

GET REAL!



Knife, syringe and bottle attacks are becoming more commonplace in modern day street fights and criminal confrontations. Just how effective are traditional martial arts techniques against syringe and bladed weapon attacks? Can policemen and soldiers offer us a different perspective to practical combative methods? Blitz asks these questions and many more to W. Hock Hockheim, one of the United States' most respected combat instructors. With over 23 years experience in police operations and black belts in American, Filipino and Japanese martial arts, Hock Hockheim has spent the last three years teaching over 50 police agencies, military SWAT teams, the US Army, Air Force and Marines his no-nonsense approach to practical self defence.

Blitz: *Hock, thank you for taking the time to speak to us. You have quite an extensive background in the martial arts and military. Can you tell us about yourself?*

Hock: I have been in the martial arts since 1973, all the while working as a police officer, both in the United States Army Military Police where I served in Oklahoma and South Korea, and for 20 years as an officer in Texas. I spent that whole time in 'Line Ops', that is on-the-line, in-the-field operations either as a patrol officer or detective. I am currently a private investigator but I work only five or six cases a year. They are

usually long, extensive murder cases, sometimes involving knives.

While studying Japanese, Filipino, Jeet Kune Do and American Karate systems, I was pretty frustrated because no matter how much they bragged about being modern and combative, I compared them to the realities of my job and against the new police tactical, street survival courses. The martial arts left so much to be desired. Then there was the petty politics. I began to formulate a mix of military, martial and policing combat systems that really reflected modern problems and violence.

Blitz: As a weapon defence system, what makes your system more effective than your common martial arts weapon methods?

Hock: It is the blend, the hybrid of knowledge, and the freedom to break the mould of any one rigid martial art that makes it special. Cops know things about fighting that martial artists don't know. Martial artists know things about the human body and power that soldiers and cops don't know. Soldiers know things about combat that the others do not know. Psychologists and criminologists know things about violence and crime that the others don't know. I crunch all this data. I don't even consider myself a martial arts instructor. I am more like a friendly drill sergeant in the military, teaching real world survival skills primarily through combat scenario simulations and drill support.

My priority in all combative training is based upon the combat scenario. That is as close to the real thing as we can get. Many systems only teach the mastery of countless drills. Their combative prowess becomes almost abstract. I use drills as a secondary source to build skill in the combat scenario.

Blitz: One of your specialties is knife fighting. What is the first thing a person should do when confronted with one of these weapons?

Hock: It's real easy to simply say 'run'. That is what they all tell you. But my studies in psychology and military history suggest that just flat turning your back from a criminal and running may be the worst thing you can do. Doing such often ignites a primal chase urge in the enemy and now the attacker not only has criminal intent, but a hunter/prey chase instinct at work. An orderly retreat, back stepping off and then when safe, completely running, might be a better plan. The biggest losses in the military have come from turning their backs to the enemy and running. This psychology also relates to crime.

The first thing to do is try to get something in your environment as a shield or weapon. Anything is better than nothing. This is not time to play 'martial-arts-fair fight' kind of 'good guy' games. We had an expression in the military: 'If you

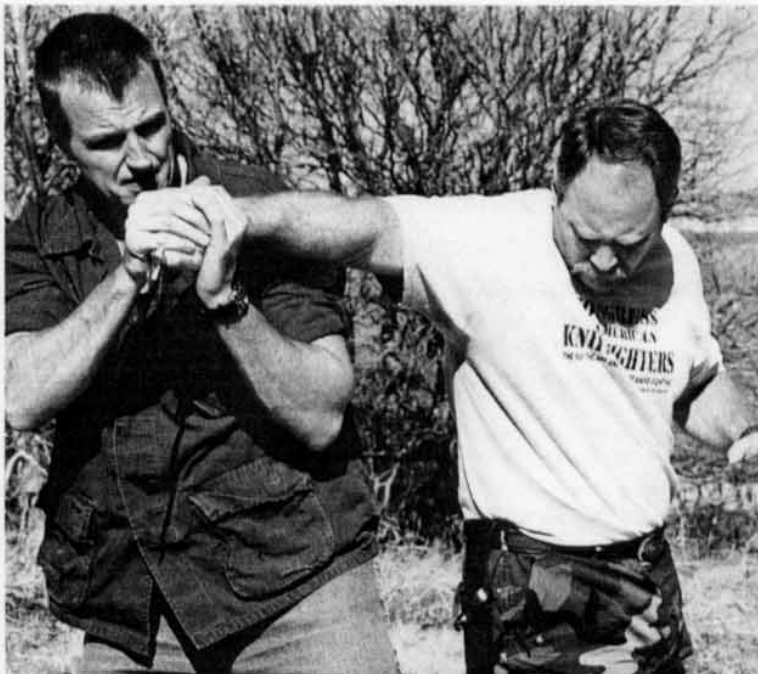


are in a fair fight, well you just didn't prepare enough!' In the real world of combat, your surroundings play an intricate part in the battle. Make it work to your favour. These are concepts undrilled in Karate classes. Cheat! Your life is on the line. This is no game. Grab a chair, a lamp, hold the enemy at bay and slowly back off. Yell and scream for a witness or for help, but not in a pathetic, scared way that empowers your attacker. Back away till you feel you have an escape route and then choose to run. But what if you can't run, what next? Your kids may be with you. Your spouse or elderly parents may be there. You may have to stand your ground and fight!

I teach a very special combative set I call 'The Empty Hand Vs Knife Military Combat Progression Drill' where I develop the skills to deal with an edged weapon attack, step-by-step. It is a favourite among soldiers, police officers and citizens because it is succinct, practical and very hardcore.

Blitz: What do you think about knife, syringe and bottle disarming?

Hock: Based upon my research, every week in my country (the United States) or certainly around the world, ten or so knives are disarmed from attackers, usually by totally untrained people. And that is a very conservative estimation. I





myself through the years have worked numerous cases where this has happened. Knives can be disarmed and these knucklehead instructors who tell you it can't be done are uneducated. If that is the case, then how are these people managing to disarm knife attacks? Sure, sometimes they get hurt. Some may die after the disarm. But many survive. Stitch them up, give them some aspirin and they go home. I teach some vital drills and combat scenarios that involve knife disarming. I want my people to live, not surrender and die because they have no idea about what to do.

The needle (syringe) has no edge and slashing attacks are reduced. An intact bottle is really a simple impact weapon. Capturing the weapon bearing limb and executing combat techniques from that point is the best plan.

Blitz: *What is the likelihood of suffering an injury in a knife, syringe or bottle attack?*

Hock: Sure it can happen, and sometimes horribly. I have worked a few police cases where some people have been hit in the head by a bottle. One was permanently paralysed, in a wheelchair for life! That was from one bottle strike to the head – not at all like the breakaway bottles used on stuntmen in the movies. Then others survive such a hit just fine. Broken bottles should be dealt with as if the man was brandishing a knife before you, for all the obvious reasons.

A knife slash might not be felt right away. The same for a stab, it all depends on where the slash or stab lands. Even a simple cut could cause a quick bleed out.

Our biggest policing concern over syringe attacks was diseases. Often drug dealers would hide syringes in car seats and cushions to



stab searching police officers. Several of my friends have been pricked so. We clean out the wounds, treat them with medicines and so far all have been survivors. I have ever worked a domestic disturbance once where a woman stabbed her sleeping husband in

the eye with a needle. It missed his pupil and he healed up just fine. They are still together by the way.

I teach a concept called 'the diminished wounds theory' where if you see an opportunity to counter attack, and that counter attack might produce a non-lethal wound in the process, you should go for it. If the weapon remains free and unencumbered, then your throat might be cut open a second later.

The important thing is that people understand they have a chance. They can win. Sure, they might be injured, but they are alive. Go down fighting. You may never have to go!

Blitz: *We believe you will be conducting seminars in Australia soon?*

Hock: Most definitely. I will be there in December for a seminar and back every eight months or so to begin certifying instructors in my Scientific Fighting Congress.

In my seminars I aim to teach people in a very informal environment. Participants learn the very best of what the police, the military, the martial artists, psychologists and modern physical fitness/athletic trainers have to offer on the subject of real world, tactical survival. I train their mind and their body to react. One learns concepts, strategies, the criminal mind, tactics, then they learn the full spectrum of the weapon from first contact to kill. You need to see what a bad guy can do to you. I don't think anyone can be properly training unless they experience a complete exposure to the weapon and how it is used.

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