



HOW TO

SURVIVE

THE MOST CRITICAL

5 SECONDS OF YOUR LIFE

TIM LARKIN

&

CHRIS RANCK-BUHR

Candid comments from readers of this new book

“Compulsory reading for every adult male on this planet. It is the most eye opening book I have ever read on the subject of self preservation. It’s so simple and clear you are left with no illusions about real violence and what is required to survive.”

Lawrence Jooste, Gauteng, South Africa

“It was really a game changer for me. There have been several times in my life when I felt I truly became enlightened about something and it forever changed my outlook – this book is one of them. I trained in college for Tae Kwon Do and became very effective at hitting targets. Now, I realize how naïve my self confidence has been. I’ve been lucky! I started your book late the night I received it and could barely put it down to go to sleep.”

Ed Hopwood, Warren NJ

“Well-written and compelling, this book will quickly strip away your ingrained, false perceptions about hand-to-hand combat and give you confidence that, with an understanding of what is really needed for victory, you could actually defend yourself against any attacker, regardless of differentials in size, aggressiveness, or skill level.”

Scott Nelson, Houston, TX

“Never before have I come across a book that addresses the use of violence in the open and honest manner this book does. As a former soldier, we were taught the simple fact that when fighting for your life, it’s you or your opponent – anything goes. The authors of this book address this basic idea but delve much deeper into the difference between anti-social and asocial violence, and why “anything goes” may sometimes be necessary. They make it abundantly clear that although violence is very rarely the solution to a confrontation, when it is, it is the only solution. This is not a book about techniques; it’s a book about mindset – the mindset about when and why the tool of violence should be utilized to end a confrontation. It is this mindset that may very well save your life if ever faced with a truly violent encounter.”

Tim Baguley, Las Vegas, NV

“I couldn’t put it down. Read it in one sitting. It’s a brilliant study on the use of violence as a tool and its use in social, asocial, & antisocial settings. If you’re considering the purchase of any self defense tool or training I highly recommend you read this book before doing so. You won’t hear this caliber of truth ANYWHERE else.”

K. T. Martin, Sacramento, CA

"I have been around combat in the Marine Corps, and with cops for most of my life. This is the first serious change in how we must look at SURVIVAL combat. It is not so much technique as it is a mental frame of mind. It has been most refreshing to read."

P. Neskow, Barrington, IL

"It was the best book I have ever read on Self Protection. It gives a 360 degree understanding of the subject. I possessed the physical side and understanding but I could never fully understand the mental part. Once I finished your book I realized I could get the job done if need be... without hesitation. The way you communicate so clearly on the subject, I can see you have survived violent encounters. A lot of people who teach Self Protection never have -- its just theory."

Shane Parisi, Mountain View, CA

"The TFT material has shed light on the grey area of violence. So simple to understand, anyone can pick it up and learn the truth about surviving an undesirable situation. One of the most significant reads I've come across. I highly recommend it!"

Justin Negrete, Madison, WI

"Having survived a tour in Nam as a combat medic I can attest to the mental fortitude necessary to counter a violent battle. Only wish this book was written 40 years ago!"

Dennis Aurilia, Parkland, FL

"I always thought I had a good combat mindset, use of color codes in my everyday life, and an understanding of what I would do if confronted with a life and death situation. I had half a picture! This is a whole different world! The simplest and best explanation I have ever heard of why when violence is the answer it truly is the only answer."

Todd W. Carr, Marion, NY

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5 SECONDS OF YOUR LIFE

TIM LARKIN
&
CHRIS RANCK-BUHR

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by Tim Larkin & Chris Ranck-Buhr

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*Dedicated to everyone who
made it back home alive . . .*

*and to the memory of
those who didn't.*

HOW TO SURVIVE THE MOST CRITICAL 5 SECONDS OF YOUR LIFE

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Chapters 1-7 included with this ebook preview. To obtain the complete book, go to: www.targetfocustraining.com or find it on Amazon.com

HOW TO SURVIVE THE MOST CRITICAL 5 SECONDS OF YOUR LIFE

Foreword

*“The art of war is simple enough. Find out where the enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike him as hard as you can and as often as you can, and keep moving on.” —
General U.S. Grant*

There are many different reasons you might start reading this book, but the only reason to finish it is if you want to protect yourself and your family from violence. That’s it. You see, I’m not just going to give you a few techniques to ward off a local thug. I don’t want to level the playing field. I want to skew it in your favor. In other words, I want to make sure that if you’re ever in a violent situation, you walk away with your life.

But to do that, you need to know something about the principles of what you’re doing. It’s educating yourself about the facts of violence. Without it, you’re doing what everyone else is doing—just learning techniques for specific situations. And by the time you finish this book, you’ll understand why that’s a recipe for disaster.

It truly amazes me how many people just stumble into various martial arts or combat sports never having once considered why they’re doing it. If you’re training your body to participate in competitions, then you’ll find numerous martial arts and combat sports that provide excellent instruction and challenging forms of competition. These give you the opportunity to exercise your abilities in a safe situation, with rules and supervision agreed upon in advance.

Combat sports can teach you effective tactics for fighting, and they’re great for getting into shape. Unfortunately, however, if “sport fighting” is your thing, this book will not say a thing to you. I’m talking about real violence, the kind we all want to avoid. I’m talking about learning to effectively deal with real life-or-death threats. And that’s completely different from combat sport fighting.

At this point, you might be wondering why you can't do both. Or maybe you're wondering why you should know how to fight at all. Maybe you're thinking that's why we have social institutions such as the police—to defend us and keep us safe from life-or-death situations.

But this book addresses the place where social communication ends and real violence begins—places where you have no control over your opponent. In other words, this book addresses those situations we all try to pretend don't exist.

The real question is, if you're unfortunate enough to find yourself in a life-or-death situation, will you have the ability to defend yourself and your family? Because in that moment, nothing else will matter.

If you want to know the truth about self-defense, read on. You might not like what I have to say. But if you keep reading, I guarantee you'll come to see the truth: There's only one way you'll ever be prepared to walk away from a life-or-death situation.

—Tim Larkin

PART ONE:

VIOLENCE IN YOUR LIFE TODAY

Chapter One:

The Unthinkable Happens

“Any man who is a man may not, in honor, submit to threats of violence. But many men who are not cowards are simply unprepared for acts of human savagery. They have not thought about it (incredible as this may appear to anyone who reads the papers or listens to the news) and they just don’t know what to do. When they look right into the face of depravity and violence they are astonished and confounded.”
—Jeff Cooper

It doesn’t make you a coward to acknowledge that you have no idea what to do in a life-or-death violent situation. In fact, it means that you have the courage to accept that there are people out there who will act in unpredictable and irrational ways to get what they want—a fact many people blithely ignore. And if you’re reading this book, it means you’ve taken that acceptance a step further, and you’re ready to do something about it.

Since I started Target-Focus Training (TFT), I’ve traveled extensively, giving seminars on how to use violence as a tool for survival. One of my most significant trips occurred when I toured Asia. I had the good fortune to travel to Singapore, Jakarta, Manila, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, and every step of the journey, the specter of violence loomed in the background. Most of my hotels had a barricade, all my cars were searched for bombs, and each guest was searched every time they reentered the hotel. My hosts represented some of the most influential people in each of these regions, and they all welcomed my message: violence is the only way to combat violence.

Why?

Because the people living in these cities live every day with the threat of violence entering their lives in a real and dramatic fashion. And they don't just face the threat of criminal violence. Political violence, terrorists, kidnappers, business rivals—all use violence as a means to solve problems.

These are clients who take a plan for asocial violence seriously. It's not that they're violent people themselves or ever want to use the knowledge. But when you've seen political assassinations over a mayoral election, when you've seen a political opponent's entire family slaughtered, you realize there are those who are very comfortable solving any conflict with violence—and you realize that you'd better be ready if they ever come gunning for you.

It quickly becomes clear that if you are unfortunate enough to get involved with people like this, you may very well find yourself in a situation where using violence is your only answer. I share this because rarely have I found my message so well received—ironically in a part of the world that was the birthplace of martial arts.

Why Can't We All Just Get Along?

There are two types of people who won't find much to help them in this book: those who think violence is never justifiable, and those who think violence is the answer to everything. One thing that will become very clear over the course of this book is that violence is an extremely negative thing. I don't recommend it as a solution to any but the most desperate of conflicts. In other words, violence is what you use when every other choice has been taken from you. So why can't we all just get along?

A perfect example occurs in the war against terror. Whether you back the war or not, our soldiers face a committed enemy who is willing to do whatever it takes to further its cause. They don't think twice about beheading civilians or sacrificing innocent lives—including their own—to make a point. Their commitment to their

cause is total and even the wounded will booby-trap themselves just to kill a couple more soldiers ‘for the cause.’ Against such an enemy you cannot afford to respond with a litigious, law enforcement mentality.

We cannot win by trying to ‘arrest’ the enemy. The cold, hard fact is that we must kill the enemy in large enough numbers to break the back of the insurgents. It is politically incorrect to point such facts out, but that, quite frankly, is the nature of war. You don’t have to like war, but you have to accept it for what it is. A soldier overseas may not like what he has to do, but if he wants to survive—and if he wants his friends and family to remain safe—he has no choice but to respond to the enemy in kind.

But this mentality is not just dangerous to soldiers on the battlefields of the Middle East. The same applies to you. You cannot afford such a litigious mentality when faced with real, asocial violence. You must respond by injuring the other guy as fast as you can. You can’t rely on running or blocking anymore than the military can use law enforcement guidelines to defeat a ‘kill or be killed’ enemy.

I don’t advocate responding to antisocial behavior with violence; nor do I believe violence will solve our social or political problems. But whether it’s a soldier facing a committed, fanatical enemy or a businessman facing an asocial recidivist criminal, the only response that will get the job done is to use the tool of violence. That’s why you must ask yourself right now, “Do I really know how to use the tool of violence?” You simply can’t wait to ask it until asocial violence is imminent. By then the stakes are far too high.

Chapter Two:

Surviving the Most Critical Five Seconds of Your Life

“What can be successfully willed must first be seen and understood.” —Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall

There’s nothing artistic about violence; it’s an instinctive survival tool, like swimming. Once you’ve learned the basics, you’re set for life. You don’t walk around every day wondering what you’d do if you fell into a swimming pool: “Let’s see, first I’d tread water, then I’d follow that up with a couple of neat butterfly strokes...” You just know that if you fall in, you’ll swim to the edge and get out of the water.

An Olympic swimmer who trains every day will always be able to swim faster, further, and with more grace than the average person who learned as a kid and only ever gets wet in the shower. But under normal conditions, neither of them will drown. Whether you’re an Olympic swimmer or an amateur, if you fall into a life-or-death situation in the water, you swim to avoid death. Violence is the same: a simple, utilitarian life skill. And as in swimming, the only arbiter of success is survival. If you make it out alive, you did the right thing.

Serious violent conflict rarely lasts more than five seconds. It doesn’t take much to put even the biggest man down, and five seconds is more than enough time to cause serious injury. On the other hand, that means you don’t have the luxury of time to think or take up a fancy kung-fu stance. You get time only to act, cause an effect, and continue to act.

So why is violence so important to survival? Because violence works on everyone. Superior physical ability, knowledge,

experience, and iron will are all trumped by the thumb in the eye. There is nothing anyone can do to make themselves immune to the laws of the physical universe.

Bullets are not swayed by opinion or presence; they are maddeningly impartial. In other words, everyone can do violence, and no one is immune.

Surviving is not Enough

Some people will argue that it's not necessary to become familiar with the tool of violence—that it's enough to know self-defense and be prepared for different situations. Well, I'm here to tell you that those tools might give you the ability to survive a violent situation. But is survival enough? Consider these examples:

At the age of 32, Jim, a man with years of martial arts training, was attacked by a meth-crazed mugger in an unprovoked homicidal assault. He was stabbed three times. He's still with us because his girlfriend attempted to stop the mugger. She was stabbed twice in the neck and bled-out before the paramedics could arrive.

John is a police officer with 12 years on the force and numerous defensive tactics courses under his belt. On a bright August day he pulled over a '79 Chevy Camaro for a dangerous lane change while speeding. As he approached, the 6'5", 262 lb very drunk driver got out to contest John's decision to stop him.

Before John finished the verbal warning he'd used a 1,000 times before, the driver bum-rushed him, lifted him off the deck, and slammed him to the pavement. Following the techniques he'd been drilled in, John fumbled for his pepper spray while the driver laughed and repeatedly pounded John's head against the pavement.

John lost consciousness as kicks to the head and torso rained down from the alcohol-fueled rage. He's still on the force today but in an admin job. Nerve damage to his right side is pretty severe.

His facial reconstructive surgery went well and surgeons think he'll regain 90% control of his facial muscles, eventually.

John's defensive tactics training was extensive. The board that reviewed the video of the incident stated John responded exactly as he was trained.

Jamie is a survivor, too.

She did everything the serial rapist asked. But the self-defense course she took never gave her a technique for the way this 234 lb brute held her on the floor of her apartment. When she said she'd do whatever he wanted, he responded by punching her face and breaking her jaw. From there it got worse.

After 3 reconstructive surgeries, she eventually recovered from the beating, but not from the trauma of rape.

Her self-defense training had great techniques and real life scenarios. Hell, it even had an instructor in a padded suit attacking them, one she could hit as hard as she wanted.

And yet she still fell victim to this violent attack.

All of these people are survivors. They lived after a vicious, unprovoked encounter with real violence. But are their lives what they were before the attacks? What they've suffered should be enough to convince you: survival is not enough.

What Went Wrong?

So what was lacking in the training of these three survivors?

I've asked this question many times before, and I always hear two responses: mind-set and will. Mind-set is by far was the most popular response. Most who respond with this answer feel the survivors' training failed to develop the proper mind-set to survive and win these encounters.

Those that offer “will” as the lacking ingredient usually state that the training of the three survivors failed to provide them the “will” to use violence.

Makes sense, right? There’s only one problem: no one knows what it really means. They’re buzzwords, and when you’re faced with real violence, they’re worse than useless.

All the talk about ‘mind-set’ in this industry makes everyone sound the same. Most people still believe you need to be in a certain ‘state’ to be able to respond to violence. Color charts are drafted and everyone feels good about how to get ready to ‘kick some ass.’

And then there’s ‘will.’

Some people stated that the three survivors lacked the will to do injury and this was a failure of their training. But how do you train will? Think about how useful will is when it comes to things like losing weight or working out. Besides, when you consider the situation, all three of these survivors were in desperate situations. In the midst of these horrible, vicious attacks, they almost certainly had the will to survive.

A lot of people will lecture you on mind-set and come up with numerous drills to ‘instill the will to kill.’ But neither mind-set nor will is what lacked in any of the survivors’ training. In fact, large amounts of the training in all three of the survivors’ cases focused on developing proper mind-set and will. But neither was there when they needed it.

That is because mind-set and will are not training objectives. Proper training develops everything needed to survive and win. The problem is there is very little proper training offered to the general public.

The point here isn’t to belittle these three survivors. They did everything right according to how they’d been trained. The problem, then, isn’t with the survivors: it’s with their training.

Making the Critical Choices

At this point, it's time for you to make a decision. Do you want to survive a violent encounter, or do you want to win? Because in the moment when someone comes at you, you won't have time to consider mind-set, will, or any of the other things self-defense instructors commonly go on about. You'll only have time to act.

If you're still with me, you're probably starting to realize that proper training is the key to becoming comfortable with violence. When I say comfortable, I don't mean that you should look forward to or seek to engage in violent encounters. What I mean is, you need to be comfortable using violence in a violent situation the same way you're comfortable swimming in a drowning situation: as a tool to survive.

The Most Common Mistakes People Make When Picking a Self-Defense System

So now that you're ready to learn how to defend yourself—how to win a violent encounter, not just survive it—how do you decide what to do? How can you avoid a program that trains you in the same mistakes the three survivors above learned to make?

When it comes to self-defense systems, there are a lot of choices out there. You've got everything from karate at the local Y to aggressive combat sports to 'hardcore' hand-to-hand combat types on the Internet. With all these choices, how is someone supposed to know what really works and what doesn't? Here are the most common mistakes most people make when confronted with choosing a self-defense system:

1. Picking a system that takes years to be usable.

If a system won't work for you until you're a Black Belt, it's not going to do you any good next week, let alone tomorrow. If it's going to take you a couple of years to learn, then you'd better

pray you don't run into trouble until then. And let's be honest: that time frame is just not realistic. In a world that's dangerous right now, you need something that's useful to you right now, not five years down the road.

2. *Picking a system that requires constant practice.*

You never forget how to ride a bike or swim; no matter how long you go without doing it. If you're going to bet your life on a self-defense system, it better work the same way. It does you no good to learn something that requires constant upkeep. Sure, it'll work great as long as you're still training, but what about after you stop? What if it's been a couple of years since you hit the mats? You'll be more than rusty: you could wind up dead! If knowing how to swim means you know how to save yourself from drowning for the rest of your life, doesn't it make sense that a self-defense system should work the same way?

You might think: "But I'm not going to stop training!" Well, that's fine for right now. But you have to plan for all eventualities in the future.

3. *Picking a system based on 'cool' techniques.*

The instructor puts on an impressive, spellbinding demo. He's flying all over the place, doing all sorts of amazing and complicated things—heck, he even broke a block of ice with his head! Naturally, you want what he has: that ability, that catlike grace, that power. The only question you have to ask is, when was the last time you saw a serial killer do anything fancy? Or what about in a prison riot? Nothing fancy there—just brutal simplicity. When trying to figure out what to do in a violent situation, look to the people who have the most experience with it: the common criminal element. They know you don't need empty techniques that look 'cool' to get the job done. In violence it's never about how it looks: it's what it does that makes the difference. Make sure your chosen system can tell the two apart

and show you how to get the job done, no matter what you look like doing it.

4. *Picking a system based on competition.*

Physical competition in and of itself is a wonderful thing. There's nothing quite like pitting yourself against another person to see who's faster, stronger, or more cunning. There's no high like besting others while basking in the camaraderie that skilled competition brings.

But when your life is on the line, you can't afford to compete: the stakes are just too high. Violence is, by definition, unfair. If all of your training is for fair competition, you've put yourself at an unfair disadvantage on the street. I can guarantee that the criminal who has decided to stab you in the neck isn't going to play by the rules.

5. *Picking a system that doesn't take into account all body types.*

Be honest: are you in the best shape of your life? Even if you are, all it takes is a couple of years behind a desk, and a couple of kids, to end up like the rest of us. If you're training somewhere where the instructor, all his senior students, and the best of the rest in the class look like a gang of clones, you can bet that the system favors that body type. Whether it's tall and lean with long legs at a Karate dojo or shorter and solidly stout in a Judo club, you're only going to do well there if you look just like them. If you don't, well, it's not going to work so well for you. Your best bet is training that fits any body type, no matter how tall, short, small or heavy. If you see people of all shapes and sizes practicing, you can bet it'll work for you.

6. *Picking a system based on a hit movie.*

You'd be amazed how often this happens! Sure, we'd all like to fight like Spiderman ... and while we're at it, why don't we fly

like Superman, too? Movies are, by definition, fake. Anything you see in a movie is choreographed and computer-generated. It's all a set-up: they had to do 800 takes and edit the crap out of it to get the final result that wowed you in the theater. In real life violence, you only get one take, and there's no movie magic to save the day. Keep the fantasy in the theater and off the mats.

7. *Picking a system that only works when everyone agrees to play by certain rules.*

This can mean anything from competition (where the contestants are bound by rules) to training in prearranged patterns that never change. The problem with this kind of training is that in violence, anything goes. Set patterns get shattered and that one scenario you trained and trained for will go down in the most unexpected way possible, taking you completely by surprise. Make sure any system you choose takes into account the chaos that exists naturally in violent conflict.

8. *Picking a system that doesn't look like the violence you see on the news.*

If it doesn't look like the violence you see on the news, it's not going to work off the mats or outside the dojo. Period.

9. *Picking a system that doesn't account for multiple attackers.*

The biggest fallacy out there is that violent assault is going to go down just like an episode of heroic single combat: you vs. him. Statistics show it's much more likely to be you, him, and all his friends. Make sure any system you choose can show you how to deal with everyone who's going to be there.

10. *Picking a system that doesn't account for common, modern weaponry (knives, sticks, guns).*

This is the killer. Nothing is more surprising than bringing a 'spinning backhand' to a gunfight. Or expecting a stand-up boxing match only to get knifed in the process. Every system

can show you how to deal with a single unarmed guy. Fewer systems can show you how to deal with a stick or knife. Only a couple even bother to bring up the gun. You need to make sure you find the one that handles all of these things at once, no matter how many people you're dealing with or what they're packing.

Chapter Three

Inside the Criminal Mind

“Although we must change the ways we protect our country, we must also guard against policies that appear attractive but offer little real protection and may even impede our ability to protect ourselves.” —Richard Burr

So now you know how not to train for self-defense. Unfortunately, the best way to train for self-defense is to look to the people who are going to be perpetrating the violence: the criminals themselves. The idea of fighting like a criminal might not sound very appealing, but believe me, when you’re face to face with someone who’s ready and willing to kill you, you want to have all the advantages you can get.

Your biggest problem is that you want to go in playing by the rules. But don’t worry—it’s not your fault. You’re sane. You’re civilized. Your humanity is intact. You’ve got empathy, and heck, the rules are really, really nice. They’ve done a lot for us—humans couldn’t have walked on the Moon without the rules to help us all work together.

The predators in our society look at life a little ... differently. Sociopathy is a broad term that covers everything from people with personality disorders to psychotics. That doesn’t really matter to you, though: what matters is that this person’s brain isn’t working the same way as the normal, civilized people you meet at work, next door, or at the supermarket.

The main characteristic of a sociopath? A complete lack of awareness about morality and social behavior. That means that a criminal not only won’t abide by rules of fair play, there’s a good chance he won’t even give them a passing thought. You have to understand that this guy will not be worried about pulling dirty

tricks, playing fair, or shoving a knife through your eye. He has one thing in mind, and the ends justify the means—even if the “ends” are nothing more than the ten bucks in your wallet or soothing his savage pride.

Until you can approach violence the same way, he will always have an edge. You do understand about morality and fair play. But in the moment your life is in danger, you have to shut that awareness off and go after him—any way possible.

Isn't It Dangerous to Put This Information Out There?

One of the most common objections I hear from people is, “What if criminals get a hold of this information? Isn't it dangerous to give them access to the kind of information they need to kill and maim other people?”

Well, this would be an excellent objection except for one thing: They already know how to use violence to get what they want!

Do they have all the principles and methods included in this book? No. But they have no problem using violence to get what they want and they know the critical factor that makes violence work: intent!

As I've stated numerous times in my newsletter and DVD products—to be successful with violence you need zero training but you must have intent. If you have years of 'training' and no intent, you lose every time.

Criminals don't waste time learning to use the tool better—they rely on intent alone.

Information I've released has created a fundamental change in the way good people go about truly protecting themselves. At first, for some, the information is uncomfortable, even shocking. But it rings true. My job is not to worry that the criminals will get a hold of this info, but to worry that good people won't. They are the ones

who truly need this program. All a criminal would do is look at it and nod his head in agreement.

An Inside Perspective

This is a perspective on the criminal mind offered to me by a criminal defense attorney:

“I am an attorney, my job is communication. I represent criminals. They do not communicate in the same way as we do. They do not communicate from the same set of social beliefs.

A person under stress, such as a knife to the neck, may not communicate well with adrenaline pounding through the system and blood retreating from the frontal lobes of the brain (where 10,000 years of human civilization lives) to the central brain (where fight, flight or freeze lives).

People blurt out the most inappropriate things. Recently a journalist was being kidnapped in Iraq, she wanted to say that she was a journalist; instead she blurted out, ‘I’m a vegetarian.’

The fact that she thought either phrase would help indicates that she did not understand the concept of the operation. A detachment of Marines solved the problem. If all one has is communications skills, then one must work those words for all they are worth. My first choice remains the equivalent of a detachment of Marines.” - Kevin Jamison

The key here is that the criminal is not operating from the same set of social beliefs you are. You are a well-adjusted, socialized person. Deep down, you believe that there’s a way to resolve your

problems without anyone getting hurt.

A criminal doesn't.

As social, sane people, we tend to think of violence in social terms—either by framing everything as the school yard David and Goliath or by believing that if we take our social rules with us into the void place we can somehow hang onto our humanity and therefore not stoop to the criminal level.

We tend to think of violence as a force continuum where if he yells at you, you can yell at him. If he pushes you, then you can push him. If he throws a punch, then you can hit back. We also believe that the worst kind of violence, that which results in death, happens somewhere out at the end of this progression, if it gets pushed far enough.

The problem is that it is not necessary to get 'worked up' or walk through all these various steps to get to serious crippling injury or death; punching someone in the throat or stabbing them in the neck is readily available at all times, in all places.

This is what the criminal sociopath knows.

Can someone ramp up through all the steps and whip themselves into a frothy frenzy that ends in killing? Yes. But what the criminal sociopath knows is that he can get there instantaneously. He can go from smiling and shrugging to stabbing in the amount of time it takes him to reach into his pocket. And the really scary part is so can you.

Violence is always available; you just have to choose to do it. You don't need to walk through the social dance one step at a time to get there. You don't need to get ready, or drop into a fighting stance, or give a verbal warning. You can swing the tool of violence whenever you wish, at a moment's notice. And this is exactly what you must do in the face of asocial violence in order to survive.

Why are the Thugs Still Winning?

The reason thugs are still using violence, and still winning, certainly isn't that they're smarter. It isn't even that they're stronger—many people who get beaten up and robbed on the streets every day are fitter and stronger than their drug-addicted assailants. The reason muggers win is that they have power. They know what they want, and they know that if they use every violent means at their disposal, they'll get it. They know that:

- If they pull out a knife, you're going to get scared.
- If they put a gun to your head, you're going to freeze.
- If they threaten to kill you, you'll give them anything they demand.

They understand how to use violence in order to cause the effect they want to achieve.

Am I advocating that same approach? No. Learning how to use violence doesn't turn you into a criminal; it changes the balance of power. When you are proficient in the use of this simple system, instead of a threat from a violent stranger causing you to suffer pain, loss or even death, you will be able to cause serious injury to the man, resulting in his complete incapacitation.

You'll understand that if you injure a man in a certain way, you can precisely predict the result. Instead of doubt preventing you from taking action, you'll have the confidence to make the split-second decisions you need to stay alive during the most stressful seconds of your life. When you've undergone this sort of training, you'll have the power—the power to protect yourself and those you love.

Taking Off The Gloves

In violent conflict there are no rules. No part of the body is out of bounds and there are no gloves to soften the blows. Violence

isn't like the choreographed dance moves you see on TV shows and movies. Each side doesn't take turns to swing and parry. One side strikes and the other side gets injured. And usually, the side that causes the first serious injury wins.

When you know how to use violence as a survival tool, you'll be the one doing the striking, the one causing the injuries.

Criminals are not in it for competition. They are committed to a radically different idea: injuring people. In the society we live in, the focus for the law-abiding citizen has been on learning how to keep violence from happening to us—how to deal with a violent attack, how to keep a serial rapist at bay, how to keep the minimum safe distance, how to break the hold and run away.

The myriad techniques available all claim to work, yet never cause debilitating trauma. It's easy to see why you'd want to know hundreds of different ways to keep someone from hurting you. Yet each and every technique you learn has you struggling to survive, without the surety of success the criminal enjoys. The criminal doesn't succeed because he knows how to deal with violence. He succeeds because his specialty is dealing out violence.

Chapter Four

Antisocial vs. Asocial Violence

“Though defensive violence will always be ‘a sad necessity’ in the eyes of men of principle, it would be still more unfortunate if wrongdoers should dominate just men.” — Saint Augustine

If you listen to people recount their experiences with violence, you’ll quickly find that they fall into two distinct groups: those who have survived a true life-or-death confrontation and those who participated in violence as a kind of sport or game.

The first group rarely speaks about the subject. When they choose to share the experience, you’ll notice that they are usually brutally honest, and almost always emphasize the fear of the situation. They make it clear that they were forced into action because they had no acceptable alternative. There is no gloating over their surviving the experience, and though many acted heroically, they don’t see it that way. They see themselves as fortunate to have survived and they hope never to be in that situation ever again.

Participants in social aggression, however, often revel in retelling the exploit where “they kicked his ass.” You’ll find yourself sitting through a play-by-play and listening to trash-talk about the other party. These people also give the impression they are ready to participate again should they ever be called upon to defend their honor, a parking space, or a spilled drink after happy hour.

Why the different responses? The first group came in contact with that ultimate specter: unavoidable life-or-death violence. No choice, no retreat, simply fight or die. In other words, the situation wasn’t fun. They dealt with it and moved on.

The second group chose violence. They took a situation that was not life threatening and chose to respond with violence. This group enjoyed using violence to gain dominance. It produced a base human reaction of control over another in the pecking order.

Now, that doesn't mean the other guy wasn't "asking for it," so to speak, or that the situation couldn't have escalated to a life-or-death situation. But in this case, using violence as a response was a deliberate choice.

People choose to use violence when they let their egos rule the situation. That's why a victory is enjoyable—it's an ego boost. The unavoidable use of violence produces a very different outcome: the desire to not participate in it ever again.

Raw violence is not something I wish on anyone, but I teach its use and methodology because when you need it you can't have enough knowledge of the subject. And quite frankly, the more competent I make you in that subject, the less likely you are to waste your time choosing to use violence in a social situation.

Antisocial Violence

The violence that comes from social posturing is avoidable; it is often loud, dramatic, and instantly recognizable. You get to see it coming. And that means you can dodge it if you choose to.

If you don't choose to (or cannot) leave, these sorts of problems can be handled with the social tools we're all familiar with. We've all talked our way out of a bad situation—you wouldn't have made it this far in life if you weren't good at negotiating. We all know how to calm someone down. We all know how to capitulate. We also all know how to act like a jerk and add fuel to the fire and turn an argument into a shouting match, a shouting match into a fist fight. The important point here is that in social situations, you have a choice.

Antisocial violence is also eminently survivable. The typical goal in a bar fight is not to kill anyone—it's simply to best the other person and dominate them physically. Does this mean you can't be killed in a bar fight? Of course not. What I'm saying is that the death rate in the typical Saturday night punch-up is far lower than one would expect—and most fatalities are accidental. You can get killed in a bar fight, or an argument over a parking space, or any other trivial social status confrontation. It's just highly unlikely.

Asocial Violence

Asocial violence, on the other hand, cannot be handled with social tools and is far less survivable. Negotiating with a serial killer is like arguing with a bullet: if it's coming your way, words are not going to deflect it. If someone has decided to stab you to death, capitulation only makes their work easier.

Confusing the Two

So how do you know whether you're dealing with antisocial or asocial violence? Once you understand the difference between the two, it's really as easy as telling a peacock from a tiger. One involves posturing and ego, the other is all about survival. The big problem arises when we confuse the two—when we don't know there's a difference between competition and destruction, between antisocial and asocial violence.

Think about a bar fight. It looks and sounds like it does because it is a display, meant to be seen and heard by all those in attendance. The participants have no intentions of seriously injuring each other; in fact, if you interrupted them and offered them handguns to shoot at each other, they'd probably think you were insane.

Asocial violence is brutally streamlined by comparison. It starts quietly, suddenly, and unmistakably. It's knocking a man down and kicking him to death. It's one person beating another with a tire iron

until he stops moving. It's stabbing someone 14 times. It's pulling the gun and firing round after round into him until he goes down and then stepping in close to make sure the last two go through the brain.

If you're a sane, socialized person, those images make you physically ill. That's because you recognize them for what they are: asocial violence. The breakdown of everything we humans hold dear, the absence of our favorite construct, the very fabric of society itself. It's an awful place where there's no such thing as a 'fair fight' or honor. It's the place where there are no rules and anything goes. It's the place where people kill and get killed.

The Essential Differences Between Antisocial and Asocial Violence

There's a short and easy way to sum this up:

Antisocial Violence:

- Is avoidable
- Is survivable
- Can be solved using social skills

Asocial Violence:

- Is lethal
- Is unaffected by social skills
- Requires decisive action.

Antisocial and Asocial Acts

Once people understand these critical differences, they rarely confuse antisocial and asocial violence. There's still the risk, though, that they may confuse antisocial and asocial actions. Antisocial actions are threatening and potentially dangerous, but there's still the possibility of dealing with them through basic social skills.

Asocial actions, on the other hand, are kill or be killed.

Essentially, the difference revolves around the idea of communication. Antisocial behavior is in the realm of communication (albeit the bad end of communication). This means that though the other guy is threatening you (for example, holding a knife to neck and demanding your valuables), he is still attempting, in the crudest way possible, to communicate with you. Holding a knife to your throat and saying, “Give me your money” is still in the realm of communication. If it was a truly asocial act, he wouldn’t bother telling you what he wanted. He would simply take it.

If you use your social skills towards antisocial behavior you may be able to diffuse the situation and essentially ‘make the bad man go away’ by giving him what he wants and then hoping he chooses to honor this questionable contract and leave. I’m sure you notice the qualifiers in there, and that’s because there’s an inherent risk in trying to reason with someone in this situation. There is still a possibility of resolving this situation without violence. If this is how it goes down, then we would say this was a successful use of your social skills to handle antisocial behavior.

However, if at any time the situation devolves to physical violence, it ceases to be in the realm of antisocial and is in the realm of asocial violence. In this realm, there is no communication—only action. The goal is not to continue dialogue but to end the interaction.

The only way to gain control of this situation is for you to be the one successfully using the tool of violence. The only way to be guaranteed success with this tool is to cause an objective injury on the other guy and continue to do so until he is nonfunctional.

There are no gray areas in antisocial vs. asocial. If you have a choice whether to respond with violence, then that situation is in the realm of social/antisocial. When you have no choice then it is asocial. In other words, if it’s fight or die, you’re dealing with asocial violence.

Chapter Five

When To Engage

“The world is filled with violence. Because criminals carry guns, we decent law-abiding citizens should also have guns. Otherwise they will win and the decent people will lose.”
—James Earl Jones

The reason I spend so much time on the difference between social and asocial violence is because it's absolutely essential to know what kind you're dealing with. Some people think just because I train the use of violence as the ultimate survival tool that it means I advocate responding to any situation with violence. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Here's a classic example of a trained reaction to avoidable violence. Matt, one of my Mastery students posted this sad story on our TFT Mastery Forum:

“In Dallas we have a famous little nightspot called the Gypsy Tea Room. You can see acts like Ben Harper, Edie Brickel, Old 97's, etc. “

“Recently, a father of two teenage girls decided to take his girls to an end-of-summer show before they left for college. Before the show was over he ended up having a severed spinal cord injury and can feel nothing from the neck down. Why?”

“Needless social violence.”

“He engaged a ‘skinhead’ in a verbal altercation because the skinhead made a comment to one of his daughters. This led to male posturing, yelling, etc. And then the skinhead opened his ‘toolbox of violence’ first and pummeled the guy to the floor.”

“As the father was on the floor the skinhead stomped down on his face and severed the man’s spinal cord somewhere between C1-C5. This all occurred right in front of his two daughters.”

“Situations like this remind me of the many reasons I thank God TFT came into my life.”

“Why?”

“Most people would think that I would say this because if I were this father I would have kicked the skinhead’s ass because of my training.”

“WRONG!”

“Because of what I learned from TFT I would not have engaged the skinhead in any verbal altercation. If the skinhead tried to start a verbal altercation I would have gotten my girls and myself out of the club immediately. All the while trying to look like a coward—the wimp.”

“Don’t get me wrong; if the situation were going to become violent I would have made it very violent. But, more than likely, simply leaving the club would have saved this man a lifetime of paralysis and spared his daughters from witnessing this horrific act.”

“TFT gives us a plan, choices, and many tools to pull out of the toolbox. As cliché as it may sound, life is about the choices we make. Thank you, TFT, for the education that you’ve given myself and countless others in order that we may make the right choices when it come to violence.”

“The father is a local high-end trim carpenter and has a home in a very wealthy part of Dallas. The club that he was hurt in, along with the band, had a fund-raising 5k run for him this weekend. The skinhead fled to California and was arrested later that week.”

“I firmly believe that the skinhead’s stomp to the face was merely intended to cause cosmetic damage not severe the man’s

spinal cord.”

“The skinhead knew how to use violence as a tool but clearly did not understand targets and injury to those targets.”

“I am constantly amazed that we get the question ‘does this stuff work?’ from many of the students. This ‘stuff’ works far better than they understand. Violence is at work everyday, everywhere.”

This story, in all its horror, graphically illustrates a key point. When violence is the answer, it’s the only answer. At that point, if you don’t know how to use it then you’re screwed—and very likely dead!

But since it rarely is the answer, if you don’t know when to use it, then you’re equally screwed (and may wish you were dead)!

“So then I took my thumb and I dug his eyeball right out of his skull.”

Some of you might be cringing at the above statement. Some of you might think it’s unnecessary exaggeration, or something you didn’t want to hear.

But that statement is exactly, word-for-word, what a Master Instructor stunned participants with at a recent live training in San Diego after he’d repeatedly gotten the question, “... how do I know when I should use what you’re teaching?”

See, if you want to know whether the situation warrants extreme violence, take the situation you’re suggesting and add that phrase to the end of it.

Try it out with these two examples:

1. ***“The drunk just flipped me off and told me to #\$%@ myself, so then I took my thumb and I dug his eyeball right out of his skull.”***

2. *“As I turned, the gangbanger stabbed me, cutting me in the ribs, so then I took my thumb and I dug his eyeball right out of his skull.”*

Put that way, it’s pretty obvious which situation warrants the response. If you can’t finish your “self defense” question with that phrase then it’s not a situation violence can help with. Period.

Why? Because I teach how to do one thing and one thing only: how to completely shut off another human being. It’s what I mean when I say “using violence as a survival tool.” It’s a limited tool, for sure, but one that’s necessary (and priceless) if your life is on the line.

When To Act

It’s a romantic notion—using a combat sport or martial art to ‘better’ a bad guy—and one that’s far more seductive to think about than gouging the eye out of the socket of some guy who comes at you with a knife. But you have to leave the romance on the movie theater floor and deal with the reality of violence as it’s practiced in everyday life.

Hopefully, you’ll never have to use the kind of violence I’m talking about. But if you’re ever in doubt about whether you should use it or not, remember the advice from above.

Using violence to solve social problems is like using dynamite to open your car door. It’ll do the job, but it’ll cause a whole heap of other problems. Violence has nothing to do with communication. It’s not part of the negotiations that form the vast bulk of personal interaction. It’s the last resort, when communication isn’t an option and it’s injure or be injured. Violence is what you use the moment you feel threatened.

If you realize it’s possible to talk your way out of a difficult situation, that should probably be your first choice. Often, an

aggressive person will put on a show to dominate without actually resorting to violence. They'll make themselves look bigger, scream obscenities or issue threats. Sometimes, they're just trying to intimidate in the hope that you'll back down. Sometimes, they're psyching themselves up for violence. You'll have to decide and act if you feel there's a real threat. Once you decide to act, act immediately.

If you don't believe a problem can be solved with language and diplomacy, say nothing. Don't look them in the eye or engage in conversation. When you enter into a conversation with a threatening person, you enter a gray zone in which it's much harder to disengage and strike the first blow. Leave if you wish to and if you can. Violence isn't always the answer, but when it is the answer, it's the only answer.

Use violence when you have no other choice. And once you start, you're not done until you finish it on your terms.

The Reality of Violence

That's what makes it so important to know when to use your training—that's why you should only use it as an absolute last resort. You aren't trying to disable your opponent. You're using violence as a tool to cause injury. That's because if you start with the intent of causing injury, then you have a much better chance of changing the situation in your favor. You control the situation as long as you continue to injure the other guy until he's nonfunctional.

Employing social skills to handle this type of scenario puts all the control of the outcome with the guy who has the knife to your neck. This is where you need to ask yourself, "How well do I read minds?" Because you don't want to get this one wrong!

There is a big difference using social skills to assuage the ego of the guy you spilled a drink on vs. trying to use them to deal with an individual who has no problem putting a knife to your neck.

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You don't need permission to use the tool of violence. It is available to you right now! The main thing I try to point out to you is you have the option to use this tool.

By learning the difference between antisocial behavior and asocial acts of violence, you end up avoiding a good deal of antisocial interactions. This by itself allows you to live a more peaceful, enjoyable life.

That's because you have no question what to do when violence is the only answer!

Chapter Six

Competition vs. Destruction

“Thus the metric system did not really catch on in the States, unless you count the increasing popularity of the nine-millimeter bullet.” —Dave Barry

We all know real violence when we see it: someone being shot in the head, or stabbed repeatedly, or kicked to death by a mob. We have a primal, visceral reaction to the real thing. It sickens us.

And yet, we can watch a bloody and grueling title bout with nothing but excitement, cheering for our favorite as the two fighters beat each other to the point of exhaustion.

What’s going on here?

It’s very simple, really, and has to do with the difference between social interaction and asocial violence.

Consider, for example, a schoolyard fight. The bully, who occupies a position of power high up on the social totem pole, is being challenged. If the kid manages to cow the bully and make him cry, the kid will gain social status while the bully will lose status. Everyone gathers around because it’s important to see who will be victorious, you want to associate yourself with the winner and shun the loser.

Such an upset, such a potential drastic change in the playground pecking order, is important to witness. The outcome of this event holds many repercussions for everyone in the social order. If the bully loses, he and his toadies will see their power eroded; kids will be less likely to hand over their lunch money. The kid who bested him will be a hero and automatically rise above the bully in social regard. If the bully prevails, the status quo is not only maintained,

but reinforced. Once again, it's extremely important, as a member enmeshed in this social order, to witness the contest and its outcome.

But what about a school shooting? No one gathers around to watch that. That's because a shooting is inherently asocial, that is, we instantly recognize that it has nothing to do with communication and there will be no change in the social order. There will only be mayhem, death, and misery. As such it holds no interest for the witnesses; it holds only terror.

This is what I mean when I speak of a divide between social aggression and asocial violence. They are two very different interactions with very different expected outcomes. And confusing one for the other can get you killed.

Another way of looking at it: one is a competition while the other is only about destruction. Competitions have rules. Destruction is just about who gets it right first.

Think about it—how does what you use from (insert chosen combat sport or martial art here) compare against, say, a guy trying to brain you with a tire iron (violence)?

If your response produced an injury, then wherever you got your info is irrelevant. It worked and you survive! Who cares if it was learned from combat sport X or martial art Y. What matters is, it worked within the standard of violence.

But most of the time, that isn't the case. The problem of attempting to train for competition is that it severely affects your ability to cause destruction.

For the purposes of achieving ranks, winning tournaments, and bettering your athletic skills—competition is the way to go. It takes tremendous dedication and discipline to go through the ranks and compete against other world-class athletes in your chosen sport/art.

But surviving asocial criminal violence is different. Here you must harness the power of destruction. Violence is about shutting

down the human body, not scoring more points or making the other guy submit. You need to know the weak areas of the human body and how to use your brain to command the ‘tools’ you choose to destroy the target area and get an injury. You then continue this simple process until the other guy is nonfunctional.

The thing that is so disturbing to the competition crowd is this: many highly skilled combat sport/martial arts athletes are murdered by less athletically skilled (and often untrained) individuals.

Does that mean the competition crowd is “weaker” than the destruction crowd? No—they just are using different methods. What’s important is understanding which method is appropriate to a given situation.

Why Violence Isn’t Competition

Why is it that the violence you see on the news never looks like a sparring match? Where is the back-and-forth, the cool techniques? Why is it always one guy (or guys) doing it to another guy? Why doesn’t the guy taking the beating fight back?

If the true nature of violence is one person doing it to another, knocking them down and then stomping them on the ground, why does most modern martial arts and combat sports training look nothing like what you see on the news?

The answer comes down to ‘The Rules.’

In the ring, the goal is to score points and get your opponent to submit, using everything allowed in the rules. Things that are against the rules are usually awful anyway: eye gouging, throat stomping, groin kicking and other ‘low blows’ and ‘cheap shots.’ We can’t have these if we want to keep competition fair—if we want the winner to be the one with the most skill, strength and heart. After all, one ‘cheap shot’ could make it so a smaller, untrained man could win, because no one can handle losing an eye.

On the street, however, ‘low blows’ and ‘cheap shots’ are where people start—and finish—violence. It’s as if they’ve thrown The Rules out the window and refuse to play by any rules at all. The average criminal is just not interested in competition or ‘winning’ in the way we like to think of it. The average criminal is interested in only one thing: taking people out.

This is why untrained criminals can take out highly trained Black Belts. The Black Belt spent most, if not all, of his time training for competition, getting stronger, learning new techniques and working very hard in the ring: in other words, following the Rules the entire time. The criminal, on the other hand, didn’t train and probably couldn’t name a single rule. All he knows is that if you stab someone in the neck, they tend not to get back up.

When they meet each other on the street, where there are no rules, the Black Belt is in serious trouble because he’s used to playing by The Rules. In fact, The Rules have always protected him from harm. In the ring his opponent was never allowed to stab him in the neck. But outside the ring, anything goes. And the only person who is used to that lack of rules is the criminal. Someone’s going to get stabbed in the neck—and I bet you can guess who it is.

If you use destruction in a competition environment, you’ll be disqualified and have little chance of advancing in your chosen martial art or combat sport career. No one will want to train you or work out with you, and you’ll find yourself blackballed from combat sport competitions.

On the other hand, use competition skills in a destruction environment and you have a good chance ending up maimed, crippled, or killed. If you think you can somehow switch between competition and destruction, don’t be surprised if you find yourself on the highway littered with the maimed, crippled, and killed who also thought that way.

Here are the steps you need to take if you don’t want it to be you:

- Make sure your training looks just like the news
- Make sure your training works when The Rules are not in play
- Make sure your training includes all the ‘low blows’ and ‘cheap shots.’

Does your training cover all three of these? Be honest with yourself—lying about it can get you killed. If the answer is ‘yes,’ then you’re learning ‘effective self-defense’ that will work anywhere, at any time. If the answer is ‘no,’ you’ll do just fine in the ring—but what about everywhere else?

Going Against the Rules: Using the 31 Ultimate Fighting Championship Fouls as the Basis for Operational Success in Violence

Believe it or not, most of the 31 UFC fouls are excellent guides as to what you should do in a violent situation. There are a few exceptions (a few are iffy, and two are flat-out wrong), but in general, to survive a violent situation, you need to go against the rules.

Before you cringe at the following no-holds-barred consideration of violence, remember that we are talking here about a life-or-death situation—one from which all other options have been removed. At that point, your goal is survival, and you’ll do whatever it takes to live.

Of the 31 fouls, these are the ones that stand out as a blueprint for what to do—and what not to do—in violent conflict:

Definite Yeses

1. Eye gouging of any kind. One of the three targets that do not require body weight to injure. Don’t avoid this because some silly “rule” says not to.
2. Hair pulling. See 12, below.

3. Groin attacks of any kind. The second of three that do not require body weight.
4. Putting a finger into any orifice or into any cut or laceration on an opponent. By itself, this is just discomfort. But if we take it to mean ‘rolling him over with his broken elbow’ then I’m all for it.
5. Small joint manipulation. As long as this is really code for ‘breaking fingers,’ I’m all for it. Personally, if I were going to use code I’d say something like ‘forcible removal of all future piano concertos.’
6. Striking to the spine or the back of the head. This is going straight for the central nervous system. Serious, life-long disability or death could result from head or spine trauma. Such things are undesirable in the ring (that’s why they have a rule making it off-limits) but can mean the difference between life and death on the street.
7. Striking downward using the point of the elbow. This is contraindicated due to ‘accidental’ body weight transfer. Downward means gravity-assisted, which means falling body weight; using the elbow rather than the lower arm or hand means the removal of muscle power. This changes it from a punch to a body-weighted strike. The point of the elbow is the smallest, hardest striking surface. Add it all up and you have people ‘accidentally’ doing an ideal strike. Line it up with a target (oh, like the spine or neck of a grounded man) and you have a guaranteed fight-ender.
8. Throat strikes of any kind, including, without limitation, grabbing the trachea. The last of the ‘Anti-Wrasslin Trifecta’. No body weight required to cause a serious injury.
9. Clawing, pinching or twisting the flesh. By itself, this does not make the cut, as it’s simply painful. As an adjunct to something vicious (like a throw or joint break) it’s wonderful.

To the trained operator the human body is like a jumpsuit with handles all over it. Except that the handles are all sewn into the bones.

10. Grabbing the clavicle. See above. By itself this is merely painful. It only really becomes useful if you look at the clavicle as a handle on the battering ram you're going to try to splinter the door with—if by 'battering ram' you mean 'head' and by 'door' you mean planet Earth.
11. Kicking the head of a grounded opponent.
12. Kneeing the head of a grounded opponent.
13. Stomping a grounded opponent. Again, the 'accidental' inclusion of body weight, driven home by leg-strength and front-ended by a part of your body that's meant for rough business (your foot). Could result in actual, fight-ending injury.
14. Kicking to the kidney with the heel. Your doctor would tell you to never, ever do this. A ruptured kidney is no joke—which makes it a huge advantage in a life-or-death situation.
15. Spiking an opponent to the canvas on his head or neck. Again, 9 out of 10 doctors scream 'NO.' Especially if by 'canvas' you mean 'mall parking lot'.
16. Throwing an opponent out of the ring or fenced area. Okay, bear with me on this one. I take it to mean 'throwing into a not-nice place' like a fire hydrant or a plate glass window. Or into traffic. I'm not joking.
17. Holding the shorts or gloves of an opponent. Falls under the aegis of 4, 12 & 13, above. Useless in isolation, brilliant in conjunction with a throw.
18. Engaging in an unsportsmanlike conduct that causes an injury to an opponent. Goes without saying.

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19. Holding the ropes or the fence. Typically employed when stomping or kicking a downed man. Adds leverage and improves follow-through.
20. Attacking an opponent on or during the break.
21. Attacking an opponent who is under the care of the referee.
22. Attacking an opponent after the bell has sounded the end of the period of unarmed combat. AKA 'attacking unexpectedly'. But isn't that the best time?
23. Flagrantly disregarding the instructions of the referee. Violence is the time to jettison those pesky social mores. You are free to do as you will, beholden only the physical laws of the universe.
24. Interference by the corner. Yes, your mates are free to pitch in. Many hands make light work, and all that.

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25. Butting with the head. Goes without saying. Can it work? Sure. Ask a Scotsman ... from a distance. Is it a good idea? Hardly.
26. Biting. Three little words: BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS. Can it work? Sure. As an omega option. I bet you ten bucks you can figure out something better to do first.
27. Fish hooking. I actually know a guy who was in a headlock and went for the eyes and missed and ended up fish hooking the perp instead. It did make the perp let go. This is anecdotal and your mileage may vary. The danger of getting your fingers chewed on should dissuade you.
28. Spitting at an opponent. If we mean the ol' sand in the eyes trick, then maaaybe. Still, I bet you can come up with something better.

29. Timidity, including, without limitation, avoiding contact with an opponent, intentionally or consistently dropping the mouthpiece or faking an injury. This one's iffy. I take it to mean 'social manipulation to gain advantage' (see 25-27, above). But that would only really apply in antisocial situations, wouldn't it?

FLAT-OUT NO WAY

30. Using abusive language in the ring or fenced area. Once you break that plane and cross over into violence, there is no communication.
31. Throwing in the towel during competition. You quit, you die. End of story.

The point is, real violence isn't a game. Real violence breaks all the rules. That means you'd better be ready to break them, too.

Not All Killers Are Quitters

Most of what goes on in martial arts and combat sports works because people quit. They quit because it hurts, or because they're exhausted, or because they start to listen to the little voice that's telling them everything will be a lot better if they'd just give in and give up. More often than not it's a combination of all these things, at once; the question gets asked often enough, with each blow, "Why don't you just quit?" until they hit that personal threshold and just can't take any more.

Any technique that isn't about career-ending, crippling injury is about compliance, about making the person submit. Convincing them to quit. This is fine when the outcome isn't critical, when what happens next is nice and social. It's great for competition and the dojo. In fact, without this, sport becomes impossible without sickening 'accidents'; the dojo runs out of students as they succumb, one by one, to the brutal endpoint of their training.

Relying on your ability to make people quit, to have a higher pain tolerance, better conditioning and an indomitable will—to outlast your foe while working him to the point where he caves—will get you killed in the place where those things don't matter. If your would-be murderer is a quitter at heart, chances are you'll be fine. But if he isn't ... if he doesn't care about pain, or how tired he is, and he lacks that little voice that the sane call caution, well, he's not going to quit. Unless you know how to remove choice from the equation, he's going to kill you. Even if it takes him a little bit of work to get you there.

If he's a killer, he knows it's not about making you quit. He knows it's not about technique, or speed, or strength. It's about results. He won't waste his time engaging or setting you up. He'll go straight for those results, breaking you, shutting you down to the point where there's nothing you can do—not even quit—he'll remove choice from the equation and treat you like meat to be butchered.

Your only hope is to know how to get those results, too; to know why those results happen so you can make them happen every single time, and get it done first. Toughness, bravado, ego, superior technique—these things mean nothing in violence. Going against a killer when the prize is your life is no time to hope for the best with a suitcase full of techniques you don't fully understand—techniques that you hope will work but can't articulate why they do. If you don't know, with surety, the result you're going to get, and why that result occurs, you're out of your league when it comes to violence. And in violence there are only two kinds of people: those who know what they're doing—precisely—and the dead.

The Terror of Competition, the Pleasure of Predation

A man approaches you on the street with a proposition: “See that guy over there?” He indicates a big, strapping fellow, his 6'4” frame enrobed in 300 lbs. of muscle. “He's coming over here to wrestle you to the ground and choke you out for a million dollars. If you can

pin him instead, I'll give you the million."

"B-but," you stammer, "I don't want to wrestle him!"

The man sniffs. "Doesn't matter—he wants the million. Here he comes—best of luck!"

How does it feel to suddenly have this contest thrust upon you? To have to worry about your performance, and how it will stack up to his experience level? For all you know, he could be very good at wrestling—and even if you, yourself, are no slouch in the ring, he's clearly way outside your weight class. And much, much stronger. As he begins to sprint toward you, you notice he's a lot faster, too.

How's it feel now?

Let's try a different tack:

Same set up, except the man says, "All you have to do is touch him, and I'll give you the million instead."

Feel any different?

How about if we qualify that touch a bit—"All you have to do is break something inside of him." And you'll get the million.

In the first case, the contest is sprung upon you, you're not prepared, you're being asked to compete with the man's physical size and athletic ability. You're being asked to perform at a level most of us can't reach. You're being asked to compete in such a way that is clearly unfair, and puts you at a disadvantage.

We could just as easily set up a scenario where you are suddenly tasked with debating international monetary policy, before an audience, with someone who may or may not be a Nobel laureate in economics. We've all got the basic tools, the components to compete in such a contest—we can speak out loud, we have experience with finances and money in general—and yet, the idea makes me sweat. Most of us can expect to get hammered and humiliated, everything

we say twisted back on us with a sneer and derisive laughter from the audience.

In the second case where, “All you have to do is touch him,” there is no performance pressure—we can all reach out and touch the guy, even if he wants to wrestle us. In fact, there’s really no way you can lose—how can he wrestle you down & choke you out without you touching him at some point? It’s so simple it’s ridiculous.

And sure, that ‘touch’ can easily be used to break something inside of him, as in the slightly more difficult scenario. We all know he can’t successfully wrestle you without you crushing his groin or gouging an eye at some point. Everything he would want to do just pulls you in nice and close to those delicate anatomical features. Another easy win.

All of the above highlights another distinct difference between competition and violence—that impending competition brings with it performance anxiety as you realize you will be required to pit your skill against unknown thresholds (what if he’s the better wrestler? or speaker?). It’s the worry that your meager skills will be outclassed.

When we remove the competition and go instead to a win condition that is not dependent on unknown thresholds (e.g., nothing about the other guy factors into the equation) there is no dread or anxiety.

Now, I know what you’re thinking—what about performance anxiety around getting violence done? Well, how anxious did you feel about merely touching the guy, above? Really? Outside of counting coup, did your anxiety increase when it was qualified as causing an injury (“...break something inside of him.”)? If the answer is yes, then you’re still looking at violence as competition.

Violence, as the absence of competition, has no performance anxiety component. It really is just touching, if we mean it in the same way that we would smash a soda can flat, or slam a car door, or break a stick on the curb. The physics and biomechanics involved

are all the same. Any considerations beyond that are imaginary. Hang ups, if you will.

As with pretty much everything in this work, the solution is mat time. It's the second best place to learn that competition has nothing to do with anything in violence, that size, speed and strength have no bearing on who wins and who dies. Those who still view violence as a form of competition, a high-stakes one, act hesitantly on the mats; they keep their distance (even when they think they're penetrating), flinch, hide and otherwise give poor reactions, and rarely employ body weight. They behave as if they are fundamentally frightened of what's going on. Which they are.

Those who have figured it out by physically burning the idea out of their heads with hours of mat time throw themselves into the work with great relish, applying themselves bodily to every problem presented them. The physical realization that violence is about a failure to compete, an end-run around competition, is liberating. Gone is the worry about being big enough, fast enough or strong enough. The other guy's skill counts for absolutely nothing. It's all about you, and only you. The other guy is prey to be taken, meat to be butchered. The pressure's off and you're free to do as you will. You're exercising your legacy as a predator—and by all accounts, predation is pleasurable.

Chapter Seven

All The Reasons Why You Can't

No sane person wants to be involved in violence. If you did, all you'd have to do is run outside your house and punch the first person you saw in the neck as hard as you could. Getting involved in a violent act is easy. The fact that you don't go looking for it is a testament to your civility, sociability, and sanity. Everybody's willing to cop to this.

But there's something more than basic humanity underlying your aversion to violence. I'm sure that if you sat down right now and made yourself a list of the top twenty reasons you don't want to get into a violent encounter, one or two would result from civility and the others would all come from the same source: fear. All of those excuses come down to the same thing: you are afraid of violence.

Now, don't take that the wrong way. There's nothing wrong with being afraid—a little fear is healthy, and to paraphrase Eddie Rickenbacker, America's top fighter ace in WWI, there is no courage without fear. What's wrong is lying to yourself about it. You come up with all the reasons you can't engage in violence, but what they really are is a smokescreen designed to protect your ego from becoming aware that you're scared. And there's a problem with lying to yourself: deep down, you know the truth. You're not actually saving your ego from anything, because you know you're lying to yourself inside.

But with a little effort and a lot of time, you can usually succeed in convincing your conscious mind that you're telling the truth—that it doesn't come down to fear but a host of other excuses. Sometimes it takes an outside source pointing out those fears before your conscious mind jibes with your unconscious and realizes the truth. So finally, collected in a single place (other than the inside of

your skull), here are all the reasons why you can't—and the truth behind them!

Physical Excuses

1. *I Don't Have Enough Training!* “I take classes in self-defense/martial arts/fighting, but I don't have enough days/months/years/belts/levels to be able to hurt someone.”

If only you had more time in, you'd be ready. Maybe next month. Maybe next year. The sad part is you typically don't get to pick when violence happens, so you're as ready as you're ever gonna be. Wouldn't it be nice if you could stop a criminal in his tracks and say, “Sorry, pal, I'm not ready for this yet. Can you come back in a few months?” You can't. And the fact that most people who successfully use violence (incarcerated criminals) have little or no training whatsoever blows this one out of the water.

2. *I'm Not Coordinated!*

I hear it all the time: “I can't move like you guys do!” Neither could Frank the Lawyer, the self-proclaimed Most Uncoordinated Person In The Universe. Stop me if you've heard this one before (and if you've trained with me live, you have). I trained Frank for about a year, a year spent lying awake at night agonizing over his personal safety. He was the only person I ever trained who I prayed to God would never, ever be called upon to use his training. He was the most uncoordinated person I'd ever met. He had two left feet—and that was just his hands. Fast forward five years and I get a phone call from him telling me how he took out two muggers, one of whom had a knife. And to quote him, “It was just like a movie.” This was the guy who convinced me that if he can do it, literally anyone can. Scratch that excuse.

3. I'm Physically Not Able!

The wheelchair-bound, the blind, a guy with one functional arm. What do they all have in common? Not this excuse. These are all people I trained—and they were more than capable of getting it done right. What's your excuse? A bum knee? I got two of 'em. You have no excuse. Even if it's as severe as the ones above, it didn't slow anybody I know down. It only slows you down if you want it to. Sure, there might be some challenges, but we work around them. Once you stop viewing, for example, blindness as a complete incapacitation and start seeing it as a hurdle to be overcome—just like a bad knee or a sprained elbow—you not only have what you need to start your training, you have what you need to seriously improve your entire life!

Mental Excuses

4. I'm Not Cut Out For It! Not cut out for violence?

Don't be ridiculous. If you're human, you are. You're born to it, built for it, and the only reason you're here is because all your ancestors did it to everything that got in their way. If we could bring back a Neanderthal I guarantee he'd piss his hides at the mere sight of you. You might not think of yourself as particularly scary, but then you've forgotten that your kind wiped his kind out. Whether you like it or not, everyone's cut out for the commission of violence. That guy you run into on the street isn't all that scary either—in fact, if you saw him begging in an alley, you'd probably feel a combination of pity and revulsion. What makes him scary is that he has the intent of hurting you. So all you need to make yourself scary is—you got it—the exact same intent.

5. I Could Never Do That To Someone!

Yeah, this is typically code for “Holy \$#!& I had no idea people did that to each other and so I'm going to go unilateral for the peace-thing with the idea that if I don't do it to anybody

then no one will ever do it to me.” You’d be amazed at what you can do when the social security blanket gets stripped away and it’s just the screech and sparks of your life rubbing up against the steel deck-plate of reality.

A gentleman once openly scoffed at me and said, “I could never kick someone in the throat when they were down.”

Really? Not even if they were down because they were picking up a gun to shoot you with? You really are very sporting about your own murder. Closed-casket funeral notwithstanding.

What he was really saying was that he was afraid. As we all are. But he was lying to me about it, as if I wouldn’t notice, and worst of all, he was lying to himself. What’s that? You think maybe he wasn’t afraid, but just valued fair play? Well, we all do. That’s normal. But the point I keep trying to drive home is that a real violent situation has nothing to do with fair play. It’s not a game, and if you try to observe the rules of polite society, you’re not “valuing fair play”—you’re making an egotistical statement about how much better you are than that criminal. Unfortunately, in this case, your statement won’t matter much to your grieving family at your funeral.

So this man’s statement isn’t about his morality, it’s about his fear and egoism. If he’s lucky, it’ll never matter. And statistics are on his side. If he ain’t lucky, that ego’s gonna get him killed. And for no good reason other than he was unwilling to admit a small, universal weakness.

Fear and Courage

I have to tell you, Rickenbacker’s quote startled me. I mean, he was the top American ace in WWI. He once dove on and single-handedly fought with a formation of seven planes. Seven to one, by choice. A stone-to-the-bone killer. And he admitted to spending

most of his time terrified out of his gourd. But then, as he said, “there is no courage without fear.”

So get over it. You have no excuse. You’re not saying you can’t, you’re saying you don’t want to. Well, none of us do.

Train hard, to the best of your abilities and know that it’s more than enough. It’s served people who were smaller than you, weaker than you, less well trained than you, when it counted most. And they’ve all made it back alive and well. So can you. But only if you quit with the excuses and get to work.

Filthy Lies

Every now and again something gets stuck in my craw, jammed in there so tight that the only things that’re going to get it out are a tire iron and a liberal dose of bile. Here’s a dose of both for three things that got stuck in there recently—lies I hear people tell themselves and each other about training for violence:

1. Intellectual understanding of the material is key.

The criminal sociopath knows only one thing about violence—that the person doing it wins. And even that statement is too wordy. That’s not to say the average criminal is stupid. It’s just that violence operates where intellect stops coming into play—in other words, from a gut level of what you have to do to survive. That’s why you’ll never hear a criminal use the words I just did, even though if you said it to them, they’d agree it was true. When asked to articulate what works in violence they’ll tend to speak to injuries—you know, things like “What works? Knee ‘em in the groin/stab ‘em in the neck/shoot ‘em in the head.”

Intellectual discourse on the subject is an exercise for instruction, not for doing. Who actually believes that a football

team would be better off if they spent every practice talking about football instead of actually playing football? Your best bet for getting good at violence is to practice doing it—not sit around talking about it. You should really only be sitting down and talking about it because you're wiped out from practicing so damn much.

2. *Once the technique is automatic, it will take care of everything.*

No, it won't. Either you're going to take care of it, or nothing's going to happen. 'Doing a technique' is like throwing a hood ornament at someone—when what you really want to do is hit them with a truck that just happens to have a hood ornament bolted on the front end.

Knowing how to set up a specific joint break is not the same thing as breaking a joint. Likewise, knowing the precise 'hand wave' to 'claw the eyes' is not the same as causing a serious eye injury. A subtle distinction? It has to do with how far into/through the other man you're thinking. A typical technique stops at the outer boundary of your skin—it's a subjective, personal exercise that has very little to do with the Other Guy or even realistic results. You know what it's supposed to do, but because technique focuses primarily on hand waving and foot placement there's really no way to be sure of the outcome.

Breaking out beyond technique means looking through an anatomical feature in him and converting it into an unrecognizable mess. It's starting with the result you need—injury—and working backwards from there to figure out how to get that result. Or, to put it another way, technique is like obsessively polishing an empty gun. What you want to do instead is study gunshot wounds and figure out how best to make those.

In other words, techniques only work when they ... well, work! To stick with the idea of the football team: sure, there might be some value in the team meeting, where they have a

brief discussion of strategy. But do they then go home and work through the motions of that strategy on their own? Of course not! They have a team practice, a scrimmage game, and put those principles into motion exactly how they'll do it in the real game. That's where technique falls apart and actual real-life practice takes over.

3. *I can't be expected to do it because I'm not ready.*

You're half right. You won't be able to do it until you give yourself permission to be ready. The only gatekeeper holding you back here is you. So why not take the time, like, right now, and decide that you can for a change?

It's shockingly easy to blind a man, make him barf his own nuts, bust his leg and stomp on his neck to end him. The only thing missing is your full force and effort, the physical symptom of a little something we call intent, and that's just you giving yourself permission to do what your inner predator wants to do anyway.

"I'm not ready" is kung-fu theater bullshit. It's a responsibility dodge. What you're really saying is, "I don't want to be responsible for screwing up. I want to be able to blame the training." You gotta wake up and own it. You gotta take responsibility for what you know and what that makes you. To do otherwise is to let yourself down—it's participating in your own murder.

Have you ever watched sumo wrestlers—you know, the huge guys who look like they're wearing diapers? An actual sumo match is very brief, but the build-up can take forever. That's because it doesn't start until both wrestlers indicate that they're ready by placing their knuckles on the white line. Sometimes for up to ten minutes, one or both wrestlers approach the line, squat down, get up, and walk away while their opponent patiently waits for that signal.

That's why sumo wrestling is not violence. No criminal will

patiently wait until you're ready, and if you expect him to, you're going to get yourself killed.

To be honest, nobody's ready; nobody wants to go there. But the last thing you want when you do end up there is to be dragging a big heavy sack of self-doubt along for the ride.

Everything outside of the mechanical facts of injury—body weight driven through vulnerable anatomy—is an illusion.

To Learn More About Target-Focus Training

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