

attacking with a prison made knife. Those individuals are out there. Those monsters do exist. And while my training has prepared me for the ego driven idiots most people are likely to be attacked by, here's a hint - don't go there, back down, walk away, hand it over - your ego isn't really important - it has not prepared for a guy that doesn't care about social standing but just wants to watch me bleed. Ego - that's a social situation (there's that term again) with people establishing their position in some primitive and pointless pecking order. But the 'what if' doesn't care about that and my fear of him wouldn't go away. Would I be able to stop an asocial monster without remorse, hesitation, or fear? Could I stop the guy that can't be stopped? I couldn't. So, I went looking for someone who could. I found Larkin and learned to stop the unstoppable.

### How to assemble a target

Having trained in martial arts for most of my life and spent the last five years focusing on Reality Based systems I've always said there're only so many ways to strike, punch and kick someone. I've seen pretty much everything at this stage. However, I can safely say this: Target Focus Training (TFT) was like nothing I've seen or done before. It was as the name suggests: training that teaches you to focus and destroy a specific target in order to get a specific response. While that seems like an obvious statement, trust me when I tell you that actually applying it is nothing short of revolutionary. It removes the chaos of violence and makes it devastatingly simple.

Larkin and his team of instructors have refined and developed the course since the early days of his military combat training with the US Navy Seals. Instead of teaching rote attack patterns they teach an intellectual, clinical and physical progression in destroying the human machine. This is achieved through a fascinating educational system broken down into three specific phases for each target. A process referred to as 'target assembly'.

The first phase is seeing the goal of your actions and thoroughly understanding it. Let's take the eye: you see exactly what a burst eyeball, a detached eyeball and a gouged eyeball looks like and you learn what will happen in medical detail. In fact, this may have been more detail than I received while earning my medical qualifications. Next, you take your partner and look at 'sight pictures'. How to optimally cause the damage you just witnessed in a variety of positions. These are simply isolated instances - snap shots. The target facing you, facing away from you, to the left, right, vertical, horizontal, lying down, on knees - any conceivable way of inflicting the injury just studied is examined. This is done in an agonisingly slow fashion to avoid causing said injury.

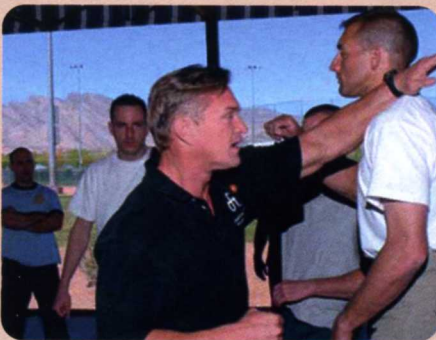
Finally, when you've assembled several targets you have 'free play'. This is how it works: you inflict an injury, then the next, and then the next. Then choose where you want to cause the next one. Do it. Rinse and repeat until the focus of this violence is non-functional. That may mean your attacker can't chase you because he's blind and you've broken his knee and ankle, thus rendering him unable to fight because he can't see and he can't stand. That's just a small example. The key here is injury.

### Cutting Pinocchio's strings

Injury is not a bloody nose, or a black eye. Injury here is defined as something that DESTROYS the body's structure. That means a broken nose that causes an involuntary spinal reflex that closes off an airway, disrupts vision or has someone choking and staggering. It means breaking someone so they can't fight. It doesn't matter how good a fighter your opponent is. How resistant he may be to pain or discomfort. He simply cannot see if his eye has been punctured or removed from its socket. He cannot chase you if his ankle or knee is broken and facing the wrong

way because he cannot support his weight on it. Causing an injury means that you will survive. It means the injured person will react in a VERY predictable way. There is no confusion and no ambiguity. There is only dead certainty that presents you with the next target. It is nothing less than the surgical, precise systematic destruction of a human being.

Six hours in and I pause and look around, over 40 people who lacked any semblance of co-ordination a few hours ago and were the furthest thing from combat efficient are focused with a shocking degree of precision on specific targets. Their whole body and every inch and ounce of who they are is being placed



Target Focus Training (TFT) founder Tim Larkin demonstrates an ulna strike to the throat.

into a tiny specific point on someone else's body - the response is devastating. It's with relief that people are being cautious and moving slowly, if they didn't there would be a pile of screaming bodies on the floor. As it is, one participant is sent to hospital with a broken nose - the pressure used to cause it only a bare fraction of what could have been used, the result of a momentary lapse in concentration. Within a disturbing short amount of days each participant is systematically dismantling several attackers simultaneously with an ease and fluidity that is both beautiful and horrific. Guns, bats, knives, all dealt with in the same brutal fashion. People are still being dismantled. My own moment of both joy and repulsion came when on a metal staircase.

### 'Shakabuku' on a staircase

I dissected my attacker standing above me with a series of simple movements that ultimately would have culminated in a life ending cervical trauma as he had been positioned (due to involuntary spinal reactions caused by the injuries I inflicted on him) about to sail over the rail of the stairs face first into the concrete pavement some two floors down. The funny thing was, this was against someone that would have scared the crap out of me. The stunning moment was I hadn't even realised who I was fighting against; all I saw was a series of easily breakable targets and so I broke them.

This trend continued as I was fortunate enough to work one-on-one with several of the mastery students and Larkin's other instructors of the program, each a cold scientist coolly observing the analytical and progressive breaking of my body. The most impressive of these was a young slender, delicate, beautiful blonde named Krista, who proceeded to rip chunks of hair from my very tight hair cut and whose detachment during combat was bone chilling. There was no intimidation, no fear or doubt against a bigger, stronger, faster aggressor. There was a target; it was broken, presenting another target. This too was broken, and the next, her movement a seamless flow of devastation. This woman, the epitome of gentle femininity, could cripple me in seconds without a

second thought, without any effort. And that's when I realised I finally had my answer to the 'what if'.

### What matters the what if?

No matter how tough, well trained, drugged up, violently psychotic a person may be, if you rupture his testicles, bursting them, he WILL in every instance, throw his hips back, brings his hands to his groin and bring his head forward. Now, freeze-frame. What do you see? Eyes? Ears? The throat? The Nose? A knee? Take your time, you have it. He's still holding the bloody mess that was his testicles. Choose the next target - let's say his eyes. Then destroy it. Take your thumbs and put them through his eyes up to the knuckles. Pop them. Now . . . freeze frame . . . what do you see? . . . and repeat.

If this sounds excessively violent it should. If this is upsetting to read, nauseating and disturbing that's because it is. What this course teaches you is horrific. It's not something you talk about. It's not something hopefully you will ever have to use. Most people won't do this, and that's okay. Most people can't handle the reality of what it takes to ensure their own safety. But that's the thing - that's why this training is so vitally important. The sense of freedom, responsibility and respect for life you have from the knowledge that you can, with minimal effort kill a person, regardless of if they're bigger, faster or stronger, is amazing. You know how easy it is to kill or be killed and with that power comes a great appreciation for life, for never wanting to be in that position. In this sickening reality and through this training you actually become a better person. Because this is, without a shadow of a doubt, something I would trust my life to implicitly if the 'what if' comes along.

It doesn't matter if a bullet doesn't stop him. It doesn't matter if he's an undefeated street fighter. It doesn't matter if he's from a notorious gang. It doesn't matter if he is high, has a knife or a gun, or anything else. It doesn't matter, because in moments all of that will be irrelevant - all he will be is a badly injured guy writhing in uncontrollable agony with no eyes, no testicles and no working legs to stand on. After that it doesn't really matter who his is, what he's done, what his skills are or what he's packing. There is no threat. There is no fear. There is nothing but the next target - and each one breaks very easily.

- To learn more about Tim Larkin and Target Focus Training (TFT) please visit his official website where you can find out more about his seminars, DVD series and new book releases.

- Visit: [www.targetfocustraining.com](http://www.targetfocustraining.com)

- Paul J.O'Brien is a fully qualified Acupuncturist and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioner. He is also certified in Western Clinical Medicine, and holds additional qualifications as a fitness instructor, personal trainer, and Whole Body Vibration trainer. He is currently a Reality Based Combat instructor and dedicated martial artist having studied Shotokan Karate and other martial arts for over 15 years. O'Brien offers a FREE consultation service for readers of Irish Fighter at his Dublin-based clinic. For more information, or should you have any questions regarding your health or how best to treat injuries and illness, you can contact him on (087) 9019627, or through his websites at:

- [www.meridian-acupuncture-clinic.com](http://www.meridian-acupuncture-clinic.com)
- [www.isometric-training.com](http://www.isometric-training.com)