

Fighting With a Knife

Although I have never had to use a knife on the street, personally, I have been trained to fight with a knife, and train others to do so as well (read deadly force situation.) Some of my thoughts on this issue :

(1) Most knife fighting programs that I have attended are taught by rote, are too complicated, and have no basis in reality. It is funny to watch the knife experts demonstrating their multi-angled compound attacks on students who offer no direct physical attack. I remember one knife-fighting seminar that I attended; I did offer "SOME" physical counter attacks to which the instructor stated... " you wouldn't be able to do that if I was really stabbing you" BULLSHIT !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(2) Remember that the only way to guarantee an "IMMEDIATE" drop down of a human subject is a direct traumatic attack to their Central Nervous System. This is hard to do at best with a knife!!! Those who believe that a few shots with a knife to the torso (which "usually" only causes blood loss) will stop an attacker are foolishly mistaken especially if your attacker feels no pain due to drugs or mindset. Unlike the movies where a person will drop to the ground after being stabbed a couple of times, it is in fact a rarity rather than a reality in the real world of the streets. Most edged weapon deaths are as a result of blood loss. This could take some time, depending upon area cut !!!! The body can lose up to 30% of its total blood supply (approximately 2 liters) , before the hydraulics of the body begin to shut down and unconsciousness sets in. This is a lot of blood people !!!!! As was described by a fellow instructor, take a two liter bottle of strawberry milk and pour it onto the floor; this gives a strong visual reference specific to the amount of blood loss needed to cause unconsciousness. This is one reason why I advocate a controversial method of cutting called "biomechanical" cutting. Although I do not purposefully search for these attacks, once you understand the muscular structure of the body, and how it interacts with the biomechanical functioning of the body, cutting these areas will limit both mobility and stability (tuff to hold onto me if you can't use your arm, or run after me if you can't use your leg(s)). Many of these same biomechanical cuts will also encourage increased blood loss. Some of these biomechanical targets include: back of neck, under arm, inside pelvic triangle, gluteus, hamstrings, back of knee, Achilles.

(3) Other than sociopath's who feel no remorse or empathy, most humans do have a very powerful resistance to kill others. To use a knife as ruthlessly and violently as needed in close quarters requires a mindset that most do not comprehend or want to acknowledge. Napoleon stated; "In war the mental factors are three times more important than the mechanical factors."

(4) It doesn't take that much training to become deadly with a knife. Most murders here in Victoria are committed with a knife. Over the past 18 years that I have been an LEO, every knife death was committed by a suspect who had NO KNIFE training but in the heat of the moment, was unconsciously competent in the use of the knife at a feral level with overwhelming results.

(5) To me, fighting with a knife is no different than the way I fight unarmed. The knife is just a tool and therefore an extension of my mind and body. Gross Motor commonality of technique rules under high stress.

(6) Too many people become weapon fixated and forget that all of their other God given weapons are still in game.

(7) I see that many LEO's, martial artists, and RBSP practitioners are now carrying a "clip it" knife of some sort, due to "vogue" and it's "sexiness" (I call this knife Cop BLING BLING), but yet many have no understanding on its use, carry, and retention. Because of these facts, every fight could be a knife fight.

(8) As MP stated in one thread that I read on this forum, if the fight is on and you need to get to your knife, the reality is, that accessing your knife during times of high stress, especially a folding blade, will be challenging at best. If you have time, distance, and awareness, having your knife out and in play during the pre-contact phase is what is most desirable. If not, bang them up first thus allowing you time to transition to the knife if legally justified to do so

For those who are seeking training in how to fight with a knife, here are some thoughts on course content:

- Use of Force context
- Legality issues specific to carry and weapon typology (will obviously differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction)
- Knife nomenclature (fixed vs. Folders)
- Carry options (needs to be accessible with both hand)
- Psychology of Fighting with a knife
- Anatomical targets (blood loss and biomechanical)
- Specific to folders, opening and closing techniques both one hand and two hand (left and right handed)
- Accessing, drawing, and presenting from a standing, sitting, prone (both face up and face down) positions (both left and right handed).
- Single threat and multiple opponent threat engagements
- Knife retention from both hand and holstered position
- Full on scenario based replication training on all the above to acid test everything learned which should be video taped for self evaluation as well (to me this is the most enlightening process in the training evolution/progression if done with real intent to see what is desirable and what is less desirable.)

I still believe that much of what is taught in this subject area by many in the field is TOO fine complex motor skill based. I speak from experience on this point, due to the number of "knife fighting" programs that I have attended.

In the end, no matter what weapon used, remember Rich's Comments:

- If you pull it out, better be prepared to use it.
- If you're carrying, you'll be much more inclined on using it.
- If you use it, understand the moral, ethical and legal implications and ramifications. It's easy to say "I'll kill you" then to actually kill, and if you did take a life, even in self-defense, yours will never be the same again.
- If you're carrying, chances are, so is your opponent.
- Have a solid understanding of the laws regarding carrying your choice of weapon where you live as well as your rights.

- The situation will dictate the tool & tactic.

Just some thoughts

Darren