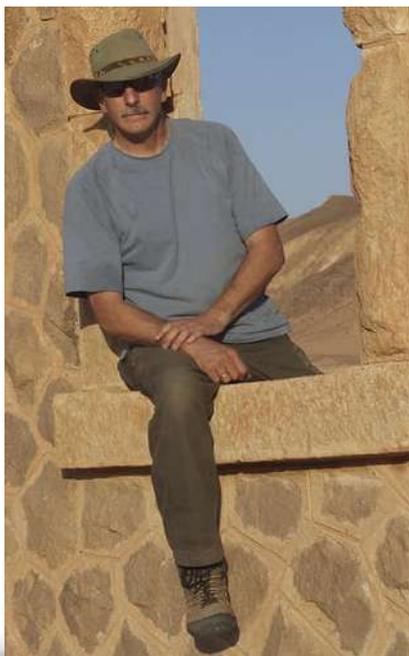


Photo: James Stejskal

Berlin, Fall 1977

The echo of pistol shots bounced off the concrete walls of the range as thin tendrils of smoke curled up out of the Walther P5 barrel that fired them. The three cardboard silhouettes were well holed.

“Clear your weapon and let’s take a look,” said Ron, our instructor.

We moved down range, walking the short seven meters from the firing line to the targets. I had fired four magazines of ammunition, double-tap, at the numbered targets according to his verbal commands.

From where I was standing, I could see what damage I had wrought but Ron wanted to show me something. My two errant rounds, “fliers” he called them, were outside the

acceptable limits. Using another target silhouette he overlapped one atop the other.

“Here, you’re okay,” he moved the cardboard a bit, “here the hostage is dead. Can’t have that. Tighten up your groups, all of them.” The verdict was matter of factly delivered. It didn’t matter that the “hostage” wasn’t displayed when I was firing; accuracy was paramount at all times.

We were located in Berlin, the “Outpost of Freedom” as it was called in the western press. There were only a few of us Special Forces types in the city, a small fraction of the 12,000 American, British, and French — the Allies — stationed there. That was an even smaller fraction of the roughly 1,000,000 Soviet and East German troops surrounding us.



Photo: Training with GSG9 circa 1978

It was the height of the Cold War between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Berlin was the focal point of that struggle, although many bloodier skirmishes took place elsewhere around the world.

Our mission in Berlin was secret. We were known to the outside world as Detachment "A" or Det "A" for short.

The classified designation was Special Forces (SF) Berlin. This unique SF unit had been stationed in Berlin since 1956 waiting for the moment when the Cold War might turn hot.

If conflict did come, SF Berlin was tasked to disrupt Soviet rear area security and slow the advance of the Warsaw Pact's forces towards Western Europe.

The men of the unit had to be experts not only in unconventional warfare but urban operations as well. It was a tall order for 90 men posted 110 miles behind enemy lines. The odds weren't good but we accepted them.

Day-to-day life was always interesting — training for special operations under the nose of the enemy was a challenge. The men became consummate professionals at war in the shadows, much like their predecessors in the Office of Strategic Services.

They had to work under cover using esoteric intelligence tradecraft skills taught by case officer instructors from the Agency. Wearing an American army uniform was not part of the mission, but wearing someone else's was. Very good

language ability and an intimate knowledge of local customs was mandatory. Of course there were other unique tasks to learn like where and how to cross East German border defenses without being shot.

In the 1970s, the situation began to change. Terrorism had reared its head in Europe. At first it was small-scale attacks, but then came the kidnapping of Israeli Olympic Team in Munich and the subsequent debacle at Fürstenfeldbruck Airfield. Senior officers in the U.S. Army European Command realized



Photo: Practicing for a Hijacking Scenario at Berlin Tegel Airport - view from sniper/observer position.

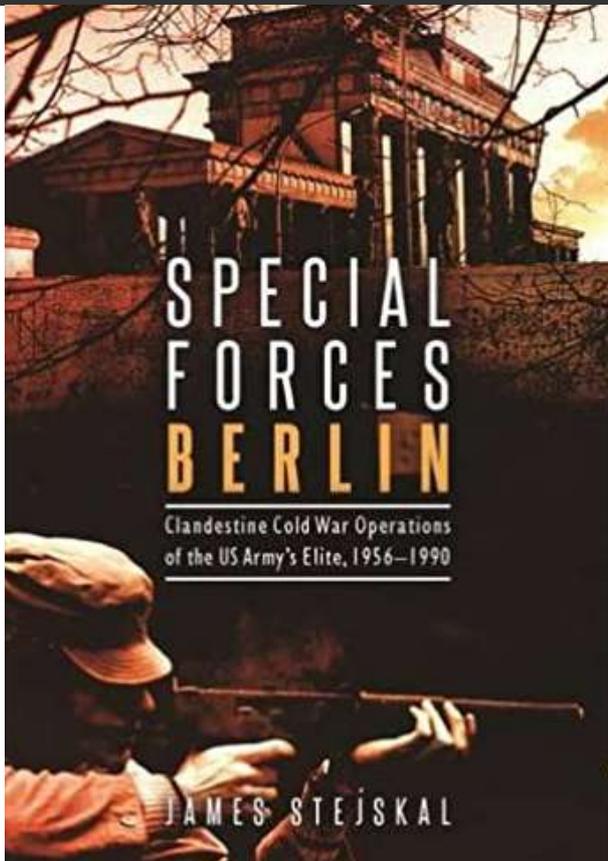


Photo: Cover Special Forces Berlin J. Stejskal



Photo: Pan Am let us borrow their uniforms when we worked on the flight line of Berlin Tegel Airport. Mac-10 9mm at the ready...

the military was not prepared for such incidents, especially aircraft hijackings. Remember, this was well before 1st SFOD-D aka “Delta” got off the ground.

So Special Forces Berlin was ordered to prepare for the job. In 1975, Det “A” became the first U.S. military unit with counter-terrorism as one of its missions. For the men of SF Berlin, there was a new skill-set to be learned while maintaining the old one.

Many of the men had trained with SWAT teams and special forces of our allies. Together with our established knowledge base, we drew on those special experiences to build a solid program that would accomplish what was needed.

Some of it came from historical examples; books came out of the closet and the masters were re-learned: what Fairbairn learned in Shanghai and Applegate taught at Area B-2. Much came from our British cousins — the Special Air Service.

Several of our troopers spent a year at with 22SASR and brought their philosophy of Close Quarter Battle to our doors. British CQB coupled with the U.S. Army’s Vietnam era

“Quick Kill” techniques were integrated to teach our shooters how to acquire and hit a small target without using the sights. For longer ranger shots, the sights would be quickly visualized. The stated aim of CQB is simple: to guarantee success in killing. Six factors play a role: surprise, confidence, concentration, speed, teamwork, and offensive attitude.

Starting out at 5 meters and then moving back to 7 and 10 meters, a shooter could quickly engage a target with a rapid “double-tap” — two-rounds in the kill zone of first, an 8” platter-size circle, down to a 3” tea-cup saucer.

At first it was single targets, then multiple, then mixed shoot / no-shoot targets. It became more intense with a single marksman on the line, then in pairs, then four-man teams, and static then moving targets. All timed, all under pressure. So far, so good.

To get out of the firing range mindset, we built a shooting house to practice room clearing, single and multiple rooms, hallways and closets. Abandoned buildings in the city and empty Pan Am aircraft standing isolated on the tarmac at Berlin’s Tegel Airport gave us the chance to practice full-on CT scenarios.



That involved a deployment of the headquarters element, sniper/observer elements, and anywhere from four to eight assault teams to conduct practice on different scenarios — good for almost anything might come up.

But that wasn't enough. We needed to practice clandestine entry and takedown techniques — essentially getting into the target area, taking care of business, and getting off the "X" once it was all over.

That's where SF Berlin's urban unconventional warfare skills came into play. Previously, we had provided "other" agencies with back up surveillance and security, mobility, infiltration and exfiltration capabilities, all of which were all useful for a possible hard target CT operation. Who knew when you might need to extract someone — a VIP or High Value Target — from East Germany?

Det "A's" soft-skills like language, intelligence tradecraft, expertise in unconventional warfare, and the ability to move unobtrusively in an unfamiliar environment, coupled with its dynamic entry, shoot to kill, special operations skills were a combination unavailable anywhere else in the U.S. military.

And soon they were needed. In November 1979, the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was overrun and more than 50 hostages taken by "radical students." Three more Americans were being held in the Iranian Foreign Ministry. It was not long before the Pentagon came calling. By then, SFOD-D was up and running. It had been certified for CT operations just days before the embassy was seized.

Although Delta had the 90 men necessary to rescue the hostages from the embassy compound, they didn't have enough for the Foreign Ministry tasking. SF Berlin got that job and ten men were selected for the operation.

Training, intense multi-service planning, preparation, and practice began but there was one small problem. There was no intelligence about the target or the enemy forces and the national systems could not (or would not, some say) provide it.

The answer was simple, send in men who understood the target and the mission requirements, men who could operate undercover in a denied area with the ability and confidence to successfully acquire the information needed, and then meet the assault force to lead them to the target. Where do you

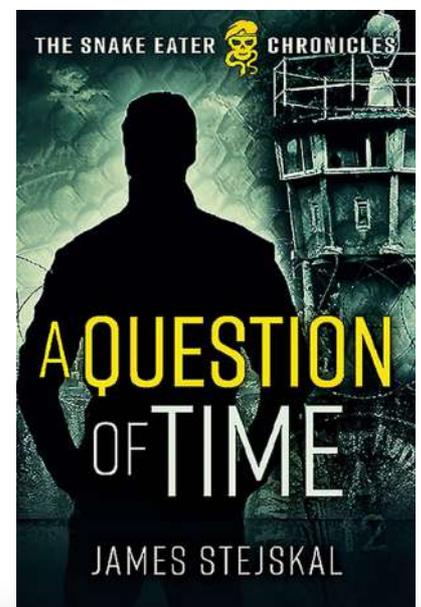
find such men? One unit had them ready to deploy: Detachment "A" Berlin.

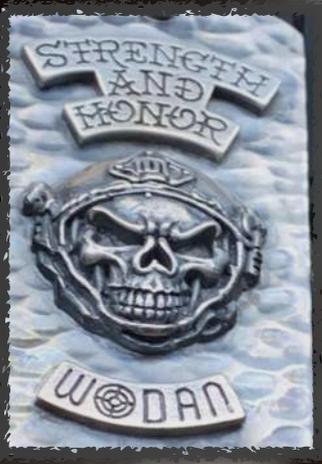
As we know, the Iran rescue mission was a failure which ended with a terrible accident at Desert One that took eight men's lives. But there was a successful side to the mission, the advanced reconnaissance mission into Tehran that provided the required information for the operation to go forward.

The lessons learned from the Joint Task Force 79 mission resulted in the Goldwater-Nichols Act and led to the creation of U.S. Special Operations Command.

The full history of Det "A" is told in the book *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956–1990*.

Not all of SF Berlin's stories could be told but I found one way to fill the gap: as fiction. So, *The Snake Eater Chronicles* were born. The first of that series is called *A Question of Time*. (Casemate Publishers, November 2020).





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Walter Bizzarri

Universal Shield USA

Redefining Combat in a New World



Photo: Walter Bizzarri



Thomas Lojek: Walter, could you give us a personal outlook on what you think will be big changes and challenges for the tactical industry as well as for the operators in LE, military or close protection services?

Walter Bizzarri: One of the biggest changes going for operators is that our “combat zone” isn’t really clearly defined anymore. The lines of the past, where battle was happening or was expected to happen, are blurring.

And it happens even faster through the rapid pace of worldwide technological change. With apps tracking constant communication, video streaming and powerful mobile devices all around us, the combat zone is everywhere now.

Terrorists conduct their attacks on common streets and video stream their killing spree to a radicalized audience on social media. Apps are able to organize riots within a very short time. Some people are just freaking out on subways, in shopping malls, or even in the hallways of their company, and starting to beat, attack or even kill people.

This seemingly randomization of attacks is in full effect... But it clearly is not really random, but rather guided by an all present technology that we as

operators never can fully oversee. I mean, even the deep pocket houses of big tech aren’t able to fully control what is happening on their own platforms. A series of comments and postings or chats can be part of the next big terror attack. Or a seemingly random killing spree of some weirdo has a long history of posting violent comments on social media, and it all ends up with him killing people in the neighborhood. Our battlefield is complex and everywhere now.

Thomas Lojek: But doesn’t work in both ways? Also in favor of the operator?

Walter Bizzarri: Yes and no. Clearly operators can use modern equipment, high tech surveillance systems, tracking software, more sources of information and so on. And it makes sense. It is a good trend that gives us more options, really.

But what I was pointing at is how the nature of attacks and threats are changing. See, the nature of how and where high violent attacks can be expected is different, today. Last year, a local group of Chechnyan clans has changed a small French town into a warzone for days because of a turf war with Algerian clans. The sleepy Austrian capital Vienna was under siege for hours by a lone wolf terrorist.



In France, several people were beheaded on the street or in public places, like churches.

See, if you are a police officer or a close protection service member... even in our developed countries... you can run into a violent situation that will come close to a third-world warzone brutality at any point and at any place. No country is safe anymore.

And this worldwide spreading of complex threats, as well as the constant rising level of violence and the more sophisticated nature of attacks, is clearly driven by technology. In the 70s, 80s, 90s or even in the first decade of the new century, these things were unthinkable. At least, in Europe or in the US.

Rules were clear before. A war was a defined space on the world's map, then. Today, it's not. A proxy war in Lebanon can have an effect in Berlin or Brussels and lead to violent gang wars, turf wars in organized crimes or terror attacks. When nations have interest in destabilizing a region, then they

have very sophisticated experts and state-funded companies to run a devastating information war on social media.

Today, the combat is 24/7 and 720 degrees - online and offline. As an operator, you have to understand that. You let your guard down, and you might be surprised by the rules of the new world and you don't make it home alive. I don't want to sound too pessimistic, but the new rules of combat are tough. And omnipresent. All the time.

Thomas Lojek: Do you have an idea how operators, or our industry in general, could counter these trends or at least adapt?

Walter Bizzarri: Our industry only works when there is an advantage. I somehow see our industry being in an illusion of "we are having the tactical advantage" by being too much in love with tactical gear, TTP and great looking videos on social media. It's not about that.

It is to understand that we cannot win the next war with

what we know from the old war. For three decades CQB, tactical gear and TTP were to our advantage. But technology is blurring - again - the rules, as well as our advantage on the operational battlefield.

You might feel safe with your latest carrier plate and tactical helmet and coming from a two-week CQB course... But one guy on a street corner, secretly filming your team with his \$50 smartphone can mean that you are maybe already dead, without even knowing it yet, and just because the bad guys know where you are now... And only thanks to the guy on the street corner and his cheap crappy smartphone.

If we lure ourselves into the sleep that we have an advantage, only because we use the term "tactical" for everything, then our industry is maybe heading towards a very painful awakening and very soon. We have to be better than that.

I see some trends towards a commercialized individualism in our industry. It seems to me that



Contact
Universal Shield

too many ex-military guys or former police officers are picking up their gun, putting their tactical gear on and trying to make it big on social media.

Well, it's a free world. Everyone should be able to make his own decision about what is his place in the world and how he makes money to pay his bills.

But... the common ground of all effective warfare, from being a police officer to conducting high-risk special operations under the command of state-side military agencies ...

The common ground of being a warrior is having a team. A unit, a team, a group, a bunch of brothers, a tribe... You name it, depending on where you come from.

And this spirit of "team" is getting lost in the hunt for social media fame.

Of course, there are a lot of quiet professionals around the world. Yes. But the general industry trend to hunt fame and likes is clearly picking up speed, especially now in a time of economical crisis. And that worries me.

We have to put teams first. On social media, everyone is a "one-man war-machine," and that is not true. We can only operate, advance and fulfill our missions in teams.

And I would like to see this spirit coming back into the communication and promotion habits of our industry.

We need more good networks, good communication between our leading experts. And we need to invest in events and trainings,

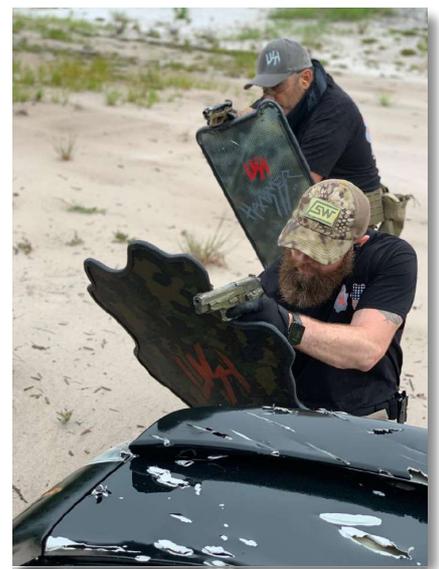


The common ground of being a warrior is having a team

where we can connect and share with our brothers where we can. Everyone should be able to learn a few things.

Cooperation is my personal path in this world and in my profession... And I am a little worried about social media creating an underlying toxic movement of "me... me... me..."

That is not what we have learned in the units and operations that made us who we are.





Thomas Lojek: Let's put these aspects into action: What would you recommend to train for?

Walter Bizzarri: The thing is, most people in our profession still train for a war that is over. Or at least over in the form we knew it. But in many, many training courses, the drills repeat what our forces have learned in places like Fallujah, Ramadhi, and Mosul. Or in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.

And don't get me wrong: Of course, this kind of training represents a portfolio of vetted combat tactics that has reached an impressive peak of efficiency in performance. The CQB tactics of units who have been on active duty in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan - these tactics might be the highest form of effective warfare of our generation.

But repeating what we have learned during the last 20 years will not prepare us fully for the war we will have the next time. Or for the war we are already in, and maybe without even noticing it. The terror attacks are happening in public places with knives, machetes, cars or trucks. Most terrorists don't even try to get explosives, because they know that this will catch the attention of our intelligence units.

Both sides are getting better in what they do and how to hide their activities. That is why the attacks are coming from within today. On a subway, in a church, on the streets. Even we



might have to put the riots of Portland, Seattle and on Capitol Hill into this category when we imply the possibility that there are maybe foreign forces at work who seem able to use modern forms of unconventional warfare and information wars against us... And maybe far better than we ever could imagine before.

If we look at modern warfare and combat as a fragmented but all present continuity, then we have to understand that the doors of Fallujah are everywhere now, so to speak... on our subways, in churches, in schools, on the streets, in company buildings. And even in police and military buildings, because we have seen the terribly effective attacks in the Fort Hood Shooting 2009 and in the deadly knife attack in a Paris police department in October 2019. Nothing is safe. The enemy is hiding deep within our culture and our daily life.

That is why we need a most flexible and full spectrum form of combat mindset and combat action. But we have to put this full spectrum of possible warfare or self-defense actions under the microscope of "What will most likely happen and what could do the most damage to us in a situation when we do not expect it to happen?"

It maybe sounds like a contradiction, but we have to train for the most likely attack, as well as forms of attack we can't even think about yet, because we haven't seen these kinds of attacks before. But this is what makes even empires win or lose a war, since ancient



Greece, Rome, and in empires like China and Japan, and it even happened to a tactical mastermind, like Napoleon.

They all were caught by surprise by enemies who came into the battle with tactics they couldn't counter, because they didn't anticipate them nor did they understand them. And it will happen to us.

Let's be honest, deeply, and frighteningly honest: Most military forces and police forces aren't ready to counter enemies and attacks that come from within and are camouflaged in the same culture and population.

But for now, this is exactly the most dangerous security threat we are facing. The best way to train is to take the vetted principles of what we know works in a certain context, to understand these principles and to move them into our context of today. Or drop them. Or redefine them.

We have to be confident in what works but keep open-minded to the fact that enemies adapt, learn and counter-attack.

Our fundamentals in TTP are not going away. We have to teach fundamentals, no doubt, but we also have to train our operators to be able to adapt all the time. We need confident warriors who carry the fundamentals of warfare in their DNA, because they have been effectively trained in these fundamentals, while being guided by instructors with a good sense of reality and who understand that every soldier has to stay flexible in his thinking and combat action.

Train confident in what you know, but keep open to the fact that you will face attacks and combat conditions that will need you to go beyond all that... in thinking and action!

If you follow this principle and if you connect with a network of good and like-minded instructors, where everyone is willing to share a certain expertise and experience, that can widen your operational capabilities... If you do follow this path, then you are ready to be an effective operator for the challenges of our new battlefields.

Thomas Lojek: Any advice for civilians?

Walter Bizzarri: In general, any civilian who is serious in his interest in self-defense should follow the same advice that I would give professionals: train reality-based and open-minded for what most likely could happen to you and your family. But train your thinking around the fact that any attack will be most likely different from what you have learned. Learn good fundamentals, but keep your mind open and able to adapt to any situation.

And, please, understand that you train as a civilian. Your goal is to protect your life, your family, and maybe your property. You don't need CQB, SWAT and counter-terror training. Stay away from instructors who want to sell you these courses. Most likely it is crap, or you will ally yourself with immoral people. Because these tactics should not be sold to the civilian market and everyone who does it has a fairly doubtful moral compass.

And it is simply not necessary. During a home invasion, you won't have a SWAT unit behind your back while you are moving forward in your fancy tactical gear. No, most likely, you will be sleepy and in your pajamas and asking yourself



what the hell is going on. Train to become a good shooter, train in a few effective self-defense moves, train in some realistic situations that will most likely be happening to you.

Understand that you aren't the member of a tactical unit. Therefore, you are just wasting time if you train yourself in things that you have seen in the movies or on Youtube.

With Universal Shield USA, we are creating a line of products for the civilian market now, because we understand that civilians are worried about the deterioration of the security situation all around the world. Of course, we don't sell our high-end tactical shield for operators to civilians, because it doesn't make sense.

But we offer homeowner smaller, highly adaptable anti-ballistic shields, that can be used effectively in the environment of a civilian home. You can pick our home-defense shields quickly, move freely in small gangways, stairways, in rooms full of furniture. Our new home defense shields will protect you and your family against bullets and knife-attacks. And they give you the freedom to use them in the

range of possibilities and in scenarios you will really face.

See, that is exactly the principle in action that I was talking about before: Take operational experience and put it into a new context. That is what we did with our new line of shields for home defense. Our shield for home defense reflects what most likely will happen during a home invasion and gives civilians the maximum flexibility to move, to escape, to protect a family, while being able to adapt to any situation in a real household environment.

Along the same vein, we are now starting a line of anti-knife attack gear. For professional operators, the line will have a different look, but for the civilian markets, our anti-knife clothes and accessories will completely blend in.



You can sit with our anti-knife shirts, trousers, scarfs and gloves in a subway and you will be completely protected against any edged-weapon attack, while not attracting anybody's attention. You blend in.

Our line is completely fashionable. But you are wearing it inside your civilian clothes. These are high-tech layers that can withstand any form of knife-stabbing, slicing, and hitting. And being protected in this way, while not attracting anyone's attention isn't the worst option in many neighborhoods today.



Nick Drossos

Real World Self-Defense Instructor

Myths and Realities of Knife Defence and Training. Is Your Discipline Real?



Nick Drossos

Puncturing the dominant myths of knife defense is essential - climatically, one's survival depends on it. Fights are brutal and sudden; most often, victims do not instantly grasp the stabbing until they see blood.

Although it's typical to deduce that extensive training qualifies one for optimal defense, the real truth predicates otherwise - exposing you to colossal risks. With each attack as unpredictable and barbarous as the attacker, it's vital false perceptions of knife fighting be analyzed.

Myth #1: Just Run

I defer this solution through pressure testing in different environments and close-quarter range - proving that running against the knife could be counterproductive, even fatal. Intuitively, turning to run leaves your back exposed, making you susceptible to being stabbed from behind. Your attacker will not wait for you to be at a standstill to strike and slash, even opting to hurl his weapon at you.

To run against the knife, you must have clearance - a bare minimum of 10 ft to 15 ft of space. If not, self-defense mechanisms come into play.

Consider being in an elevator, a stairwell, or a parking garage? Acknowledge any compounding factors. Are you alone? With your wife, your

child? Are you attired to run? Do you have the stamina for flight, or do you have physical limitations? A logical assessment succeeds in outrunning your aggressor.

Myth #2: Just Use A Gun

The dominant mindset asserts that when faced with an attacker wielding a knife, just shoot. This restrictive thinking may cost you your life.

Knives are close-ranged weapons and consistently cause the highest fatalities; anyone with a knife can be deadly. Blades do not require the skill of a gun; they are silent and easily concealed. Note, a draw with a knife is synonymous with violence. There is intent to harm, even kill. My raw experience has exposed that time and space are critical factors determining the outcome of knife vs. gun.

I test this systematically within my edge instructor training course; what I exercise with law enforcement is not only vigorous but compelling. Most recently in Boston during my DT Police Instructor Course, we performed drills at proximities of 3ft., 9ft., 12 ft., and 20 ft as distance often controls who triumphs in a knife vs. gun scenario.

I also placed a trainee in a confined space, unable to move back and then up against a wall. I followed with an attacker charging at full speed.



The outcome...At less than 3 ft, you will not get to your gun before being stabbed. At less than 6 ft, there is a 50/50 chance of being stabbed. By the time you pull out your weapon, the attacker has potentially begun puncturing you.

The 21 Rule is on target; clearance space you need to get to your weapon. Anything under that - is a hit or miss. Despite training, go for your gun only if time and space make it viable. Triumph in such a drill demands that as a shooter, you must be able to draw and fire two rounds of your gun in 1.5 seconds.

A gun vs. knife is only perilous if you have your opponent within a slim trajectory; accuracy is contingent on it. Adrenaline and panic may obscure opportune sightlines, even for those with extensive gun training. An amateur shooter may never replicate what they have practiced under stress, even shock. Furthermore, drawing a gun, especially from a holster, is slower and could even demand two hands.

If you determine that the divide between you and your aggressor is too close, you stop drawing your gun to fire before being stabbed; utilizing knife defense is the more effective. Switching to hand, intensely explored in

training, becomes your ammunition.

Myth #3: Just Duel

The majority of knife attacks aren't fights - they are supreme assaults, making knife on knife duels hardly credible. Your inherent counteraction is immediate retaliation or pulling out your knife. It's vital to conceptualize that within mere seconds, an attacker will stab you numerous times. The attacker's motive is not to duel, with equal footing, and like weapons - it is to violently harm.

It's the unpredictability of an attack that makes a victim vulnerable and consequently weak, so understanding the attacker and the plethora of ways he may use his weapon is essential for survival. As adrenaline is pumping, katas and techniques obliterate. Surviving and cutting is your objective.

Being prepared for surprise attacks defines my strategy; teaching a full range of motion and following through with intent. Slow, medium and fast scenarios will trigger a victim to expand their paradigm of techniques, facilitating the brain to focus on the most vital. Strategies and isolated drills without perimeters are

monumental. I teach that flexible thinking takes precedence, attention, and awareness are critical.

Just to Ruminare

Cutting through myths about knife defense may be the edge you need. The controversy is real within the plethora of assessments being debated and analyzed amongst experts and amateurs alike. It's pivotal to consider what comes to mind as possible and what may seem impossible.

Being prepared for anything and everything is your most potent weapon. I instill both cutting edge knowledge and practice, but the logic must come from you. Trusting your instincts and controlling your mindset is critical to your survival. The fight begins when you visually connect with your attacker - not once the knife is visible.

When I train, I assert the gravity of not giving up the will to fight - a stabbing is not always a death sentence. Adrenaline will feed your muscles with the oxygen and stamina to fight.

If the attacker is close, you have ample space to attempt a defense. Actualizing a vigorous mindset and a relentless drive to fight could save your life.

Nick Drossos Homepage:

SCAN ME





Brian A. Bewley

Tactical Solutions International

Tactical Training in the Cold Weather Environment

“Nothing burns like the cold.”
George R.R. Martin

I remember having multiple discussions recently over which environment is worse to train and operate in... the cold or the heat. I have been pulling an Ahkio across the Alaskan wilderness at -50F, and I have lived in a hide-site in the sands of the Middle East at almost 130F...I can tell you that they BOTH sucked!

In terms of the most memorable or ultimate misery however, my memory takes me to two different environments that in no way compared to the extremes that I mentioned above:

1. Trying to survive in the field in Fort Bragg, North Carolina during an ice storm at 31F still haunts me to this day! There were exposure deaths during

that training exercise, and decades long memories of how badly Mother Nature could fuck you at the drop of a hat!

And, 2. Trying to survive in the jungle in Panama during a week-long recon, 88F and full rainy season.

Covered in prickly heat, crotch rot, trench foot, black palm wounds and insect bites head to toe. I dreamed of pulling the Ahkio in -50F just to stay alive until exfil!

The military understood the need to keep us trained in various environments, as we can never predict when or where the next global gunfight or police action would occur.

Since hanging up Uncle Sam's rucksack, my family and tactical training company returned to the State of Wyoming.

Besides being the least populated State in the union, fully pro-2d amendment and rich in conservative values, it can be cold. I have seen snow at our ranch in every month, except for August.



While many trainers and students have no issue with training in fair weather, many choose to conduct training indoors or worse - they cancel their training during inclement weather or in the cold of winter. Those who live and work in these cold environments MUST train in all applicable local environments, inside and outside, to develop or maintain their skills.

As an example, one of our standard monthly training events is the Wyoming Concealed Firearms Permit (CFP) course conducted for the local community through our Community College. This is a basic and required course of instruction for those who do not already possess the training and experience to be licensed by the State of Wyoming to carry concealed.

The class is conducted at our local gun club indoor range and when the students graduate, they possess the skills, knowledge and minimal experience to legally and safely carry a concealed pistol “in the environment for which they were trained.” What this means is - regardless if it was -20F or 100F outside of the classroom, the students were trained in an



Photo: Davis Meschke, one of our local Winter Training SMEs conducting avalanche training in the Wind River Mountains.

environmentally controlled classroom and range and have the basic skills, knowledge and minimal experience of carrying a concealed pistol under a very light jacket or shirt in a like environment.

It does not provide them with the experience or expertise to carry concealed within a different environment, such as with minimal clothing on a beach or bundled under 3 layers of clothing while wearing arctic gloves in a blizzard at -20F.

One must train in these new environments for skill proficiency.

“What does not kill you, makes you stronger” ...
German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche

Whether you are currently living in a particular environment (urban, rural, winter, summer, desert, high altitude mountain, maritime, jungle, arctic, etc.) or you are temporarily visiting these locations or conducting environmental training, there are some general guidelines that I always recommend.

As we are currently discussing cold weather environments, let's focus on this for recommendations:

1. Be prepared (always!). The Boy Scout Motto. While on the range training, traveling by vehicle, hunting, hiking in the back country or while in your home/place of work - always have a fully stocked, equipped and accessible Cold Weather Survival Kit or bag (bug out or get home bag).

Winter is unpredictable and can change from an awesome 50F spring like, sunny day to -10F and blizzarding over the course of an hour or two.

There are so many stories of people being trapped in their vehicles or needing to make an emergency snow cave or were generally challenged with they lost power and heat in their homes due to rapidly changing weather.

I always have food, water, blankets, signaling devices and medical supplies in my vehicles. Preparing for every situation is nearly impossible, so plan for contingencies that you have a high probability of encountering.

There are many online resources for “how to setup a winter survival bag” or essential items that you need to have such as:

9 Winter Survival Items Your Bug-Out Bag May Be Missing:

2. Training Plan and Goal. The type of training and the training location are two critical areas to address in the planning and preparation of cold weather instruction. Firearms training, tactical training, and survival training are just some of the general areas that we concentrate on throughout the year - regardless of snow, ice, winds, freezing rain, etc.

Historically, in mid-December, we conduct our Low Light/No light pistol course on our outdoor 25m range. Winds are typically out of the west at 25 mph providing a wind chill temperature of between 0 and -15 with a high probability of



standing snow. As part of our planning and preparation, we have always positioned a warming trailer near the range with hot coffee and heat and provide breaks as required for safety. Student performance degradation due to the cold (mental weakness and potential for minor cold weather injuries) are highlighted by the instructor.

Is the cold the only difference between our Low Light/No Light pistol courses that we conduct in May or June and the December class? Absolutely not! Glove removal, weapon and magazine manipulation, ancillary equipment such as lights, reloading magazines, drawing and re-holstering from concealment under multiple garments are just some of the additional skills that must be mastered to operate skillfully in a cold environment. We could not realistically gain the experience or train these skills with any competency indoors.

Remember, absence of a plan leads to chaos, so plan accordingly and ensure that the training has an end state or goal.

3. Specialty Gear and Equipment Common to All. Proper seasonal equipment, range gear, clothing of the correct type and properly layered, survival requirements (food, water, shelter, security, comms and health). Anything and everything that we train for in the “nice” months, can be trained in the winter, but we do need some specialty gear and to ensure that the equipment common to all is adequate for the task at hand.

When the snow begins to fall and the ice forms, we have already dusted off, tested and re-acquainted ourselves with our winter gear. We are ready to continue training regardless of the temperature or cold conditions. Application of Tactics, Techniques and Procedures may change a little due to the addition of this winter equipment, but tactics are tactics. Our specialty gear is required for mission/training accomplishment, safety, health or due to direct environmental considerations and should be planned for.

My SF ODA conducted a Full Mission Profile Direct Action/demolition mission in Korea up by the DMZ years back. The task was to drop a critical bridge while conducting Unconventional

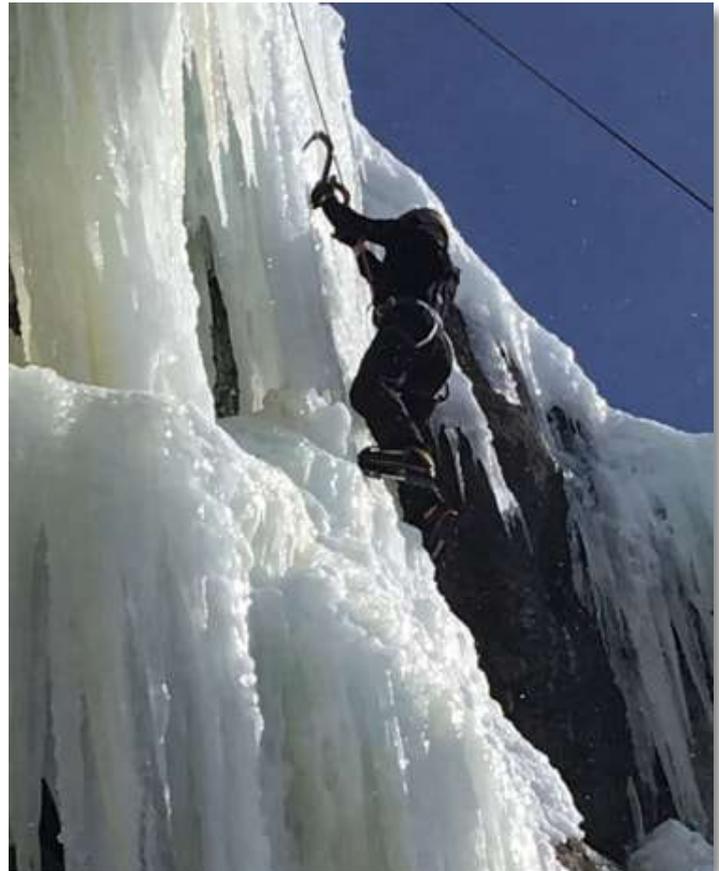


Photo: Nate Mastin, one of TSI, Inc. Mountain Warfare instructors demonstrating an ascent of ice falls.

Warfare as part of our war planning. We were already carrying what seemed like insane rucksack weights, so we chose to forego personal comfort equipment, extra water and we carried only minimal food. We infiltrated the area with all the equipment needed to accomplish the mission and little else.

A freak cold front dropped upon us 24 hours before target hit time and we were totally unprepared for the sub-freezing temperatures. I thought of our soldiers and Marines who had fought at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in North Korea, who were not too far from our position during the period of November and December 1950. They too were underequipped, outgunned and freezing. They were hard men back then and we were about to test our hardness as well.

We froze our balls off, learned a lot about the hardness of each of our teammates and accomplished the mission. If I had to do that again, I would bring a bit of cold weather personal gear however as there is a fine line between being hard and being stupid.



4. Fitness, Health and Medical Considerations. Winter/cold weather training is hard. There are two specific areas that can lead to different maladies that we need to be aware of: 1. Cold, and 2. Altitude. Either or both can lead to significant medical maladies.

Cold can be uncomfortably miserable if ill-equipped or not wearing proper clothing. Painful or numb fingers/toes/ears/nose that can lead to frost nip or frost bite; and hypothermia is too real. Movement through deep snow can sap energy quicker than the cold itself.

Proficiency in back country skiing, snow shoeing, rope and alpine skills, understanding terrain/avalanche prone areas, layering of clothing during movement are all requisite skills - but they also require strength, flexibility, and a good level of fitness and overall health.

Smokers are known to be prone to colder feet and hands due to poor circulation. Mental fitness is often overlooked... risk taking can and does lead to death in the mountains.

Altitude: Chronic Mountain Sickness or Acute Mountain Sickness is a reality for those training or conducting operations at altitudes over 14,000' (Huey 2001). High altitude is considered

4500' to 11,500.' Very High altitude is considered 11,500' to 18,000.' Extreme altitude is considered 18,000' with altitudes higher than 26,000' are in the Death Zone.

High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) and High-Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) can be fatal diseases/injuries. Plan for medical emergencies not only for potential altitude injuries, but also for the effects of cold weather.

Keep communications open between participants and constantly monitor each other for signs and symptoms of cold weather or altitude related injuries. Have a realistic MEDEVAC plan, communications plan and capable medical trained individuals with equipment at the training sites.

5. After-Action Reviews (AAR). As with any training event, the critical aspect of conducting an After-Action Review must not be overlooked.

Army Training Circular TC 25-20 A leaders Guide to After Action Reviews defines the after-action review (AAR) as "a professional discussion of an event, focused on performance standards, that enables soldiers to discover for themselves what happened, why it happened, and how to sustain strengths and improve on weaknesses. It is a tool leaders and units can use to get maximum benefit from every mission or task. It provides--

- Candid insights into specific soldier, leader, and unit strengths and weaknesses from various perspectives.
- Feedback and insight critical to battle-focused training.
- Details often lacking in evaluation reports alone. Evaluation is the basis for the commander's unit-training assessment. No commander, no matter how skilled, will see as much as the individual soldiers and leaders who actually conduct the training.

Leaders can better correct deficiencies and sustain strengths by carefully evaluating and comparing soldier, leader, and unit performance against the standard. The AAR is the keystone of the evaluation process. Feedback compares the actual output of a process with the intended outcome. By focusing on the task's standards and by describing specific observations, leaders and



Photo: Master Survival Instructor Recondo Tony of Wyoming Survival and Tactics demonstrating winter survival skills to Recondo Students.

I use AARs as a review of the Program of Instruction by activity, which guides both me, the instructor and the students in a cognitive return to the skills taught, learned and exercised. Use what you have at your disposal to conduct the review. If in the field, I use a stick and the earth/snow or any other surface to scratch in movements, illustrations, or specific areas that were trained.

Returning to a classroom with white boards, chalk boards, videos and the like provide the instructor and student the ability to conduct their AAR in a comfortable environment utilizing technology to enhance the AAR. Questions and answers solidify the learning process and validate the training goals. Finish your cold weather environmental training as you would with any other tactical or technical training skill... use the AAR.

soldiers identify strengths and weaknesses and together decide how to improve their performances. This shared learning improves task proficiency and promotes unit bonding and esprit. Squad and platoon leaders will use the information to develop input for unit-training plans. The AAR is a valid and valuable technique regardless of branch, echelon, or training task.

Of course, AARs are not cure-alls for unit-training problems. Leaders must still make on-the-spot corrections and take responsibility for training their soldiers and units. However, AARs are a key part of the training process. The goal is to improve soldier, leader, and unit performance.

The result is a more cohesive and proficient fighting force. Because soldiers and leaders participating in an AAR actively discover what happened and why, they learn and remember more than they would from a critique alone.

A critique only gives one viewpoint and frequently provides little opportunity for discussion of events by participants. Soldier observations and comments may not be encouraged. The climate of the critique, focusing only on what is wrong, prevents candid discussion of training events and stifles learning and team building.”

Training in a cold environment should not be viewed as specialty training but as a continuation of your current training program. The environmental training might require additional skills and equipment to accomplish your training goals, but the cold is just another day on the range. Embrace the suck and train cold, wet, tired, hungry and miserable... again, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger!

Brian Bewley and his wife S. Jessica own and manage Tactical Solutions International, Inc. (TSI) in Crowheart, WY.

TSI and its commercial training department, Tactical Training International and the Mountain Training Center has been conducting cutting edge tactical training for DoD, US Govt organizations, friendly foreign governments, LE, corporations and qualified civilians since 2003.

For more information on TSI, TTI or MTC training opportunities, please visit www.tacticalsolutionsintl.com or contact Nate Mastin or Logan Brown, TTI Training Dept., (307) 486-2336.

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Trevor S. Thrasher

88 Tactical • Senior Instructor & Partner

Having Behavior-Based Marksmanship-Training for the event not the qualification



Trevor S. Thrasher

Over the last century, there has been minimal improvement in police marksmanship short of a few rare examples. Many studies have concluded that there has been neither an improvement in firearms accuracy nor a correlation between range/qualification performance and real-world performance (Vila & Morrison 1994).

Often what instructors ask officers to do at the range is completely disconnected from the reality of most shootings. Look at the facts of most police shootings. It should be clear that the average range-based paradigm is not up to par, and the minimal amount of scenario or reality-based training conducted does not provide enough repetition to cement appropriate behavior and skill.

In 1973 Shelford Bidwell is quoted as saying the primary issue with finding out what truly happens in combat is on 'dangerous ground because the union between soldier and scientist has yet past beyond flirtation.'

Fortunately, the last 50 years have seen a significant increase in the science of combat. The previous ten years have unequivocally provided a massive influx of video evidence clearly showing what occurs. Unfortunately, this has been mostly ignored or

forgotten, even if agencies at one time considered the science and data. For example, the FBI changed its firearms qualification course around 2013 to better reflect street encounters based on information known for nearly 100 years. Typical training is often in direct conflict with what is required by the courts and common sense.

In *Tennessee v. Garner*, the Supreme Court stated that use of force situations are "tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving." This case demanded that the courts consider the human and situational factors when deciding if a person acted reasonably in a use of force encounter.

In other words, theoretical or static range performance without risk to life should not be the standard by which officers are judged.

Likewise, this should demand that theoretical marksmanship-based or static range performance should also not be the standard by which officers are trained.

Yet, by my estimate, 80% of law-enforcement range training is useful in perhaps 20% of actual encounters that, fortunately for the officer, represent a range-like shooting event. Likewise, only 20% of the training addresses 80% of real-world conflict.



In addition to *Tennessee v. Garner*, numerous court cases such as *Popow v. City of Margate* and *Tuttle v. Oklahoma* have established the training standard that you must regularly practice based on reality.

Most departments provide this in check the box form for liability protection, but not in a beneficial form for officer safety and performance. Officers are most often at their best leaving the academy only to probably get worse and continue meeting a minimal, often useless qualification standard short of outside training or belonging to a SWAT Team.

The court accurately described human stress factors in a simple three-item list from *Tennessee v. Garner*:

1. Tense- meaning fearful events short on safety. The safety factors include the intensity of the threat and whether it is facing you or oriented away, distance, availability of escape, availability of hiding space/ barriers. (Fernandez, 2013)

2. Uncertain- meaning dynamic, changing events short on information. Studies show that people facing an uncertain threat have more stress than

when facing a known clear threat (Pettersson & Bertilsson 2017). Uncertainty can take the form of a confusing situation or one you have no experience dealing with.

3. Rapidly Evolving- meaning changing and happening quickly short on time. A high probability shooting time frame from imminent threat to shooting is 2-3 seconds: (Pettersson & Bertilsson 2017; Hillman 1995). Getting caught off-guard or surprised is a sure way to add stress to a situation.

For most departments, firearms training consists of deliberate, pre-meditated tactics and skills requiring high levels of focus on the shooter or gun to obtain small shot groups in unrealistically slow time frames.

How far is that going to get an officer in a stressful, speed of life shooting? Not very far. Although skills like that may be useful in a small number of shootings, they directly conflict with human performance in higher probability and more highly dangerous shootings and very often become abandoned and useless.

How do you replicate some of this in training? For one, take

half of your live-fire training and dedicate it to training officers in a more realistic environment with "immediate action drills," or what the military calls "battle drills."

These are short-duration immediate responses to critical situations. They do not require live fire but can be live fire reinforced once learned. They can involve occasional force on force using projectiles, but more importantly, they require human interaction and performance in a realistic setting. These drills can have plenty of value with blue training guns at almost no expense minimal resources. The focus is on taking the right action behaviorally and tactically.

Use a similar drill at the range with appropriate safety and limitations to validate that officers can perform at the required speed and accuracy with their duty weapons. Next, keep in mind that true "combative marksmanship" requires speed and precision only after "survival and decision."

In other words, train officers to keep themselves from being shot first, then to find threats



and make decisions to shoot/not shoot or do something else however you can. A great way to avoid being shot is to hit the suspect first with solid hits; however, thinking this is always the solution or even always possible in many shootings is a disconnect from reality.

By law, a threat has to materialize before an officer can shoot, and shootings are at least initially overwhelmingly reactive. Human behavior prioritizes primitive survival actions first: flinching, moving away from danger, escaping, and hiding. Put those into play.

For example, if your target is a suspect pointing a gun at the officer, and the officer starts with a holstered gun, the behavioral and smart tactical thing to do would be to get the officer moving or moving to cover and firing quickly with at least initial focus on the threat.

Do not ignore your live-fire range training. Officers must be good enough to have functionally useful skills when performing immediate action and combative marksmanship drills. Functional meaning, the officer can achieve what they need to accomplish at real-world distances and times, with realistic targets in realistic settings.

There is an over-emphasis on slow accuracy, in my opinion, because trainers incorrectly require marksmanship precision that does not reflect the majority of real-world situations. Shooting a great group in 10 seconds reflects only a tiny fraction of gunfights. Shooting multiple rounds into an anatomically important area the size of a sheet of paper in 3-5 seconds incorporating realistic movement at 7 yards is massively more useful.

If your slow accuracy sucks, it won't get any better under stress with compressed time frames. Do not use anything I have said to be lazy with your marksmanship or as an excuse to get sloppy. If you aren't confident and competent on the flat range, you will be terrible at best in a gunfight.

Decide what your effective enough hit or the effective number of hits looks like, start smoothly and correctly, then get faster at it and achieve it under more dynamic conditions. Only training slower than a real fight does not make you better in a fight; it makes you worse. Slow does not become fast if unpracticed. It can lead to panic if it is clear the fight's speed is far faster than what the officer has practiced or experienced. You have to get officers shooting at the speed of a fight with sufficient accuracy in a realistic context before sending them to the street. Reality tells us that a high-probability law enforcement gunfight will take place at 3-5/7 yards, be over within 3-5 seconds, and require 3-5 rounds fired from the shooter.





Different departments have different environments. Some like NYPD will have a bias towards even closer range shootings. Others may involve the higher likelihood of a long gun being used pro-actively at extended distances. Overall, this description of a high probability gunfight has not changed for over 100 years.

Keep in mind this is a high probability gunfight. Although it may reflect averages, averages alone cannot describe gunfighting in general because gunfights typically take place within different clusters or patterns. Training for the average gunfight alone doesn't help you if you find yourself at 20 yards or grappling with a suspect. However, it would be best to bias your practice towards the higher probability and higher danger events.

After a lengthy study of a vast amount of published use of force data and a review of probably several 1000 shooting videos, here are some of the event clusters that I believe should be implemented continuously into some form of marksmanship training.

1. 0-2 yards, compressed or retention one-hand shooting focusing on controlling the officer's gun and controlling the suspect's body. Often this is a struggle for the officer's or suspect's gun, frequently preceded by a situation involving physical control. This should include an officer defending a fellow officer in a similar event. At this point, physical



control is most often more important than speed or accuracy. This is a lower probability but an extremely hazardous event.

a.) LEOKA studies show 50% of officers are killed at this distance, and 50% do not even attempt or have the chance to draw their gun. This clearly indicates you must practice combative and hand-to-hand skills as part of the marksmanship package. Shooting in these situations also brings up a significant consideration for self-injury or other officers' injury. Here is where marking cartridges can be useful, and live-fire training will be minimal and tightly controlled.

2. 3-4 yards, one hand compressed and extended threat-focused shooting prioritizing rapid movement. Movement should be fast enough to avoid being hit, focusing on getting to a minimum of 4 yards, or shooting quickly with aggressive lateral movement to other angles. At this distance, the goal is to avoid allowing the suspect an easy target, especially an easy headshot. Emphasis should be placed on moving, then speed, then accuracy. This event's probability is relatively high, and it is hazardous.

a) Shooting one-handed happens in a significant percentage of close-range gunfights (20-30% in my review) even though officers do very little to no training with one hand. It is behaviorally driven because it is simpler, quicker, and allows more rapid movement.



Of course, if you think about it, two hands may be better, but we are talking about events with no time to "think."

b) Numerous studies, including a Force Science Research study on untrained shooter marksmanship and others, indicate that even untrained people are sufficiently fast and accurate enough at this distance to easily seriously wound or kill another person, and many will intuitively aim for the head. These studies also show that a typically trained marksman is only 10% better at this distance. Marksmanship for everyone beyond 4 yards takes a significant dive, so moving or staying at least 4 yards from a threat is critical for safety. Short of that, rapid movement will make the head an exceedingly difficult target.

3. 4-7 yards, two-handed, "eye-level" threat-focused shooting mixing offense and defense and very rapid threat engagement. This is a high probability event. These events will unfold rapidly, and there will be a need for quick hits with focus predomi-

nantly on the threat as shoot-no-shoot information is processed to the last fraction of a second.

a) Eye tracking and other studies show that threat focus may lead to better performance and fewer mistake-of-fact shootings. A review of a massive number of gunfights and self-reporting and witnessed training studies shows that threat-focus will dominate despite officers never or rarely training to do it. Typically, 70% or more officers report not using or noticing their sights during these events.

b) Occasionally, these situations may require a more precise shot. For example, use a partially obscured or hostage taker target to develop the ability to recognize and deliver a more accurate shot depending on the threat presented. Threat-focused two-handed approximate eye-level point shooting will solve 80%+ of the problems found here.

4. 7-15 yards, two-handed, soft, or flash visually confirmed sight alignment. These situations typically require the balance

shifting to focused marksmanship, enabling consistent multiple hits with some precision under compressed time frames. These events are not the most likely and are slightly less dangerous with handguns involved, but they are still significantly frequent and dangerous.

a) There is another notable drop in accuracy at 7 yards for officers and suspects alike. Reported real-world accuracy is typically around 25% at this level. Time frames can still be very compressed at this distance. Officers need to perform with the effects of significant stress, such as keeping attention mostly on the threat and rough sight, trigger, and recoil management.

Focusing cleanly on the front sight and having the internal and external focus to manage a perfect trigger press will be extremely challenging unless the situation is less threatening to that particular officer. Officers not adequately trained and under duress will typically point shoot or completely focus on the threat, leading to a lack of round



accountability. Officers have to recognize what they need to do, and they have to have a practiced, stress-resilient means to get it done to achieve multiple, rapid, sufficiently accurate shots with confidence. Again, consider rapidly getting hits anywhere on a sheet of paper at this distance with little tolerance for misses.

5. 15+ yards, two hands, front sight focused perfect shooting fundamentals, under compressed time frames. Without having significant situational and stress control to enable the conscious management of sights and trigger, getting a hit at this distance will be tough.

These events are typically rare and relatively safer for officers but still frequent enough that officers should have this skill available for short exposure targets of 3-5 seconds.

a) Historical reported accuracy at this distance is somewhere between 5 and 10% with handguns. Keep in mind that even these situations are rarely static. The threat may be obscured or moving; there may only be a small window of opportunity to make the shot against a fleeting target, or the officer may be under fire. Considering how real the effects

of stress are on handgun performance, possible physiological limits under pressure, and the level of training most officers receive, this should be no surprise.

However, it can be done if practice emphasizes recognizing that this type of shot needs to be made combined with stress control as part of the marksmanship package.

The 80/20 rule is a good rule.

Keep in mind there is a clear need for more marksmanship-intensive skills, and officers must be conditioned to recognize the need to use them. Typically, these are situations where the threat is not directly attacking or is unaware of the officer.

The 80/20 rule is a good rule to follow with any of these clusters. Spend 80% of your training time with the specified skill at the specified distance, then mix up the skills' application at a closer or greater distance. Next, add in more context. Address the stress factors of cover, escape routes/movement, and threat orientation. Behaviorally, I have found that threat orientation is the primary factor affecting marksmanship; overall stress control is second, then shooting posture or platform, then grip, then trigger, then sights. For long guns, I switch sights and trigger.

An immediate threat facing you firing or about to fire is a far different threat than a suspect running from you or a suspect oriented on another person.

Watch videos and note the difference in posture and shooting. It is exceedingly evident. Take that behavior into account when working your drills. Because I have found high

probability situations typically allow minimal, narrow external focus on the sights and minimal, narrow internal focus on the trigger finger and its movement, I prioritize platform and grip first.

A shooter's presentation, overall shooting platform, and consistent grip might be the primary mechanism to achieve sight alignment.

Pistols are anatomically hard to shoot under duress because the human hand is designed to squeeze as a whole unit. Isolating the trigger finger and moving it with precision (not to be confused with pulling the trigger as you squeeze your entire hand) is a fine motor skill achievable for sure, but mostly under the right conditions and with the proper conditioning.

Behavior-based marksmanship starts with the courts, works its way through the realities of shooting situations, works with human behavior, and ultimately brings it all together with marksmanship fundamentals in a very functional, training-efficient manner. Give yourself and others the training they need to prevail and discount the human and reality factors at your own and your organization's risk.



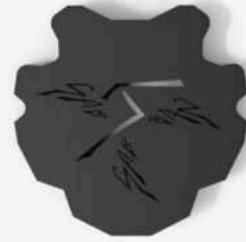
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Clay Martin

Bestselling Author of "Concrete Jungle",
"Prairie Fire" about: Fire and Maneuver

What's missing from Civilian and LE training? Going old school!



There is a big chunk of tactical knowledge that is missing from very nearly every civilian and LE training course, something that first came to my attention back in 2016 after the infamous LE ambush in Dallas.

Looking at similar examples, I found several other instances of Law Enforcement losing gun battles to Veterans turned criminals. And I'm not talking about some high speed SEAL Ranger Commando gone off the reservation. I'm talking run of the mill low speed/high drag poorly trained Veterans.

Micah Johnson, perpetrator of the deadliest day for Law Enforcement since September 11th, 2001, was an Army Reservist carpenter and a Private First Class at that. Not exactly what we in the military would consider a ninja. So what the hell was happening?

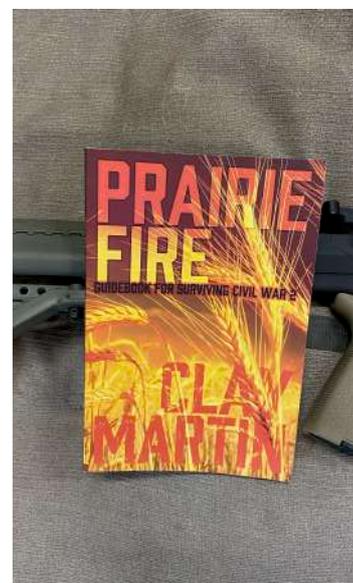
Right after Dallas, I offered a month of free training to anyone in LE. If you showed up, your fee was on the house, and several individual Officers took me up on it.

And early in that month, I discovered what I consider to be the missing component. Fire and maneuver is such a basic task that we in military circles take it for granted. Don't take my tone wrong on this, please. It's not a matter of talking smack that we know some magic

sauce. It's a case of you don't know what you don't know, and Veterans are as much to blame as anyone for its absence in other training circles.

When I talk about bad guys in this equation, it boils down to one of two things working for them. Either they are using principles of fire and maneuver, even as an individual, which is doctrinally not a thing. But works anyway since nothing is done to counteract it.

Or the perp has found a solid piece of cover, and could easily be overwhelmed and destroyed by basic F&M, but ends up winning because no one on the ground knows how to



The idea is to keep the bad guy from being able to return effective fire

do so. Now fire and maneuver isn't rocket science, nor is it even difficult to learn. I expound greatly on it in my latest book, Prairie Fire: Guidebook for Surviving Civil War 2.

For a quick point of reference, let's break it down to its simplest terms. Two maneuver elements, which in a street battle could be as small as two single people representing A&B, take turns suppressing a threat while the other one moves. The idea is to keep the bad guy from being able to return EFFECTIVE fire, while the





good guys close the distance or gain the angle to be able to shoot him dead. Sounds easy, right? Well, actually, it is.

There can be a lot more subtlety than that, and a lot more moving parts. But at its most simple form, that is it. And I

mean it when I say this is possibly the one unifying bit of tactical knowledge that is taught to everyone from cooks and dudes in the band to the SAS.

It has been the foundational principle of Western infantry tactics since the end of WW1, and should not be dismissed. You can learn enough of it to be deadly in a single day, more than sufficient in my opinion to change the outcome of some of these recent shootings. But like many “simple” tasks, you could also spend a lifetime trying to master every component. We still went out and practiced a couple of times a year on my ODA, regardless of this being a skill you could dismiss as a day 1 Ranger School tactic.

Wait, really, are you advocating this for LE and Civilians? Yes. Yes I am. Another part of the problem here is a failure of training assessment. For about the last 20 years, all anyone wants to do is CQB oriented drills. Which are fun and cool, no doubt. I get it.

I like shooting the A zone from 3 feet too. And running up and down the range throwing yourself to the ground every 5 seconds is not exactly fun. But like many things, what you need to do and what is fun to do are often mutually exclusive. I like having cardio, but I hate doing cardio. I have to choose. Am I going to be a lump of chewed bubble gum, or am I going to work hard at something that isn't fun? Same thing here. Except the choice to not learn the hard thing may mean you die.

Is this an easy sell to LE and Civilian mindsets? No. Just talking about a base of fire laying down a wall of lead so you can close distance makes the lawyers hyperventilate. But the world is also

changing, and quickly. From a pure cost perspective, is it worth it to dump 3 magazines in the general direction of the bad guy, likely not hitting him? Well, it's probably going to happen anyway.

I've been in a couple firefights myself, and sitting there on your sights waiting on a perfect shot likely isn't in the cards. Knowing fire and maneuver at least gives you an option. Do you want to blast those rounds off hiding behind cover, or closing with the enemy so he can be destroyed?

For civilians, this would have been pure fantasy a year ago. But if the Mongolian horde is invading your neighborhood, is it plausible you might have to act in a similar manner? It isn't out of the question.

This isn't the end all be all of tactical corrections, not by a long shot. But it does address what I see as a serious deficiency. And I would hope that if I had a gaping hole in my knowledge, one of my LE or Civ brothers would do the same and fill it. In my experience now



Not cover, and barely concealment

Another part of the problem is a failure of training assessment.

adding in at least 2 hours of fire and maneuver to all of my classes, it has been very well received. I recommend that at the very least, you find a former infantry or SOF dude and ask him to show you how it's done.

Give it a chance before you dismiss it out of hand, it just might surprise you how game changing it is.



Infantryman cover, use the micro terrain

Chris Hauty

Thriller Author and Screenwriter

The hard part is really getting across the idea how devastating the weaponization of information is...

Chris Hauty has been a screenwriter in Hollywood for the last 30 years. He has worked for every major movie studio, in nearly all genres, and in collaboration with well-known Hollywood professionals, ranging from Mel Gibson to Jessica Alba.

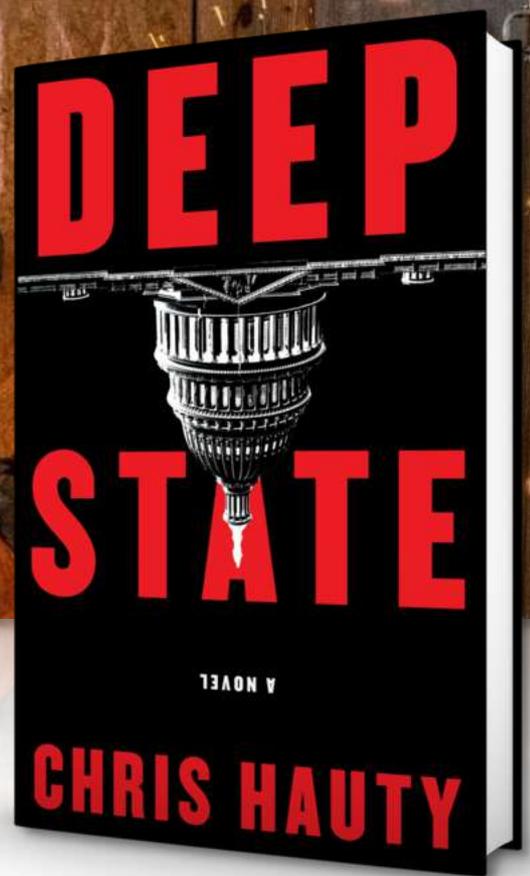
His recent production credits include "Never Back Down," directed by Jeff Wadlow and starring Djimon Hounsou and "Sniper: Ghost Shooter," starring Billy Zane for Sony Pictures Entertainment.

His first novel "Deep State," a political thriller set in Washington D.C., explored a timely conspiracy and a direct threat to the president of the United States.

His second novel, "Savage Road," deals with cyberwarfare in the Information Age.

In this interview Chris Hauty talks with GTI Magazine Editor-in-Chief and thriller author Thomas Lojek about the deep state, information wars and stereotypes in the thriller genre.

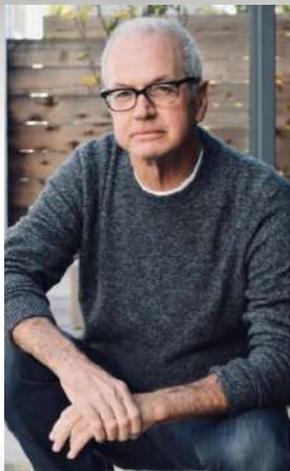
Thomas Lojek: Is the "deep state" real? Or is it just a propaganda tool to create political tension, to sell a political agenda, or maybe just a tool for guys like us to write suspenseful thriller novels? How real is it?



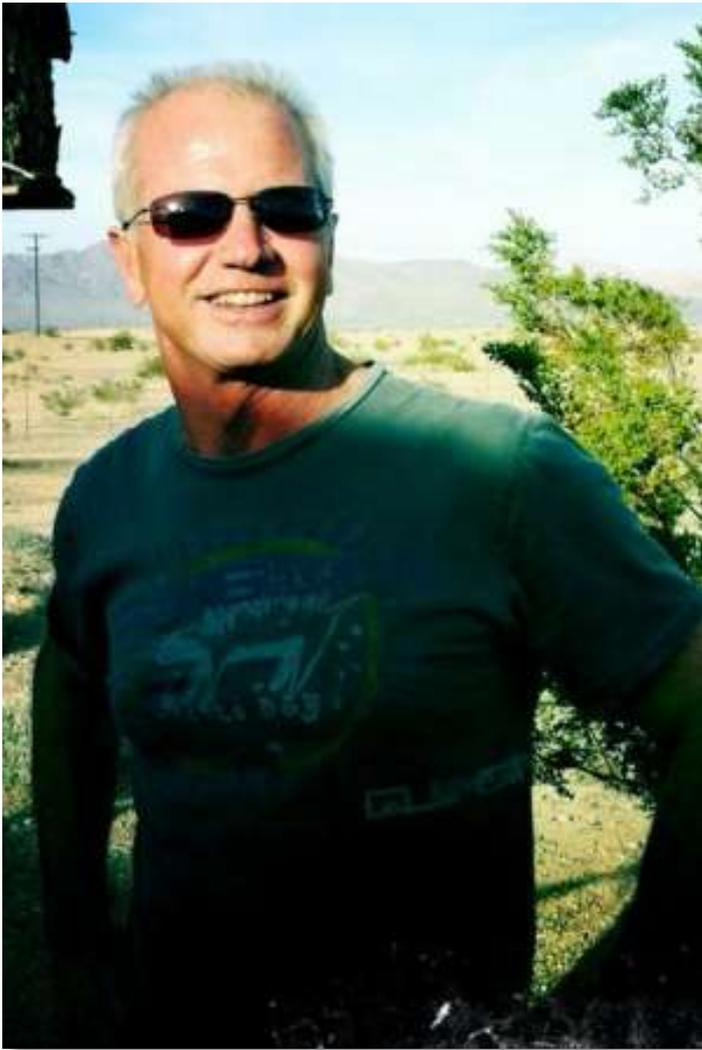
Chris Hauty: My feeling about the deep state: I don't see it as an entity or organization, but as a condition, a human condition. When you put people into power, particular people who are elected to that office or position, they tend to hold on onto this power.

I think deep state, as a concept, describes the motivation of government officials to do whatever they can to preserve their power. I always bring up the example of Edgar Hoover, who created the FBI. He served under several administrations and used the information that his cadre of agents gathered to preserve his power and use it as a weapon against anyone, any official - unelected or elected - who tried to remove him.

So, I think the idea and the condition of a deep state has been with us probably a lot longer than the United State has existed. The deep state existed as advisors to monarchies in previous centuries, men and women who manipulated their offices and the royals they worked for to preserve their power.



Chris Hauty



Thomas Lojek: I think the idea of a deep state does a very good job in dividing people, in dividing a nation from the inside out, no matter if the idea is really just a theoretical concept to describe certain dynamics in the struggle for power in any administration or the deep state is real and therefore a real threat.

In both ways the outcome seems nearly the same: It creates conflict. People get angry. And the nation turns against itself. When did things go so wrong like we have seen it over the last few years? When and why got people so angry? And nearly about everything?

Chris Hauty: I ask myself this same question all the time: “Why are people so angry?” particularly in Europe and the United States? I mean, I live in Los Angeles and it seems to me sometimes that the people who are the angriest are those who have the highest standards of living, relatively speaking.

I don’t understand why people are so angry or why the political environment has become so toxic.

I have no answers to these questions. Maybe civilizations inherently need to go through upheavals like the two world wars in the 20th century. Perhaps the chaos of the ‘60s, too, which were more a cultural upheaval.

No doubt we are going through one of these “difficult” phases, where after a long period of prosperity, for whatever reason, cultures and societies need to create conflict. And I am afraid they’re gonna get it.

Thomas Lojek: In our modern age of information: What do you think about the information war and its role in global tension or even as a tool to create conflict in a nation or between nations?

Chris Hauty: I think the information war is very real and something thriller writers and movie writers have some difficulty depicting with any kind of accuracy.

It’s a challenge to capture the true extent of information manipulation in social media. Or how problematic that manipulation is for society.

If truth and facts become unreliable then figures of authority can “control” reality. We will no longer be able to trust our own eyes. We won’t trust math. We will only believe what the state says, what a particular state actor says.

But it’s difficult to dramatize those ideas. There’s nothing less interesting than a villain typing on a keyboard. That’s not dynamic. So, it is easier to write a lot of sequences with SWAT Teams and snipers and guys with night vision goggles - that stuff is sexy and cool and makes a lot of noise.

The hard part is really getting across the idea how much more devastating the weaponization of information is.

I got a little bit of this in my new book “Savage Road,” that’s out this January. It does involve a computer hacker and cyberwarfare and I got a little more into this idea of weaponizing information.

So, honestly I think: No, it is not overly dramatized by books and movies. Instead, I feel it is vastly underrepresented, both as a theme in books and movies, as well as in its devastating effect on societies.

Thomas Lojek: Your novel's protagonist is a woman. Most thrillers on the market are about hard-knuckled special operations guys, who kick and shoot their way out of the novel's trouble. Do you think there is a difference between how men and women look at and conduct violence?

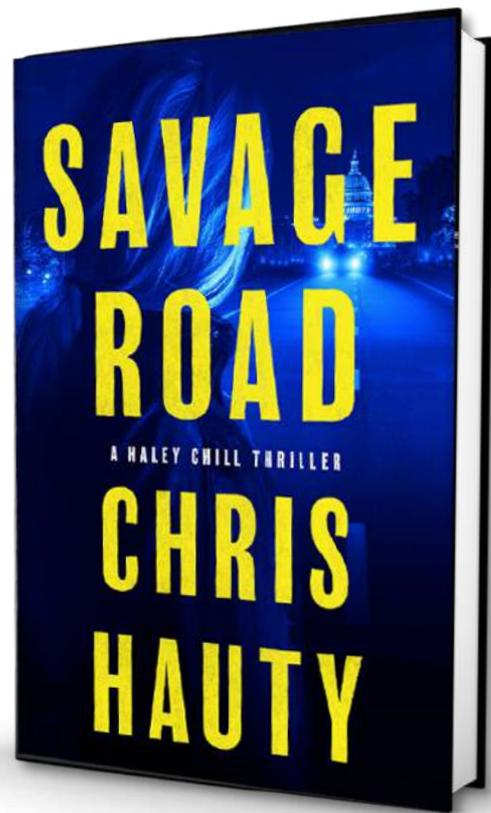
Chris Hauty: Violence has no gender. My protagonist is single-minded. She's motivated by a desire to protect and preserve the US Constitution and everything that it represents. Hayley Chill's sworn duty is to neutralize whatever poses a threat to the United States. And I am pretty down with that idea.

The problem, of course, is that there are diverse interpretations of that document, and people who cloak themselves in the flag with a very fuzzy sense of what the US Constitution actually says or means. But that's a whole other discussion.

When I have seen female protagonists - in any medium: film, TV and books - and they are well written, then they act that way... They aren't squeamish and they don't fit into any stereotype of what a woman should be. I like that. Because I believe it. That is my belief.

Women are capable of both justified violence, such as in warfare, battle, crime prevention, and illegal violence.

I got into writing more female characters as a movie script writer years ago, because I thought it was more interesting. Women weren't often depicted as protagonists in action movies.



It's just interesting to me. Having a female lead creates unique challenges for your protagonist, ones we haven't seen before. Hayley Chill has no qualms about committing to violence if there's no other choice. Readers won't accept it if she did.

But, back to my initial statement about gender and violence, I have zero doubt that women are just as capable of engaging in a violent act as men. I'm ERA all the way, baby. Good and evil, of course, has no gender preference either!

Hauty's new book "Savage Road" has been released in the United States on January 5th, 2020.

Photo Credits GTI: Dave Young



Tony Blauer

Tony Blauer SPEAR System

Violence Doesn't Care What Martial Art You Study



The science of survival

Bodycam footage captured the moment when semi-truck driver Elijah Collins stabbed Police Captain Brian Dalton in the neck with a screwdriver during a traffic stop, in June 2019. The video can still be found online.

Collins was sitting in the cab of his truck. The truck driver was initially calm as the captain explained how to handle the citation. Until Collins reached towards the inner panel of the open door of his truck cab.

Collins suddenly lunged out of the truck with a screwdriver in his hand. The suspect stabbed the screwdriver

into Capt. Dalton's neck. The captain yelled out just before a rapid series of gunshots rang out.

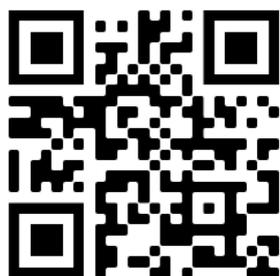
Collins was fatally struck. Capt. Dalton was rushed to Summa Akron City Hospital by helicopter, where he remained in intensive care for two days. He returned to duty in July 2019.

Human nature's airbag: the Startle-flinch response

When Brian Dalton was attacked his body's instinctive survival system bypassed his thinking brain and deployed human nature's airbag: the Startle-flinch response.



Photo: Tony Blauer



QR Code to watch the video!





Homepage
Tony Blauer

The startle-flinch response deploys like a biological airbag, expanding in a sudden incident to create space between you and the danger.

In Brian's fight, the flinch-response expanded as nature designed it. It bought him time, created space between him and the threat and this allowed his mind to catch-up to what was happening and ultimately get to his sidearm.

Physiology vs. Physicality

The human brain and neuroscience can play a huge role in your training and subsequently your safety. As a police officer you should learn more about how physiology, fear and physics can play a huge role in how you navigate violence.

When a violent stimulus is introduced too quickly the body's survival system hijacks executive function.

The typical psychological response is to protect the head and then push away danger. Fingers are splayed if the hands are empty and the forearms are outside ninety degrees from the elbow. The startle-flinch is hardwired into you.

When our situational awareness is compromised we must rely on instinct, intuition, and psychology.

Think of your startle-flinch response as the equivalent of your "backup" – it's the back-up to your DT, your complex motor skills.

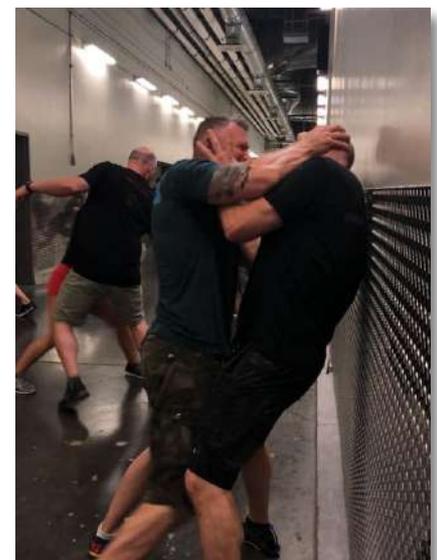
How many of you noticed the summons floating through the frame long after the attack Re-watch if you missed it. Two key points: even though officer Dalton knew he was in a fight for his life, physiology had already intervened



Think of your startle-flinch response as the equivalent of your "backup"

and was pushing away the danger. Dalton knew he had to get to his weapon as he was being stabbed, the whole time he was still holding the summons.

This is another vital element to understanding physiology and neuroscience. If you are holding something in your hands, your flinch-response via the crossed-extensors will cause you to tighten around that object. This is vital when seconds count. It could be





the door frame of a suspect's car, their clothing, your flashlight, or in this case the summons (again, watch it drop in slow motion long after the fight started). Understanding why allows you to recognize it sooner and fix it.

I can't emphasize how important this point is to your 'future' safety because in a future encounter you will have an object like your flashlight in your hand and it might be your dominant hand that you need to transition your weapon to.

You may be pulling a suspect out of car when he launches an attack. You will flinch and your grip will tighten around whatever you're holding. This will either delay or interfere with your next action.

Now that you understand this, intelligently build these 'physiological malfunctions' into training and you will improve your self-awareness and help convert the flinch sooner.

Violence Doesn't Care

Sorry. It doesn't. In 1980 I began doing scenario-training. We would run scenario seminars monthly and about 7 years into this I observed how this weird but intuitive movement of pushing away the attacker seemed to mess up most attacks and interrupted the flow of the attacker. It was an ugly moment. But it often appeared out of nowhere. This movement of course is the 'startle-flinch' response.



Here was the next and more important observation: I noticed how 'everyone' flinched regardless of their training, experience or background. WTF?

After watching this for years I concluded that it was the stimulus (the aggression of the attack) that triggered the flinch and the skill of the defender wasn't really a factor if the attack – stimuli- was sudden and close.

Built around the 'action vs reaction' model

In law enforcement the phrase "Action is faster than reaction" is often used in training, but what is it's point? How is this logic applied to officer survival research?

Consider this: If action is faster than reaction ... which is accurate... well the bad-guy is 'action' in an ambush. That means the way many are training for violence isn't congruent with math, physics and psychology.

This can get very deep, but the gist of it is that we need physiology to assist us during sudden attacks.

Had Brian Dalton brought his support hand to his sternum as he did a close quarter draw, this fight might've had a very different outcome.

I began analyzing the startle-flinch and its potential role in personal defense response in the late 80's and in 1988 wrote this thesis statement:

Left: Coach Tony Blauer

Right: Blauer Spear System Training



“What does your body do prior to any training? Does that movement have a protective response? If yes, then why aren't we integrating this into all our training?”

In short: When a stimulus is introduced too quickly the human body flinches. This is a fact. Why not integrate an instinctive response into your training? It'll make you safer.

Friends, I've been studying self-defense for over 50 years. I wrestled, boxed, studied many martial arts and after one of my students lost a fight I thought I had prepared him for, I switched my entire approach to only looking at violence through the eyes of the predator. This challenged so many assumptions about how we should train.

It spawned an entire reframe for me and my students. It forced me to look deeper into psychology and neuroscience.

I spent decades researching this trying to figure out a reliable system that could make anyone safer sooner. After 30+ years of studying violence, I submit this to you: If you have the choice, you will always want back-up.

The 'startle-flinch' is your body's biological backup system. Learn to weaponize your startle flinch now, because when sudden violence erupts, it's what's going to be what's between you and the bad-guy.

Stay safe, Coach Blauer

Tony Blauer has been in the combatives industry for four decades and successfully affected training across self-defense, combat sports, and the military & law enforcement sector.

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Neil Held

$F=m \cdot a$

“The force of an object is equal to its mass multiplied by acceleration.”

-Some guy much smarter than I am.

Manual Breaching methods: Human-powered push, pull, cut or break
Manual methods aren't as sexy as other techniques, but manual is what 90% of Law Enforcement uses 90% of the time. As the saying goes, 90% of the time it works 100% of the time, sort of.

Breaching, whether on SWAT or patrol, is one of the most under-trained and underperformed events in police work. Most departments don't have the budget for a fancy hydraulic tool or a torch. Police administrators often cringe at the mere mention of ballistic breaching - too much liability and too expensive to maintain the training.

Explosives? Have you lost your mind? The truth is, manual entry methods work. While manual methods aren't appropriate for every situation, with proper kit and proper technique, it can work very, very well.

Whether it's a dynamic or medical situation, the most likely method used by patrol would probably be manual.

Having been a breacher for over 15 years, I've had my fair share of experiences with the current rams on the market. Can they get the job done? Sure. But, let's be honest. They are too big and too heavy - like a piece of outdated technology.

It was time for an upgrade. I knew that I could create something better. I had used some old and heavy bullshit for the last time. Busted fingers, jammed wrists, smashed shins from something hard, heavy and pointy... no more.

Size & Weight

I started with the size and weight. Bigger and heavier is not better. If I can't accelerate the mass, how can I create any force with it to create the breach?

How can I accurately apply the force where I want it? What if it's too big to even swing on a small hallway or a porch? How can I swing it over my head?

Weight (mass) is important though. It's part of the force equation, $F=m \cdot a$. I decided to make my tool smaller by using materials that were denser.

I used materials that have 40% greater density than steel which allowed me to make a tool of the same weight, only it



would be 40% smaller. Further research at the local university revealed that I could also reduce the overall weight of the tool in an effort to maximize efficiency. 18 lbs is right where returns start to diminish. You can also create the

desired acceleration easier with an 18lb ram as opposed to a 40lb or a 50lb one. So we created an 18lb ram as well as 25lb and 32lb versions.

Strike Face

Next was the strike face. During testing, I discovered that even mild steel dents and deforms easily. Some manufacturers place a bead of weld material along the edge of the strike face as it's harder than mild steel, it's also a cost saving measure so that cheaper materials can be used. I went in a different direction. I chose a steel that was chemically different and over 4 times harder than mild steel.

I also decided to make the strike face rounded. No hard 90° corners to smash into your hip or shin. The result is a circular strike face that maintains its crisp perpendicular edges avoiding rounding or mushrooming of the strike face.

This is one of the key factors in preventing glancing blows. Some of my fed friends requested a non-sparking strike face, so I drilled and tapped the hard steel to mount an HDPE plastic strike face. These are very useful in training venues as hammering steel-on-steel training doors isn't the best therapy for hands and wrists.

Bounce & Momentum

I reduced the size of the tool and employed materials that were harder and denser. I thought the function of a dead blow mallet. When the dead blow strikes, the counterweight located inside the head strikes a fraction of a

second later, essentially cancelling out any bounce. I discovered that if I could cancel the "bounce" it would save time and energy so the breacher could concentrate on subsequent ram strikes on the intended target. There is also a nice little side benefit to this - the dynamic movement of the counterweight actually assists in generating more force.

Proper Techniques

When I went through SWAT school in the mid 2000's, it was customary to take the biggest and strongest lumox on the team and make him the breacher. Yea, that's definitely one way to do it. You could also chop down a tree with a sledgehammer, but why would you when you have a sharp axe available? Smart efficiency is key. And with it, comes proper technique. When ramming a door, the breacher plants their strong foot behind them. This is where the kinetic energy originates. Leverage and rotational forces generated from the hips

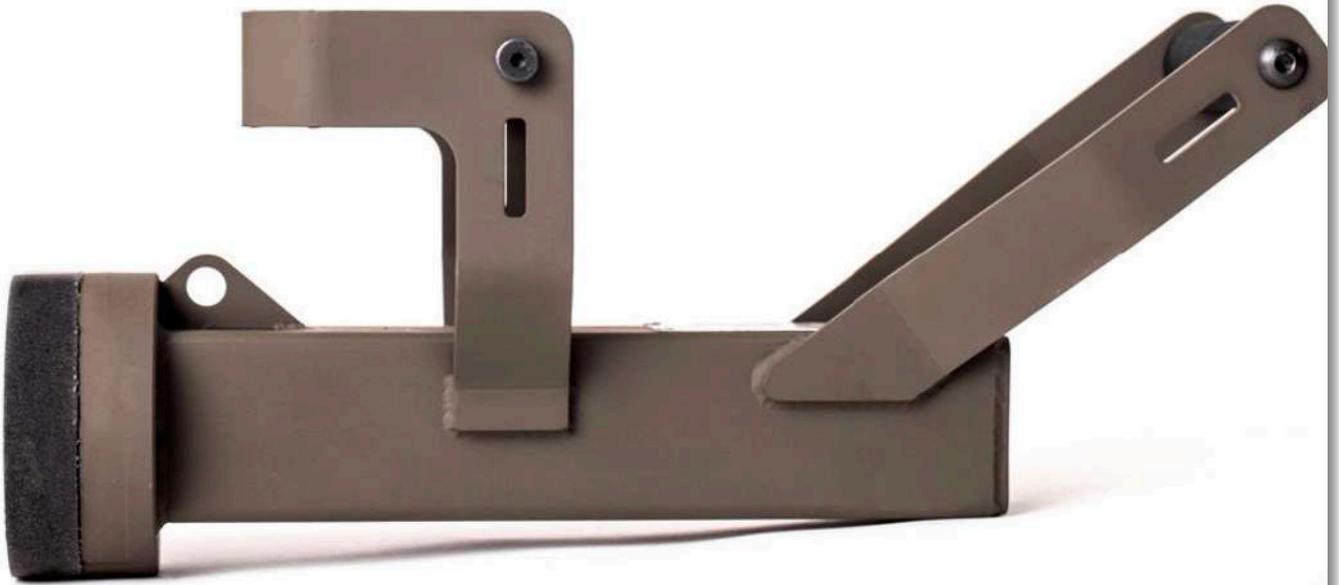


I discovered that if I could cancel the "bounce" it would save time and energy

and torso are transferred down the arms multiplying the energy, like the coiling and cracking of a whip. But this is only part of the technique. Placement on the door is also crucial. If you are attempting to breach the locking side of the door, then your target is the



crescent shaped area around the door handle and locking mechanism. With the hinges acting as the fulcrum, the further you are away from



the fulcrum, the stronger you are. The final and magical part (JFM) of the technique is “taking the slack out of the door”.

This is done by the breacher or the A-breacher using their foot to put tension on the bottom corner of the door, pushing it tight into the frame.

Kinetic energy flows in a very similar fashion to electricity.

The components of the door must be in tight contact so the energy can be transmitted into the locking mechanism or the door frame in an effort to break the weakest component.

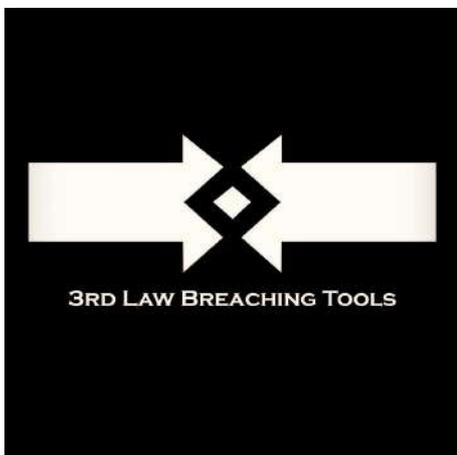
There is typically some sort of gap or slack in any door. If not mitigated, the slack will absolutely prolong your breach, or it may prevent it all together.

At the end of the day, use proper kit, use proper technique, create a positive breach.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some world class warriors that I have had the pleasure of learning from: Chaz, Rob, Ivan, Kenny, Jose and Joe – this kit is what it is because of your added expertise.

-Stay tuned for my next article on the MASTUS PRY!

-Stay Dangerous!



3rd Law Breaching

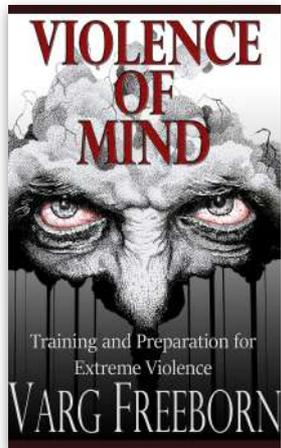
Our Breachers are manufactured in New York State! The owner and operator of 3rd Law is a Police Officer, a Breacher on a Fema Type 1 team in New York, and a Combat Veteran. 3rd Law Breaching Tools LLC is a 100% Veteran owned small business, and is a certified Service Connected Disabled Veteran owned Small Business in NY.



Varg Freeborn

Author: Violence of Mind

The more strength, speed and endurance you have in a functional manner, the more effective you are in performance



Top: Violence of Mind

For me, conditioning is the "Schwerpunkt" of performance, and it is the most commonly skipped component of training. It is twofold: there's the physical fitness aspect of conditioning, and then there's the practice and repetition skills-based aspect of conditioning.

How many times have you walked into a dojo and witnessed horribly out of shape people learning fighting technique?

I know I have also seen it in dojos as well as on the gun range, where fantasies of fast-paced gunfights are lived out, but often the real work of preparedness is lost on the majority of participants. This is evidenced by their inability to perform many physically challenging tasks.

Now, to be clear, I am not talking about people with injuries, illnesses or disabilities. My job as a teacher is to guide your development to be able to effectively fight within your own limitations.

However, some limitations can and should be overcome, and I would argue that a great majority of the technique and skill used in a fight require a minimum amount of strength, speed and endurance to perform them adequately.

I would also contend that the more strength, speed and endurance you have in a functional manner, the more effective you are in performance and the greater your chances of lasting through a real deadly fight will be.

This concept is well established in athleticism, and we should feel the same about physical performance in self-defense fighting and martial arts, including gunfighting.

Conditioning is the best road to advanced technique. Technique that emerges from dedicated conditioning work is technique that you truly own. It has your own signature on it.

The instructor can show you the basic skill, and you can awkwardly emulate it, but when you understand how to move your body through space and how to leverage yourself against the environment, because you have developed





strength, speed, endurance, proprioceptive capability and kinesthetic awareness, you customize it into a technique to match your body type and your most efficient movement pathways. You develop around your individual limitations, genetic heritage and clothing choices. It's truly yours. Conditioning through the increase of physical capabilities and the repetition of skills is the only way to achieve this.

I guess a huge gap that I try to fill with conditioning is the performance aspect of skill and technique. It is very easy to mimic and repeat a technique with semi-willing participants, but a real fight with a dedicated violent attacker is going to generally be a lot more work. Especially if you are a smaller framed man or woman, and it will be tenfold as hard if you do not have an athletic background.

I currently spend more time with my remote coaching clients and students than I do with martial or weapon based training. In fact, I now focus my fight training on weapons-based force-on-force, and spend the rest of my time training individuals to develop strength and functional physical capabilities like speed,

explosiveness and endurance. These are the priorities as I see them, the areas where I believe the good guys can gain the best advantages for their time and effort. It ties directly into your orientation with confidence. The confidence you gain from a truly earned technique, that you own, coupled with a great sense of capability in proven strength, speed and endurance, is irreplaceable and genuine.

It is not a false confidence, especially if you've spent hundreds of hours proving it to yourself and getting better each time. This all applies to every type of fighting, whether its striking, grappling and even gunfighting. You can see the difference in all of them.

The confidence aspect can not be downplayed at all, here. It is well known that someone who is not "fit" or capable of fighting very well will go to the lethal option much faster than they should. The more capable and confident you are, the less panic you will experience. You may be able to solve a problem without going lethal because you can get away, or control it with less than lethal force.

Many fights have turned lethal when they should not have because someone lacked the

conditioning or skills to handle a physical fight. This literally happens all the time. I have personally made these mistakes myself, so I truly believe in what I am saying here. The more confident and capable you are, the better your options and your ability to choose from those options.

This is something that we see in police officers that are not well trained, as well as with civilians. Lacking the necessary conditioning and technique to go hands-on with someone and control them leaves you with very little options left.

You may kill someone when you really didn't have to and that might haunt you quite a bit. The courts do not make exceptions for people who are unfit as much as they do for those with serious physical limitations, disabilities, age, etc. And today public opinion about the use of force is merciless. Regardless of what the legal outcome is, one thing is definitely true: If you are out of shape you will have to resort to lethal much quicker than if you had some conditioning. If you carry a gun or work in a profession that leads you to confrontations, this should invoke some serious thought.

To learn more about my strength and conditioning program, Cognitionis Training Systems, check out www.ctsmethod.com. To catch me at a force-on-force UTM course, or all other inquiries, contact me at www.violenceofmind.com

SCAN ME



SCAN ME





Paolo Simeone

PST Paolo Simeone Tactical

Connecting to Your Brain Through Your Breath

After my article in the last issue of GTI Magazine (Oct. 2020), I received many questions about my “breathing system” and my way to control stress in CQB by better respiration. There is nothing really mystical going on in what I teach about better breathing, and I can assure you it has nothing to do with “new age hocus pocus.”

I added just a few things already known in the world of professional sports to my combat training. At the end of the day a TIER 1 soldier can be compared to a professional football player just with different objectives (and a different salary) but with the same goal: Be the most focused and efficient player in the game. Especially over the last few decades, scientists all over the world have discovered an interesting correlation between the brain and respiration, including a link between stress and nasal respiration. I’m not a scientist, so I will leave the technical and medical

explanation alone for the sake of a better and shorter article, but you can find quite interesting resources online about this topic.

With my focus on tactical training, I can just say that my team and I have been testing nasal respiration since 2019, and we found tactical benefits in it. We notice that deep nasal respiration (that additionally involves the diagram) helped the operator to stay focused on the task and focused on the operational priority of his mission, even when his surroundings were really stressful and chaotic.

Basically, it all started while I was exercising for myself. I noticed straight away a great benefit in terms of resistance and focus in my training. I started to apply my findings into shoot house training runs. Step by step, I added more challenging “stress factors” to it, such as total darkness, noises,

strobos, smoke and other hellish scenario-details. And due to my better breathing during the exercises, I noticed that I was more confident about my choices and faster in my reactions. We tried out a few more things, refined our insights and made our findings a part of our training. And it worked. Reaction time, confidence, aggressiveness and decision-making showed significant improvements - in our team and for the attendees of our training.

Again: I’m not a medic, so my feedback here is just to motivate you to do your own research and learn what works for you and what not. Our key element is a deep nasal respiration that involves the diagram. You have to try for yourself, include it in your physical training as well in stressful challenges as kill house training.

Start with resources like Youtube to understand the basics of better breathing and try to include it in your next training session. Watch yourself, learn from adding these aspects to your training, refine your findings and come back to get better at it. That was basically the formula that works for us. So, no magic, just think, try and learn.

It is well-known: US TIER 1 units use breathing techniques, hand in hand with other neuroscientific methods to improve focus, reflex and cognitive capabilities. And it is easy to understand why: all the world’s finest tactics, technologies and equipment mean nothing. If we can’t breathe properly, we are zeroes, not heroes. The starting point of everything, in life and combat, is the respiration. Make sure you master both.



Top: Tom Buchino and cadre of instructors at Tactical Ranch

Tom Buchino: Small Unit Tactics



Tom Buchino

Buchino, Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Special Forces (Ret.), a decorated combat veteran with worldwide experience having served in multiple Special Forces Operational Groups, the Special Warfare Center and School, and a Counter-Drug Organization. Founder and CEO of Covenant Special Projects and Tactical Ranch®.

I feel extremely fortunate to have been included in this group of dynamic tactical instructors and asked to provide my insight into the latest tactical trends.

I've had the opportunity to review many of the submissions provided by others spotlighted in this publication. And agree with their take on the evolution of the tactical industry as we enter another decade.

To be honest, I was impressed by the lack of Knuckle-Drumming verbiage in their write-ups... instead, my counterparts exemplify the true essence of the modern Warrior; eloquent, well-spoken, professional, yet always prepared to drop the hammer if the situation requires Violence of Action. My kind of guys... No Snowflakes!

There is no-such-thing as advanced tactics; only perfect execution of the fundamentals under stress. Everything we do as tactical operators, protective agents, law enforcement officers and trainers, must be rooted in the fundamentals.

Shoot - Move - Communicate!
Nothing else matters.

So, with that in mind, I choose to go a slightly different direction (yet mutually supporting to all my counterparts' writings) in my contribution to this publication.

I'd like to address the importance of Small Unit Tactics (SUT). I know from first-hand experience in the Special Forces Regiment, most battles are fought and won or lost by the composition of small teams. A SEAL Platoon, SF A-Team,



light infantry squad or a few police officer's responding to a school shooting fight with limited personnel, limited weapons systems, and limited supporting resources.

Success or failure hinges on factors including individual and collective skills (training and experience) and the immediate ability to operate as a Team, thus Small Unit Tactics.

As the owner of Covenant Special Projects Protective Services and our training facility, TACTICAL RANCH®, my instructor cadre and I ensure we stress the importance of proper execution of Small Unit Tactics.

Small Unit Tactics (SUT) encompasses all aspects of individual and collective element tactical competencies as well as the team's doctrine, policies, procedures (SOP's), and TTP's. SUT requires mental and physical discipline.

The discipline to execute the trained behavior that best supports fellow teammate efforts and the ground-truth situation.

Small teams rely completely on one another, it's critical to mission success. Every operator must do his/her job and not "Be the Lone Wolf", possibly placing fellow teammates or the mission at risk.

SUT is like a tactical symphony; every instrument or operator has a supporting role. One rogue violin out of key... One teammate performing something different from rehearsed SOP... Well, you get the picture.

The issue with developing robust SUT capabilities in small teams is: this aspect of training is often overlooked. It's much cooler and better for the Spotlight Ranger YouTube posts to simply allocate all training time to individual skills; El-Presidente, Tactical Reloads, etc.

Of course, those of us that carry guns for living or for defense purposes love to spend time at the range punching holes in paper or banging steel, but all too often we neglect working scenarios involving others (Team Work / SUT).

SMALL UNIT TACTICS

... because only Rambo can do it alone...

So, let's break down SUT. Think of SUT as the combination of everything administrative, historical, and tactical combined in an Action.

An action that is based on a solid foundation of principles and doctrine. Foundations are the sturdy, never-wavering, always present blocks that support every structure, every business, and every successful tactical operator and operation. Foundations (based on doctrine) support fundamentally-based execution of an operation.

Now foundations are seldom in view, often hidden and constructed of messy, not pleasing to the eye materials, yet when the molecular structure of these elements combine with just the right mixture, the result is nothing less than a Solid Platform for everything else to stand upon.

The implementation of SUT training into group or team



training events is critical for mission readiness. As previously stated, every aspect of individual and collective skills are combined into Small Unit Tactics.

Whether conducting a Dismounted Patrol through an Afghan village, Counter Ambush Immediate Actions while operating a convoy in Syria, or Serving a High-Risk Warrant in Chicago, the immediate action of team members during emerging events must be behavioral and decisive.

Small Unit Tactics

The application of doctrine for the combat deployment of smaller units in a particular environment.

In order to truly develop and implement SUT competencies in your small team's training, you have to first determine your doctrine. Military and most Law Enforcement elements have published doctrine, but occasionally we work with small teams that have yet to determine what their true mission is, let alone know anything about doctrine.

This deficiency leaves the team no clue how to train and often leads to confusion in team member's response in emerging scenarios, resulting in diminished SUT competency.

Think of a part-time police SWAT team in a landlocked small rural county in the US that wants to spend time training with borrowed boats on a river 150 miles outside their jurisdiction... Maybe it is fun, and a great tanning opportunity, but what a waste of valuable training time. It's not relevant to their assigned directives. Or that same SWAT team that has not developed a Tactical SOP (TACSOP) concerning Entry's; could be catastrophic should officers not know their individual and supporting officer's duties and responsibilities during the assault.

I know all this discussion of Doctrine, SOP's, Policy, Procedures blah, blah, blah are not what gets Tactical Practitioners blood pumping. For many of you, the behavioral response of such is already engrained in your soul from years of service...

But, we as trainers or unit leaders have a responsibility to set our folks up for success. Combat Marksmanship Speed and Accuracy development is quantifiable; immediate results are noted by hits on steel or the tone of a Pro-Timer, but evaluation of SUT requires non-biased evaluation of the team performance in a given scenario.

Scenarios must be of tactical relevance (SWAT Team in Boat thing) and each exercise must be followed by a facilitated After Action Review (AAR). The AAR allows teammates to discuss their actions and supporting team member actions from the Planning Phase through Actions On the Objective. We develop Lessons Learned from the exercise and subsequent AAR, then revise (if necessary), rehearse, and evaluate. An ongoing process that must evolve with the tactical environment.

Don't waste time, resources, or energy on tactics or techniques that will (a) Will Never Be Authorized by Your Agency / Unit and (b) Are Not a Mission Essential Task.

Scenarios must be of tactical relevance and each exercise must be followed by a facilitated After Action Review





Left: Tom Buchino

Stick with what is doctrine! Doctrine consists of fundamental principles, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and terms and symbols. Most of all doctrine provides the fundamental principles of what works in battle, based on past experience.

These principles have been learned through combat and conflict and although not always perspective in nature, they are authoritative and always the starting point for address new problems.

Such principles are not simply a checklist for what to do in a situation, or a constraining set of rules, these principles are designed to promote operator initiative and adaption to solve problems.

With that in mind, once the team has identified their Mission, the Mission Essential Task List (METL: skills required to fulfill mission directives, Specified and Implied Task), accepted or developed and implemented department, agency or unit policies,

procedures, and standard operating procedures, they now have the basis for doctrine. The team now knows what skills to train, how to develop team operability, and the best course of action for revising and sustaining capabilities. All of this combined become the receipt for SUT development.

My time serving on and leading small teams (Special Forces & Protective Services Teams) has engrained the importance of SUT. Knowing the learned behavior and immediate response for myself and teammates in a given situation provides teams the Tactical Advantage when “shit hits the fan.” When on the “X” what do we all do to win? That’s SUT.

SUT is not restricted to Policing and Military Units, it must be trained and employed in any aspect of battle involving two (2) or more operators. Offensive, defensive, reconnaissance and stability operations require SUT. Traveling, traveling Overwatch, Bounding Overwatch, requires SUT. Get it? Everything we do in this

wonderful world of the fight involves Small Unit Tactics.

A SEAL Team supporting a Marine Task Force, may have differing Tactical SOP’s (TACOPS), however their doctrine is consistent; allowing them to operate in support of each other.

An SF HALO (Military Freefall) Team will have mission specific aspects to their TACSOP but will integrate perfectly and operate alongside that SEAL Team. We may differ slightly in composition and capabilities but operate conducive because of common doctrine and training based on the fundamentals.

Never was this more clear than during a mounted patrol during the initial invasion into Iraq in 2003. (Unclassified)

Prior to the “Official Kickoff” of the coalition forces air campaign, a small group of Special Operations Forces (SOF) conducted an infiltration of Iraq to set up and secure an isolated abandoned airfield.

The mission was to conduct a clandestine infill of other SOF teams for reconnaissance operations from the secured airfield.

The airfield seizure team consisted of one (1) SF A-team and one (1) SF-B Team (a small headquarters command and control element) and a handful of Air Force Combat Controllers. Upon successful occupation and set up of the airfield, the SOF contingent received multiple small teams via prompt delivery from time-staggered blacked out MC130's.

With the successful and undetected infiltration of US SOF operators complete, all were dispatched to different recon sectors and the Airfield Team was ordered to initiate movement North to Baghdad to get Eyes-On the Baghdad International Airport (the called Sadaam Intl AP / SIAP).

The small SOF element traveling in GMV (ground mobility vehicles) and Toyota Tacoma's were joined by a Civil Affairs (CA) Section with two (2) HumV's.

The CA section was integrated into the SOF convoy, placing their vehicles between the A team leading and B team bringing up the rear. The combined team pushed North in the dark cold, reaching the Euphrates River crossing as the

sun began to rise. A final security halt prior to crossing the bridge provided the team confirmation that aerial intelligence indicated no insurgent presence.

As the team made their push over the bridge crossing the Euphrates, and all vehicles now approaching the Southern, downward slope of the bridge, the convoy became engulfed in enemy small arms fire from all directions. Front, Rear, Left and Right contact as the Fedayeen had laid in ambush positions covered by buildings and elevated rock walls awaiting the patrols entry into the Kill Zone.

Supporting the Fedayeen's efforts was multiple RPG teams and soviet DShk heavy machine guns positioned at multiple roadway intersections.

The US teams options to Break Contact or Fight Through was made for them when the Assistant Patrol Leader (rear of convoy) identified that there had been break-in-contact and one vehicle was no longer positioned in convoy order.

As the SOF operators continue to engage targets with both rifles and mounted machine-guns and MK-19 grenades launchers from vehicles (now at much higher speeds) the announcement of the lost vehicle was sounded over the radio.



With the team fighting from their convoy and ever expanding distance between the trucks, the trailing Tacomas made a stance at an overwatch intersection and dismounted a couple of operators to recover the lost Civil Affairs vehicle. All of this came in the midst of a seemingly endless ambush of enemy participants.

Supporting fires provided the dismounted troops to maneuver and vector the wayward vehicle back into convoy configuration, all while both the SF and Civil Affairs soldiers returned fire to the repositioning enemy forces.

The commander and lead element located an open field to assemble, set up security and defensive positions and awaited the trailing arrivals.

Upon arrival of all vehicles, defenses were set as the team prepared for counter-attack.





To this point, the Unit had received no serious casualties. However; many of the vehicles have suffered multiple non-disabling wounds of their own. Communications with higher (command) reporting the situation was established while a motivated US Air Force TACP (an attached member of the team) dispatched Close Air Support from an A-10 Thunderbolt.

Due to enemy armor positions located to the patrols North, the determination to fight back through the ambush site and cross over the Euphrates once again was made, brief to all teammates, and executed with the firepower of the A-10. The extended period spent coordinating air support, reporting, and refitting for round two allowed the Fedayeen time to re-form and position for their counter.

Never go through an ambush a second time... That's just common sense.

But, when the options are tanks vs. trucks or some buggers in

decent position vs. SOF guys and other American troops with a crap ton of bullets, the answer is a no brainer.

After positioning the Tacoma's in between the heavier HMMV's and ensuring the A-10 inbound run, the detachment began its violent egress through the city back the rivers crossing.

Round two proved to be more intense than the previous, but the A-10 showed no mercy, and the US ground element's speed and fire accuracy was more than the opposing forces anticipated.

As the egressing US forces laid waste to stationary targets the A-10 spent every grain of its combat load on the hardened positions and one poor bastard bad on a motorcycle, the team was able to cross the danger zone and egress South, over the bridge spanning the Euphrates to a secure rally point; all without a serious casualty.

Yes, many of the vehicles looked like Swiss cheese, one

even died just after making it to safety but the team was secure and in the defense. Live to Fight Another Day!

This brief overview of a contact in Iraq is not intended to showcase hero's (a word much overused these days), or lack of perfect intelligence... It is intended to highlight the importance of Small Unit Tactics.

The US forces involved in this 5-hour battle on a hectic day in foreign land remained poised in overwhelming odds and destroyed a large number of enemy forces by working together; thinking intuitively, exercising initiative, and taking the fight to the enemy.

Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and US Air Force troops although serving different units, with differing SOP's and different training and equipment, exercised the principles of Small Unit Tactics to fight. "One Team One Fight"

Small Unit Tactics is a vital aspect of tactical training.

Left: Team-up at Tactical Ranch

Right: Training at Tactical Ranch



The combination of everything administrative, historical, and tactical combined in an Action ... an Action that is based on a solid foundation of principles and doctrine.

As we face this new decade, global threats and domestic disturbances will require increased vigilance on behalf of the Tactical Practitioner.

ISIS will reemerge, Al-Qaeda will operate its terror, and others wanting to do freedom and good people harm will perpetrate their hate.

2020 brings many unknowns, but I know me and my guys at Tactical Ranch® will continue to stress relevant, mission specific, realistic tactical training and the importance of developing and/or enhancing SUT capabilities in every group we have the privilege to work with.

“One Team One Fight”

Tom Buchino
Sergeant Major
US Army Special Forces (ret.)

Owner, CSP Protective
Services
Tactical Ranch®

“De Oppresso Liber”



Mark Human

MDW MultiDimensional Warriors

What are the challenges of the modern-day training environment?



Mark Human

The Warrior Mind

Developing the right work ethic, skill, attitude, physical mental resilience.

Although the majority of my time is spent developing and presenting training, I believe that spending time in the field with clients to understand their context is important to ensure that the skill sets, we present in our training curriculums are fully congruent with their actual working environment.

One of the challenges in training people in the modern combat environment is an attitude of “tick the box” or the „I been there and done that“ attitude.

There are always the core crew groups that are dedicated to continued training throughout their careers but for many they will not put time and money into training unless it is a requirement to work.

It always baffles me when I meet people working in some of the most dangerous environments that they do not spend time to invest in acquiring new skills or maintaining existing ones.

Along with recognition skills it is critical to foster what I call a “Responsible Warrior Mind supported by physical and mental resilience.” This encompasses instilling pride, identity, purpose and a sense of urgency.

In our age of games, gear and technology many people coming into the industry and have not been exposed to true physical violence.

It is also important for combatants to prepare them for the cost (physical, emotional and moral) of engaging enemies in combat.

What about rules for the “good guys”?

The rules of engagement for regular forces (private and state) are influenced and liable to military and or civilian mandates (Law), and held up to the scrutiny of the world by politically backed media agendas.

Professional private military entities, private security and private law enforcement are important role players in this equation.

Often, they are governed by higher moral, ethical and performance criteria than entities of the state.





Top: Mark Human demonstrates combat tactics around a vehicle



Below: Mark Human edged weapon workshop

This means the good guys better know the game, be skilled and get to know their enemy.

The enemy you face does not play by the rules!

What happens when training fails to address “The Responsible Warrior Mind” as part of their curriculum?

To act decisively without hesitation requires speedy decision-making, linked with the immediate appropriate response.

To achieve this, it is obvious that one requires well developed “pattern” recognition skills and have the right physical and equipment familiarity skills linked with the appropriate options for response in context to any given situation

It is prudent to ask oneself, why then do well equipped, well trained individuals dither even though they have the above requirements in place?

Because: “Dithering gets you dead!”

There are third/fourth underlying factors to decisive action.

A person’s value and belief system underpinned with their understanding of the consequences for their specific actions can often be a stronger “breaking” or “accelerating” mechanisms to decisive action than poor or well-honed physical skills.

These too need to be addressed in the training environment and be congruent with action and pattern recognition skills.

How can this be addressed in the training environment?

1. Create context about value of tasks goals and objectives
2. Clarify mandates
3. Redefine and reset the parameters of their value and belief system.
4. Clarify consequences (legal/moral justification) of action/inaction.



Put these factors together the right way and you will come up with the best training solution for your customers.

It is a challenge for us as instructors as it will be for our customers.

But this is what it takes to be prepared for the threats of our time and facing a rising global aggression level.



Mark Human

Modern combat has been depersonalised by technology, gaming and gadgets. Edged weapons work brings back the emotional driving forces that need to be managed to fight for your life!

Why do you place a large emphasis on edged weapons training?

Edged weapons demonstrate how low tech in an age that relies on gadgets and technology applied with intent and skill can be both a useful tool for professionals but a formidable threat in the wrong hands.

The knife threat is not going to go away. And if the “good guys” leave it out of their box of skills they fail, both to understand the threat as well as lose a valuable force multiplier in an anormal or a plan B scenario.

“To know your enemy” means for people who do not grow up in blade cultures can benefit from training that works on physical skills as well as understanding the mindset of edged weapon attackers in different arenas.

Training needs to address actual threats faced in the field environment. It’s easy to teach „feel good“ crap but there is

nothing more terrifying for someone in the field trying their academy taught technique in the field while they are fighting for their life and their mind is going “this shit just does not work!”

In modern conflict, combat has been depersonalised by technology, gaming and gadgets.

Edged weapons work brings back the emotional driving forces that need to be managed to fight for your life and



Edged weapon training is a powerful tool for developing mental resilience!

possibly take a life at bad breath distance.

I believe even if edged weapon skills directly utilised in combat that edged weapon training is a powerful tool for developing mental resilience, a culture of training and a fighting spirit.



Paul Bonnici

Elite Spartan Tactical Concept

Vehicle Counter Assault Tactics, Combat Mindset and Situational Awareness



Photo: Paul Bonnici

Today, many law enforcement and military shootouts take place in and around cars. It's obvious that this type of training is important for law enforcement, military, and military contractors.

When you spend so much time in vehicles, start your training in a way that mimics your everyday life. If you consider the amount of time you spend in and around a vehicle, it stands to reason that your chances of becoming involved in a gunfight are extremely high.

Unfortunately, in our modern world, you have to accept that there are very few places left where you are immune to threats to your personal safety or the safety of your clients. Roads, routes, and cars are not one of them. Don't take this lightly.

We are not talking about straight forward Close Quarters Battle (CQB). This is not range combat nor tactical shooting. Being under fire in a confined space, as it is in any vehicle, adds a complexity to your decisions and to the situation that is unique in the world of tactical training.

To start to understand the problem with most vehicle attack situations is to understand that the criminal and terrorist have the upper hand. They decide how and when they will attack,



and by what means they will perpetrate their assault. Professional criminals, assassins, and terrorists will never attack you in wide straight open roads but they will make their planned assault when you are in a position where you can't do any evasive maneuvers or in urban centres chokepoints areas.

In this article, I am not going to cover tactical approaches and options, particularly, because I am not sure who might be reading this article. But I will share with you what is your most important and effective tool: Your brain.

Your brain is your most important and effective tool to prevent and to take the necessary measures which will allow you to see potential threats to your safety ahead of time.

This will provide you a window of opportunity to prepare for or prevent potential confrontations as they arise.





Your situational awareness plays a big part in actually preventing trouble or an assault on you. After all, the best way to survive an attack is to prevent one.

You need to understand that deadly situations typically happen when you least expect them.

Let's face it, unfortunately most people are completely oblivious to their surroundings. This is because our attention is often drawn somewhere else.

Perhaps with your inner ramblings, your own involuntary internal discussions, or when life gets busy by answering the mobile phone, the focus on what you need to accomplish the next day.

In these circumstances you lost sight of what's going around you. The brain is a powerful and necessary tool to avoid dangerous situations or react to a threat when used in the right context.

But like with any tool, you need to be able to shut it off and put it on combat mindset mode.

Having a Combat Mindset, simply means that you have developed the ability of awareness, to think and act effectively and act properly under adversity, stress, and under extreme pressure with clarity of legal and ethical purpose.

You must, at all times, heighten your situational awareness and be aware of what is going on around you, before you find yourself confined inside a vehicle that offers no ballistic protection from incoming fire when an armed confrontation arises. So let's start with your awareness:

Step 1: Start thinking 15 minutes ahead, think as a criminal or a terrorist, to help you to prevent any attack.

Step 2: Start looking for any possible loopholes available in the security of your client or your daily life routine, start planning your own assassination or kidnapping in order to take the necessary steps to predict and prevent.

Remember "a person who does not think and plan ahead will find trouble right at his door".



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Ken Witt Tactical Instructor

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Vetted guidelines for tactical training

In the United States, as well as around much of the globe, law enforcement will continue to face many of the same issues in 2021 that have challenged it throughout the previous decade: reducing part one crimes against person and property, active shooters, domestic and foreign terrorist threats, hate crimes, human trafficking, crowd management, training, staffing, budgets, and public scrutiny.

Each law enforcement agency's approach to these critical issues must be reassessed through historical experience, data, and professional insight.

This approach must also be outward looking and include the experiences of outside agencies and well-regarded public safety think tanks. This provides the opportunity to either validate existing tactics, techniques and procedures or evaluate new methodologies.

Yet, the fact remains that the deployment of tactical units carries with it one of the greatest liability concerns – in both human and monetary terms – facing any agency. For this reason, agencies must adequately prepare their tactical teams for success. Additionally, this commitment to tactical preparedness must be extended to active shooter training for all field officers.

Any tactical training must begin with an accredited set of standards for training and performance.

The absence in this country of a national standard for tactical units means agencies should look to state governments such as California's Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training for guidance.

Credible organizations such as the National Tactical Officers Association also provide vetted guidelines for tactical training and policies. It is these standards that identify the core competencies which drive individual and team training.

It is essential that team training is entrusted to a vetted cadre of instructors based on their education, training, and experience not rank or time on the team. Rank and tenure do

not always equate to the aforementioned criteria. Equally important is the issue of tactical leadership training.

This is another area where rank and tenure are not a guarantee that a leader is prepared to efficiently plan and execute a tactical operation, let alone for the rigors of critical decision making in a dynamic high-stress environment.

Finally, new tactical methodologies should be sought out and evaluated, even if they only serve to validate existing doctrine.

Otherwise the team's training will become inbred and lose its effective edge.

The arbiter of tactical success is regular, meaningful, and realistic training.

Any tactical training must begin with an accredited set of standards for training and performance.



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