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**"THIS BOOK WILL SAVE LIVES!"**

—Alain Burrese, J.D., US Army, Author

*The Little Black Book of*

# **VIOLENCE**

What *Every* Young Man  
Needs to Know About *Fighting*

**Lawrence A. Kane and Kris Wilder**

Forewords by Marc "Animal" MacYoung and Sgt. Rory Miller

### Praise for *The Little Black Book of Violence* . . .

“Kane and Wilder’s *Little Black Book of Violence* will save lives. It will keep others out of prison. Their insightful and informative text is an invaluable resource for anyone who follows the warrior’s path and deals with violence, or who is interested in this life or death topic.

The hard-won wisdom of the two authors, combined with research, quotes, and passages from others, provide a guidebook on why and how to avoid violence, what to do when it cannot be avoided, and how to survive the physical and legal aftermath that follows most violent encounters.

Do yourself a favor. Answer all of the questions in Appendix A – “How Far Am I Willing to Go?” Then read this book in its entirety. Answer the questions again, and take the time to think seriously about your answers. Sure, there are many of them, but this mental exercise could very well make the difference in your surviving and staying free versus ending up behind bars or becoming a statistic due to a violent encounter. Violence has consequences, many of them permanent. This *Little Black Book* will help you understand them and, more importantly, avoid the worst of them.

As an attorney, a self-defense instructor, and someone who has experienced violence, I was most impressed with the practical and realistic information Kane and Wilder provide in their *Little Black Book*. This is a must read for anyone who deals with violence, anyone who thinks he may encounter violence, or anyone who wants to increase his knowledge regarding avoiding, confronting, and surviving the aftermath of violent encounters. I commend both Kane and Wilder for providing this much-needed resource. Thank you gentlemen. You have just saved lives.

— **Alain Burrese, J.D.**, former U.S. Army 2nd Infantry Division Scout Sniper School instructor and author of *Hard-Won Wisdom From the School of Hard Knocks*, and the DVDs *Hapkido Hoshinsul*, *Streetfighting Essentials*, *Hapkido Cane*, and the *Lock On* series.

Kane and Wilder’s *Little Black Book of Violence* is a well thought out and detailed book of tactical thinking. Reminiscent of Musashi’s *Book of Five Rings*, *Little Black Book of Violence* gives the reader insight way beyond punching and kicking back. Elements of psychology, street smarts, and martial strategy make this book worthy of inclusion in everyone’s library. Well done and comprehensive.

— **Kancho John Roseberry**, three-time All Services Judo Champion, seven-time All Marine Judo Champion, 10th *dan* Goju Ryu karate, 7th *dan* judo, 3rd *dan* aikido, (honorary) 5th *dan* Daito Ryu Aikijujutsu.

Every parent of an adolescent should read this. We need to be reminded sometimes of how certain we were at that age, and how little we really knew. It takes a well-adjusted grownup to put things in perspective for our kids without losing it and shutting down all communication. As the mother of an adolescent son, I know what a challenge that can be.

Kane and Wilder succeed in this; they slow us down and point us in the right direction. Fitted out with insight, we can help our kids through inevitable assaults on their egos, and they can strategize without violence. The sooner a they learn to choose their battles, and use wits

instead of fists, the better off they'll be. This book is like a deep breath and counting to 10; it gives parents and kids the time to tell the difference.

— **Julie Van Dielen**, Producer, Law Enforcement Training for *In the Line of Duty*.

Wow. I loved this book! Authors Wilder and Kane continue to specialize in bringing to light areas of martial arts that have little or ever been discussed.

Through *The Little Black Book of Violence: What Every Young Man Needs to Know about Fighting*, Wilder and Kane have written a very important, critically timed, and far-reaching treatise on the subject of reality-based martial violence. Writing their text as a field guide to violence and violent encounters, the authors lend their knowledge and expertise to show both the “how’s” and the “why’s” of violent encounters that occur including the aftermath, and probably most important, the necessary steps to take to avoid them. Recognizing that no one truly “wins” in a violent encounter incident, Wilder and Kane offer tips and solutions to the reader to ensure safe passage if the situation should arise.

Drawing from multiple sources, perspectives, and personal reflections from actual martial combatants, the true flavor of down and dirty fighting is captured and revealed to the audience at large. Dispellled are the glorious myths and glamorized dramatization of “man-to-man” combative violence. The aftermath of the fight is laid bare as it really exists. The reader is left to experience the blood, injuries, guilt, regret, and post-traumatic stress that sometimes plague the individual combatant involved.

This book was relevant to my own experiences having conducted hundreds of traffic, summary, misdemeanor, and felony arrests over the course of a fifteen-year police career. During that time I often was required to “lay hands” on those arrestees and bring them into custody. The times I recall most vividly were those where I was fighting, grappling, and attempting to subdue my subject opponent. Those real-life incidents were engaged in with pure adrenaline where I fought to protect myself and to fulfill my duty, knowing there was no margin for error. At times, after the arrest, I would find myself with cuts, scrapes, and holes ripped in my uniform or my badge and other accoutrements pulled off and missing. However, I still considered myself fortunate to have survived all of those years without serious injury. Why are these statements important to you then, the potential reader? They are a testament to the powerful truthfulness, veracity, and accuracy of the knowledge and advice contained in this book. In my opinion, this book is as relevant to any police officer, soldier, or martial artist as it is to any student of criminal justice or psychology.

In my opinion, this wonderful book fills a necessary void of knowledge in the realm of martial science. I rate it at five out of five stars. Bravo!

— **Jeffrey-Peter A.M. Hauck, J.D.**, Entrepreneur, Professional Consultant and Trainer, Former U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Infantry Pathfinder, Martial Arts Instructor, retired Municipal Police Sergeant, and co-author of *Ports and Happy Havens*.

*The Little Black Book of Violence* is a hip, easy-to-read manual on how to identify potentially violent situations and avoid them. Or, failing that, how to best deal effectively with violence

should one be forced to do so. Everyone with a pulse should read this book, but it's a must read for teenaged boys, who aren't likely to get this kind of a tutorial at home or school.

— **William C. Dietz**, bestselling author of more than thirty science fiction novels and thrillers including *Halo: The Flood*, and *Hitman: Enemy Within*.

Lawrence Kane and Kris Wilder have written a comprehensive book about violence, more specifically, how to recognize situations where violence might occur and how to deal with those situations should one be unable to avoid them. Sometimes it is prudent to fight, other times less so. For example, when faced with a threat to one's life, and verbal defense has proven insufficient, one might be forced to resort to physical battle. However, if the situation involves only an attempt to avoid losing face, one might be wise to remember that physical battle, with or without weapons, is seldom as glorious as one might have imagined. While you are thinking "fight," your adversary may well be thinking "combat," with the intent to permanently maim or kill. There will be blood and injuries, some severe, even in situations that do not involve a weapon.

*The Little Black Book of Violence: What Every Young Man Needs to Know about Fighting* raises a number of excellent questions that one should ask in order to learn about self. It teaches one how to examine a potentially violent situation with a critical eye, how to use the indicators (such as the "tell") to discern when violence is imminent, and how to ensure that one's message is heard when emotions are running hot. Having an understanding of the process that leads to a violent situation will fuel one's confidence and, at least partially, help lift the "fog" of battle.

Young men have their heroes and their dreams. Kane and Wilder, through their knowledge of fighting and their ability to use the written word supported by graphic images and real-life stories, have managed to present a very cool yet frightening perspective on violence, a book where the dreams of heroism and adventure are acted upon with proper forethought and intellect.

— **Martina Sprague**, martial arts instructor and author of seven books on martial arts and two books on history.

Although I've been training in the fighting arts for over four decades, I found this book to be rich with innovative ways to apply techniques, insightful observations on self-defense, and a mother lode of gold nuggets on the nature of violence and how not to be its next victim. The dynamic writing team of Kane and Wilder just gets better and better with each new book. While martial arts schools show you how to kick and punch, *The Little Black Book* fills in crucial information about street survival that most instructors don't teach or even know.

— **Loren W. Christensen**, 8th *dan* black belt, author of 38 books on the fighting arts including *Warriors*, *Defensive Tactics*, *On Combat*, and *Fighter's Fact Book*.

Today we live in a society replete with criminal, professional, and recreational violence. Beyond mere acceptance, a culture of violence is being nurtured by the portrayal of brutality, cruelty, and aggressive behavior in movies and on TV, by its simulation in video games, and by access via Internet that can provide the worst acts of inhumanity that the world has to offer 24/7.

As a result, our society has raised an entire generation of youth who are desensitized to most forms of violence. Whereas our government has dictated that our public schools are responsible for educating our teens on the subject of sexuality, there is little to be found in any educational program to address the avoidance, prevention, or protection from violence. Maybe it is in this new world order that books like *The Little Black Book of Violence* can provide some semblance of rational thought.

This book is an important work that all youth of any post-elementary school age should read or at least should have portions read to them (with the caution that the graphic nature of some of the words and illustrations could be overwhelming to some adolescents). I was hooked from the first 15 words in the Prologue all the way through Appendix E. I suggest you read it, re-read it, memorize some of the more basic “rules,” and keep the book handy. Unlike most books, the appendices are interesting and valuable material; I recommend studying them first. In the appendix describing vital area targets, you will be amazed at how many descriptions of a blow to one of these areas end in the phrase “paralysis or death.” I’m sure most “non-violent” types that might find themselves in some kind of violent encounter will be busy trying to protect their genitals without giving much concern to the other 39 areas, and this could be very unfortunate.

Pain is about the only thing left to the imagination today. This book tries to help the reader “visualize” pain. I like to call this book *Scared Smart* or at least *Scared Thoughtful*. As a minimum, after reading this book you will learn to be more observant and more aware of the potential for violence and certainly more knowledgeable about the possible physical and financial consequences of a violent encounter. Whatever the circumstances, this book will help you spot potentially violent situations, find your way around them, or give you the best chance at surviving them. Don’t wait for the movie!

— **Michael F. Murphy**, School Board Director, Bellevue, WA School District.

Great book! A must read for any man or woman who is interested in learning not only how to defend oneself, but how to read other people’s aggressions and understand both the mental and physical aspects of violence.

— **Staff Sgt. Bryan Hopkins**, USMC, 1999 Armed Forces Judo Champion, US Marine Corps Martial Arts Instructor.

*The Little Black Book of Violence* is an exceptionally modest title for a volume so comprehensive. Dividing their subject sensibly enough into before, during, and after, Kane and Wilder use quotes, anecdotes, and expert commentary to shine an unflinching light on the realities of violence, with a focus on what can be done to avoid it, or when avoidance is impractical or impossible, to prevail. Despite the complexity of the subject matter and the comprehensiveness of their approach, Kane and Wilder maintain an engaging, readable, and occasionally humorous style that makes the book not just incredibly useful, but hard to put down, as well. It was a privilege to get a sneak peek at this fine book and I have no doubt it’ll do for many others what it’s done for me—help me live more sensibly, more sanely, and more safely.

— **Barry Eisler**, internationally bestselling author of the John Rain series, *shodan* in Kodokan judo.

*The Little Black Book of*  
**VIOLENCE**





*The Little Black Book of*  
**VIOLENCE**  
What *Every* Young Man  
Needs to Know about *Fighting*

**Lawrence A. Kane and Kris Wilder**

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**Warning:** While self-defense is legal, fighting is illegal. If you don't know the difference you'll go to jail because you aren't defending yourself; you are fighting—or worse. Readers are encouraged to be aware of all appropriate local and national laws relating to self-defense, reasonable force, and the use of weaponry, and act in accordance with all applicable laws at all times. Understand that while legal definitions and interpretations are generally uniform, there are small—but very important—differences from state to state. To stay out of jail, you need to know these differences. Neither the authors nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for the use or misuse of information contained in this book.

Nothing in this document constitutes a legal opinion nor should any of its contents be treated as such. While the authors believe that everything herein is accurate, any questions regarding specific self-defense situations, legal liability, and/or interpretation of federal, state, or local laws should always be addressed by an attorney at law. This text relies on public news sources to gather information on various crimes and criminals described herein. While news reports of such incidents are generally accurate, they are on occasion incomplete or incorrect. Consequently, all suspects should be considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

When it comes to martial arts, self-defense, and related topics, no text, no matter how well written, can substitute for professional, hands-on instruction. These materials should be used **for academic study only**.

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## Prologue

*“When I felt the knife blade grate across my teeth, I knew I was in trouble, and then my lower lip fell open like overcooked chicken dropping from the bone.”*

At eighteen, I found myself outside an all-ages pool hall in Redmond, Washington. If Redmond sounds familiar to you, it should; it is the home of Microsoft corporate headquarters, the home of programmers, computer geeks, and ninety-eight pound nerds. I was standing in the heart of suburbia bleeding badly from my face. The three men who jumped me outside the pool hall started hitting me hard, driving me onto the ground that was more dirt than gravel. I tried to fight but they had got the first strike in, a slash with a knife that was designed to shock, disfigure, and terrify me. It worked.

What brought me some thirty miles from my home to fight in the parking lot of a pool hall? My buddy’s name was on the line. He was losing face so I decided that I needed to defend him. It was a matter of friendship, of honor. So, in my senior year of high school, five close friends and I cut the deal for a fight—five on five at the appointed pool hall—and just to add drama, we were going to do it at midnight.

I got there early to hang out with my buddies and amp ourselves up for the confrontation. It was maybe a quarter to midnight when I stepped outside for a smoke.

One of the three guys hanging around near the door gave me a hard look and then spat out, “Wadda you looking at?” “Nothing,” I replied and turned to go back inside. I heard one of them move and looked back to see what was going on when I was met by a knife slash across my face, striking my teeth and making my mouth an “X” instead of the nice, straight line my momma gave me. When I felt that blade grate across my teeth, I knew I was in trouble, and then my lower lip fell open like overcooked chicken dropping from the bone.

This wasn’t the glorious battle I’d imagined. It was pain and blood and terror. What would the victor get from this fight? Absolutely nothing! No turf, no money, nothing, save perhaps a little pride. And the loser? I wound up with eighty stitches and a missing tooth. It cost me a day in the hospital, a big medical bill, and this scar you are looking at right now.



“Andy”  
Seattle, WA

## Foreword

*Sergeant Rory Miller*

Kris and Lawrence are nice guys.

They're tough guys, and they have the skill to put a hurtin' on you. They've both spilled blood and smelled it. But they're nice and intelligent and a little naïve—because they think they can convince you that violence is something you want to avoid just using facts.

There are tons of facts in here. Facts and stories, and really good advice. Whatever you paid in money for the book, someone else paid in blood for the lessons. All that advice came at a price. All of Lawrence's statistics were originally written in some poor bastard's blood on some sidewalk.

Lawrence and Kris think that they can get this through your head with facts and words. I don't think you're that smart.

When they write how hard it will be looking in the mirror every morning knowing that you have killed someone, they know this is true—because every non-sociopath they have talked to tells them how hard it is. Just words. In your adolescent fantasy (and even in your fifties, many of your fantasies are purely adolescent) being a 'killer' seems pretty cool.

Let me lay it out as these two fine men tried to lay it out in this *Little Black Book*; there are tons of things that are cool to think about that suck to do. Some suck so badly that the memory becomes a pain separate from the thing you are remembering.

You will read about heroes in here. Your little eyes will get all shiny and you will think, "I could do that!" And it's a good feeling because in your little Hollywood-influenced world, the hero gets the acclaim of people and the love of a beautiful stranger. In the world of this book, the same hero gets months of physical therapy, torturous surgeries and "it" (the arm, the knee, the hand, the eye, the back) never, ever works the same way again. Never.

Or maybe it goes another way. Maybe the relatives of the guy who attacked you, though they have been afraid of him for years, come out of the woodwork and get a small



army of attorneys and start remembering how he was “a good boy, very caring” or he “was turning his life around.” That small army of attorneys will have a mission—to take money from you to give to the family of the person you injured or to the person himself. If a home invasion robber can sue, and win for “loss of earnings,” there’s very little hope that good intentions will protect you. What seems worse, to me, is that you wind up giving your earnings, your money, and your assets to someone you don’t even like, possibly someone with a long history of crime, certainly to someone who doesn’t deserve it.

That’s the good option because the boys in blue may show up. You may find some special stainless steel bling ratcheted over your wrists and get a nice ride to the big building with the laminated Lexan windows and sometimes real bars for doors. When you hear and feel that cold electronic lock slam shut behind you, you will know that your life has changed forever. Then you might meet me or someone very like me. If you decided to sip twice at the well of violence, it will be my job to stop you, and I will stop you cold. It will hurt quite a lot.

When you hear and feel that cold electronic lock slam shut behind you, you will know that your life has changed forever. Then you might meet me or someone very like me. If you decided to sip twice at the well of violence, it will be my job to stop you, and I will stop you cold. It will hurt quite a lot.

Lawrence and Kris tell good stories about fights and killings that don’t happen. A strategist takes the lesson and they hope, in their naïve and sincere way, that the reader (that’s you) wants to be a strategist. I know better. You’ll skim those stories and get to the bloody ones, imagining what a knife can do in vivid Technicolor, just like at the movies. But the movies never get the screams quite right and sometimes the real memories that stay with you are the smells: rotten sh\*t and fresh blood and decomposition and the soapy, meaty smell of fresh brains.

Kris and Lawrence are so careful to go over the complexity of the subject. Violence isn’t just violence. It happens in a social context, a legal context, and a medical context, and they all play off of each other. They put it in your face that you may lose your home, your career, your family, your sight... to save a wallet with fourteen dollars or so that some strangers won’t think bad thoughts about you. Is it enough for them to put it in your face? Will you read it?

I don’t think you’re that smart. I don’t think you can see past your own ego. I think that you will risk your own life and piss away good information to protect your daydreams.

Maybe not. Prove me wrong. Read the book; read it carefully. Follow the advice, avoid the risks, and become a *strategist*. Prove to me that you are smarter than I think you are.

I won’t hold my breath.

**Sgt. Rory Miller**

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[www.chirontraining.blogspot.com](http://www.chirontraining.blogspot.com)



*Sergeant Rory Miller is the author of Meditations on Violence: A Comparison of Martial Arts Training and Real World Violence. He has studied martial arts since 1981. He has received college varsities in judo and fencing, and holds mokuroku (teaching certificate) in Sosuishitsu-ryu jujutsu. He is a corrections officer and tactical team leader who teaches and designs courses in defensive tactics, close quarters combat, and Use of Force policy and application for law enforcement and corrections officers. A veteran of hundreds of violent confrontations, he lectures on realism and training for martial artists and writers.*

## Foreword

*Marc "Animal" MacYoung*

One of the harder things for a young man to hear is that many of the things that he is willing to fight for aren't worth fighting for. In fact, often all you seem to hear from older people is "don't fight."

Unfortunately, that is kind of hard to do. As a young man, you have many opportunities to get involved in violence. And in the heat of the moment, it really does seem like the only way to handle the problem. Older people who tell you 'not to fight' just never seem to realize that, often, the repercussions of not fighting look to be a bigger problem than all those bad things that 'might' happen if you do fight. While 'don't fight' because of what might happen seems to make sense to older people, that advice doesn't do you much good about dealing with the problems that WILL happen if you don't fight.

I mean sure, you may get a bloody nose if you fight the guy, but how much grief and suffering are you going to have to endure when word gets out that you're a wimp for not fighting him? How does not fighting help you deal with the feelings of being less than a man for not standing up for yourself? Will your girlfriend think you're a wuss for not defending her honor? And, will she still be willing to sleep with a wuss? These are the kinds of problems that "don't fight" doesn't answer.

You hold in your hands a rather unique book, a book that will help you understand something that will be, at first, confusing. But the more you know about the subject of violence, the more you realize that both sides are right.

How can that be? How can two totally opposite points of view be right?

Well, let's start with the idea that it isn't black or white. There are all kinds of shades of gray. Both groups are right to a degree. It's just that often these different points of view can't see what the other group sees because of the years in between them.

Now to really muck things up, let's throw in something else that complicates things. How much of what you are feeling right now is based on biological patterns? Patterns that ALL human beings have—even though most of the time they are neither consciously aware of the patterns or know how to talk about them.



Oh and guess what? These patterns are seriously influenced by age. As a young man, you are very concerned with establishing social status, finding a mate, and making your own territory. This is primate behavior and it often includes violence. It's when you remember that humans are primates that should make you go, "Oh..." Now for the big shocker, the people who are telling you 'not to fight' are the ones who have already dealt with these primate drives. That means they're secure with their social status, have established territories, and live with long-term mates. Good for them, but it doesn't help you now does it?

Lawrence and Kris have written a book that will help young men understand how violence happens, how it can be avoided (without losing face), how situations can escalate into violence because of a reaction to something that you thought would solve the problem, and the life-long consequences that violence can have. Sometimes resorting to violence is necessary, but more often than not it is better—for all kinds of reasons—to find a peaceful way to resolve the problem.

When you are in the middle of an emotional storm, being pushed along by the need to establish yourself, violence can look like a perfectly logical thing to do. On the other hand, to those who've established themselves, it looks pretty stupid. They've forgotten what it was like not having these issues squared away. And this is why their answer of 'don't fight' looks as stupid to someone trying to establish himself as fighting looks to them.

Lawrence and Kris have written a book that will help young men understand how violence happens, how it can be avoided (without losing face), how situations can escalate into violence because of a reaction to something that you thought would solve the problem and the life-long consequences that violence can have. Sometimes resorting to violence is necessary, but more often than not it is better—for all kinds of reasons—to find a peaceful way to resolve the problem.

The trick is to know when each of these times are. And this book will help with that too.

**Marc "Animal" MacYoung**  
[www.nonnonsenseselfdefense.com](http://www.nonnonsenseselfdefense.com)

*Growing up on gang-infested streets not only gave Marc MacYoung his street name "Animal," but also extensive firsthand experience about what does and does not work for self-defense. Over the years, he has held a number of dangerous occupations including director of a correctional institute, bodyguard, and bouncer. He was first shot at when he was 15 years old and has since survived multiple attempts on his life, including professional contracts. He has studied a variety of martial arts since childhood, teaching experience-based self-defense to police, military, civilians, and martial artists around the world. He has written dozens of books and produced numerous DVDs covering all aspects of this field.*

## Preface

*Both the victor  
and the vanquished are  
but drops of dew,  
but bolts of lightning-  
thus should we view the world.*

– Ouchi Yoshitaka (1507–1551)<sup>1</sup>

This book is about violence. It is about running into something that you have probably never encountered in your life, but that will change your whole world if you do. We're not talking about a schoolyard brawl or a fistfight between buddies here, but rather the deeper, darker kind of altercations, the ones where oftentimes someone doesn't walk away, and win or lose you may very well be scarred for life.

If you picked up this book because you are interested in self-defense and want to give yourself the best chance of surviving a violent encounter, you've come to the right place. If, instead, you've just had a run-in with the dark side, are trying to make sense of what occurred, and are looking for strategies to ensure that it will not happen again, well, you've come to the right place for that too.

We will introduce you to a world of hatred, anger, fear, and lies where you will come to understand sociopaths, career criminals, thieves, cheats, bullies, misogynists, and various other twisted personalities that you might one day run across in real life. We hope that you will never experience the violence wrought by such people. Yet, if you do, and most will at one point or another in their lives, we will prepare you to better understand and more likely survive the experience.

We have taken a no-nonsense approach in reflecting the world of violence. Consequently, you may well be offended by some of what you read. You might even disagree with certain things we have written in this book. If you find the contents provocative, or even shocking, then we have succeeded in making you think. That's what this book is about, opening your mind. And, of course, filling it with practical, sensible knowledge and tools to protect yourself from violence.





Photo courtesy of Al Arsenault

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, men commit about 80 percent of all violent crimes in the United States, serious stuff like homicides, rapes, robberies, and assaults. Men are twice as likely as women to become victims of those same violent crimes, except for rape.\* Furthermore, males are more likely to be victimized by a stranger, whereas females are more likely to be victimized by a friend, acquaintance, or intimate. (Although when women engage in violence, they are more likely to assault someone physically they know than a stranger—which still leaves you in the crosshairs.) Consequently, while bad things can happen to anyone, males are the ones who really need to understand aggression and be prepared for sudden encounters with violence. That is why this book was written especially for you. Let us make it clear; although we may present situations or vignettes from one gender's perspective, violence is an equal opportunity employer that knows no gender.

When it comes to violence, all the statistics confirm that younger people are far more inclined toward aggressive behavior than older people are. For example, many bars and most nightclubs are populated by younger people. Take an emotionally charged atmosphere, stir in a generous dose of alcohol and/or drugs, and you've got a good recipe for conflict and violence.

Young males tend to have a long list of things to prove, whether they are conscious of them or not. Often their motives are unconscious because they are based

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\* Almost 90 percent of reported rapes are perpetrated against female victims, though the rate of reporting by males who were sexually assaulted is thought to be very low, so that number might be a bit skewed.

on biological patterns of the human species. You probably don't realize how much of what you think and feel is based on these patterns—and this especially applies to territoriality and status.

Young men typically do not truly understand or fully appreciate the physical, psychological, and legal costs of violence. They often feel immortal, never considering the possibility of becoming maimed, crippled, or even killed in a confrontation. Consequently, young men will fight for any number of reasons—affiliations, self esteem, social status, not to be considered a wimp, the clothes they wear, revenge for some perceived slight, to impress a cute girlfriend, or just to blow off a little steam, to name a few.

So, what do the participants of violence look like? Well, they look like you, the reader. You might simply find yourself in the wrong place at the right time. Perhaps some seemingly harmless behavior on your part will be the spark that sets things off, or you may be minding your own business and fail to notice impending danger until you walk into it unaware. Either way, it's a precarious place to be.

The goal of this book is to help you understand and avoid behavior that will get you involved in violence by giving you a roadmap to a conscious decision-making process that takes the non-thinking response out of your behavior. We will enable you to reach up into your head and flick the switch on the violence control panel from “react” to “respond.” You need to ask yourself, “Is this really worth fighting over?” While in some instances, the response could legitimately be “Yes,” more often than not, it ought to be “No.”

Simply put, some yahoo spewing insults about your favorite sports team is worlds apart from a drug-crazed lunatic coming at you with a knife in a parking lot. There is a large gray area between those two extremes where hard and fast rules don't always apply. This is where wisdom, oftentimes hard-earned wisdom, is the difference between a good decision and a bad one. It's not always a life or death decision, yet a bad choice could have serious consequences, the kind of stuff that can change a life completely, for the worse.

Recognize that every time you engage in violence, no matter how small and trivial, it has the potential of escalating into something that has life-long consequences. What *is* really worth fighting for when you might end up spending the rest of your life behind bars with a sociopathic roommate, dreading the moment you might accidentally drop the soap in the shower, confined to a wheelchair peeing through a catheter and sh\*tting into a colostomy bag, or declaring bankruptcy under the crushing weight of a massive civil lawsuit?

Is it really worth fighting over a comment that hurts your feelings or makes you feel

The goal of this book is to help you understand and avoid behavior that will get you involved in violence by giving you a roadmap to a conscious decision-making process that takes the non-thinking response out of your behavior. You need to ask yourself, “Is this really worth fighting over?” While in some instances, the response could legitimately be “Yes,” more often than not, it ought to be “No.”

less than a man? Is it really worth fighting with the mugger over your wallet? Is it really worth fighting the other driver who flipped you the bird in traffic? Is it worth fighting over a threat to your child? Is it worth fighting someone who bumped into you at a party and refused to apologize for spilling your drink? Is it worth fighting someone trying to break into your car? Is it worth fighting a drunk who copped a feel on your girlfriend?

What if it's not just one guy who's messing with you but rather a gang of thugs? What about fighting to protect a pregnant woman or disabled friend who cannot get away from a hostile individual? What if he's got a knife or a gun? What if it's your intoxicated brother or your drugged-up best friend pointing the weapon at you with malevolence in his eyes? These are all situational; they are decisions that without forethought could, and most likely will, be poorly made.

We hope to give you a strategic view of what is happening, a view that is more practical than emotional. It is then up to you to establish a goal and to adhere to tactics that serve that goal. An example of establishing these goals comes from a police officer friend of ours. Long before encountering violence, he had already built an internal list of things he simply will not allow in his world. An example is, "I will not allow myself to be tied up." He knows from experience and training that being tied up is a precursor to being moved to a secondary crime scene or killed outright. For him, physical restraint by a criminal means certain death. In his mind, it is far better to fight now and have some chance of survival than to comply and face near certain slaughter later on.

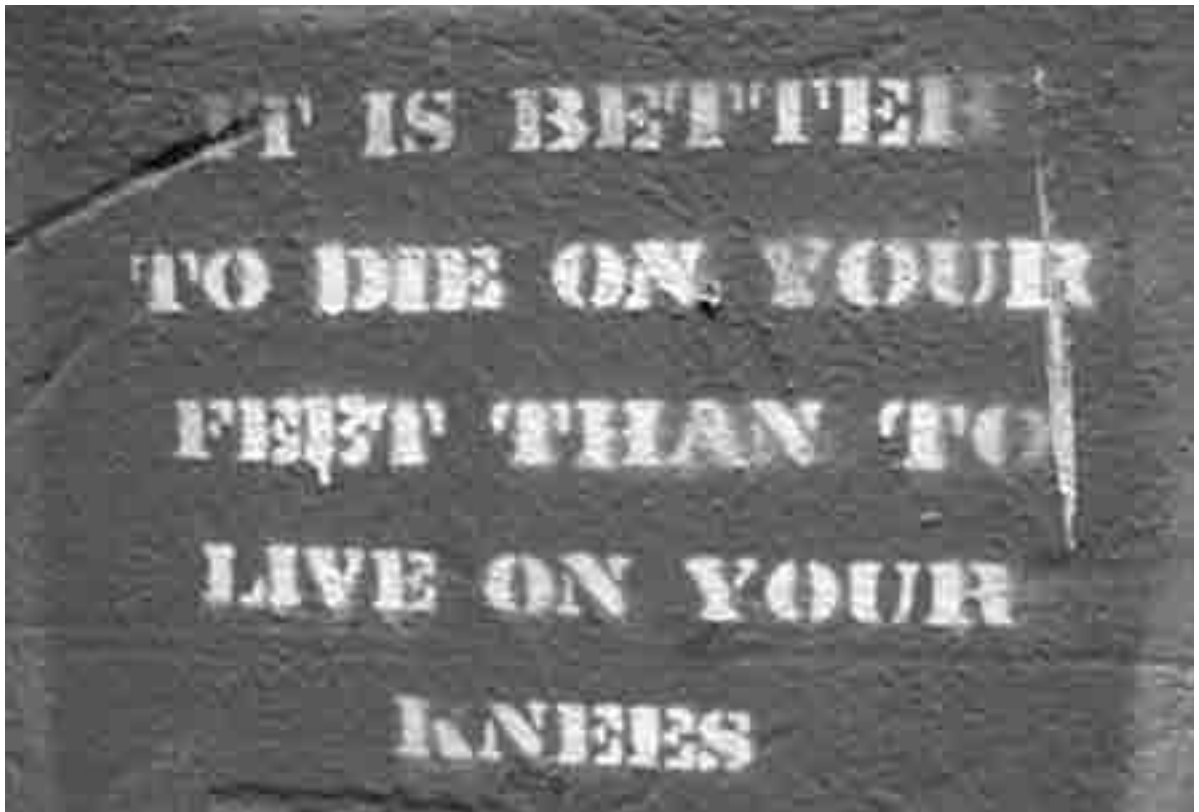
How would you respond to that type of scenario? It is not only useful, but also critical, to determine what you are willing to do, or have done to you, during a violent encounter, in advance of such incidents occurring. That way, during the heat of the moment, you can act without hesitation.

Here's your chance to really think about it. At the end of the book in Appendix A is a checklist titled "How Far Am I Willing to Go?" To use this checklist properly, **stop reading this book now, flip to the back, and fill in your answers. Once you have finished reading the book, go back and do it again.** There is no answer key. There is no right or



wrong when it comes to responding to these questions. The answers that you put will be whatever is right for you at the time. Once filled out, this list will be composed of your limits and thresholds, the ones you will use as a guide. This exercise will help you understand how you will operate in the world and especially in the world of violence.

Once you have read this book you will recognize behaviors from people around you and, more importantly, you will recognize your own. If you can recognize such behaviors, especially those within yourself, then you are halfway toward winning any conflict. As you begin to understand these behaviors and situations, it will help you make the right choices for success in terms of conflict resolution. Ultimately, what you have learned will help you live a longer and more peaceful life as a result. Be smart, be informed, and be safe.





## Acknowledgements

Laura Vanderpool has helped with all of our books over the years. Once again, she reviewed the draft manuscript, gave us insightful feedback, and helped shore up our sometimes overt grammatical shortcomings. Her keen insight and ongoing assistance is, quite simply, invaluable. Without her, we would be grunting cavemen not knowing if we should eat the paper or write on it.

We are also enormously grateful to Loren Christensen who has always been very supportive of our work. For this book, he graciously shared his first-hand experience and in-depth research on gang culture and crowd violence. Great stuff man, thanks! We sincerely appreciate Marc MacYoung's insight into the brutal realities of violence; he has probably forgotten more than most people will ever know about the subject. Not only was his hard-won wisdom invaluable on this project, but he also donated some great photographs as well. Sergeant Rory Miller helped us benefit from the vast experience at the sharp end of conflict. His discerning feedback has been tremendously helpful and very much appreciated. Lt. Colonel John R. Finch (ret.) graciously shared his unique insight and personal experience with the "cost" and aftermath of violence. Tracy Getty and Jeffrey-Peter Hauck contributed some outstanding photographs. Finally, a big thank you goes to David Organ for sharing his amusing drunk wrangling experience. Thanks guys, you rock!

Posed photos in this book feature Frank Getty, Tracy Getty, Lawrence Kane, Joey Kane, Sophal Keo, Lance Kilgore, Lou Kings, Andy Orose, Joyce Walters, and Kris Wilder. These pictures were taken by Joey Kane, Lawrence Kane, and Kris Wilder. This book also contains several gruesome visuals that graphically illustrate the effects of real-life violence. While some of these pictures were taken by Lawrence Kane, who carried a camera around with him for several months while keeping an eye out for trouble, many were provided by Al Arsenault.

Al is the Executive Director of the famed Odd Squad, a cadre of Vancouver police officers who worked, fought, and filmed in the seedy underbelly of Canada's infamous Skid Road. This blighted area is infested with drugs, crime, mental illness, and every possible social problem imaginable. These pictures capture but a bit of the human degradation and suffering Al has witnessed in his 27 years as a street cop with the Vancouver Police Department.

A more poignant rendition of the essence of drug Hell can be found in *Tears for April: Beyond the Blue Lens* (2007), a gut-wrenching feature-length documentary film about the lives, deaths, and the horrible suffering in between, of a handful of addicts who live in what Al calls the "Chemical Gulag" ([www.oddsquad.com](http://www.oddsquad.com)).

Al is currently in Thailand on a sabbatical from the Vancouver Police Judo Club and Odd Squad to write a book about his experiences with Odd Squad, drug abuse, and policing. He is also starting on two more practical martial arts books for civilians and police. For a sample of his work, see his book *Chin Na in Ground Fighting* published in 2003.

## Introduction

*Spitting blood  
clears up reality  
and dream alike.*

—Sunao (1887–1926)<sup>2</sup>

Violence is everywhere—on the street, in the workplace, on campus, and in the community. It can be instigated by everyone from drunken fools who hit like Jell-O to drug-crazed lunatics who cannot only throw a good punch but will slash your throat for good measure, and everything else in between. The danger can come from fists, feet, or flying objects. You might encounter or deploy impromptu weapons such as bricks, bottles, or bludgeons, or more conventional ones such as blades, buckshot, or bullets.

You might be the instigator, the victim, a witness, any or all of the above. You might see violence coming or it might catch you totally by surprise. Aggression can come from friends, relatives, acquaintances, or total strangers. It can be logical or illogical, easily predictable or totally unexpected. It might be some crackhead trying to score a few bucks for his next rock, an irate driver in the grip of road rage, or a neighborhood bully intimidating you to make his point. Or it might be from your drunken brother at your cousin's wedding, or it might be your best friend having a drug reaction at a party.

Aggression doesn't have to make sense at the time, and often won't. Whenever the face of violence is glaring at you with that cold, hard stare, however, you must deal with it effectively in order to survive. For example, a friend of ours was putting some dishes away one afternoon when his sister tried to kill him with a steak knife. One moment he was leaning over the dishwasher and the next there was a wedge of razor-sharp steel whistling toward his lower back. Why? She simply wanted to know what it would be like to murder someone, though he did not know that, nor frankly care about that, at the time. All he was concerned with was not dying. Fortunately, he caught a reflection in his peripheral vision, reacted appropriately, disarmed her, and survived unscathed without even a minor scratch.

That's where situational awareness comes into play. If you see violence coming early enough, you can easily walk, or more often, run away. With sufficient warning to prepare yourself mentally and physically, you can choose to fight or not to fight. When you are caught by surprise, however, you frequently have no choice but to fight... and on his terms rather than yours. Not exactly an ideal situation when it comes to survival. This is, of course, why predators like to jump their victims, catching them by surprise rather than facing up to them on even terms. The other guy doesn't want to fight. He wants to *win*.

Though street predators, bullies, and thugs are not typically all that intelligent, they are generally very crafty. It doesn't take a genius to know that if he attacks you out in a highly traveled, public place, he will have less control over the encounter and will more than likely



Photo courtesy of Al Arsenault

Aggression doesn't have to make sense at the time, and often won't, yet you must learn to deal with it effectively in order to survive.

be seen. And if not get caught, then at least he should have his plans interfered with. While he might want to take you to an isolated place in order to have the privacy he needs to assault, rape, murder, or rob you, he is not likely to find too many victims wandering around in remote, secluded locations. Consequently, fringe areas adjacent to heavily traveled public places are where the majority of violent crimes occur. That is where you need to pay the most attention to your surroundings. This includes areas such as parking lots, public parks, bike paths, alleyways, bathrooms, stairwells, ATM kiosks, bus terminals, train platforms and the like, particularly at night when few bystanders are hanging around.

Sometimes you're confronted by a violent person who has not yet attacked you, but is in the process of working himself up to a fight. You may have the chance to talk him down if you know how to de-escalate a situation, as opposed to trying to show him you aren't afraid of him, and that he needs to back off (that usually escalates a conflict rather than preventing it). But before you can de-escalate a situation, you need to know what kinds of things will escalate it from a verbal confrontation into violence.

Even if you cannot verbally de-escalate a bad situation, your words can be a powerful weapon for defending yourself on the street. For example, if you are in a public place you may have the opportunity to solicit help from bystanders or create friendly witnesses by using words that point out your danger and clearly articulate who's the aggressor and who's the victim. Anyone who stumbles across a fight that's already in progress has no way of knowing who the bad guy is if you don't make it clear for him. Furthermore, clever words can distract your adversary and facilitate your escape.

Escape is an admirable goal. Self-defense really isn't about fighting like most people think. Self-defense is primarily about not being there when the other guy wants to fight. Fighting is a participatory event. It means you were part of the problem. Even if you think you were only 'defending' yourself, if your actions contributed to the creation, escalation, and execution of violence then you were fighting. And remember, fighting is illegal.

Not fighting is good because whenever you do get into an altercation there will be repercussions. Perhaps you win, beating the other guy down with your fists only to find that he's come back afterward with the police, his lawyer, or a gun. Perhaps you lose and take the beat down yourself. If you're lucky you may end up with nothing more than a few bruises or minor bleeding, yet it's not unusual to suffer injuries that are far more serious. Go visit an emergency room in an urban area on a Friday or Saturday night and you'll see what we mean. Such visits can be quite enlightening.

The brutal reality of a violent encounter is that if you are knocked out, severely busted up, or otherwise placed in a position where you can no longer defend yourself during a fight, you are completely at the other guy's mercy. And often in the heat of the moment, mercy is in short supply. There is only a thin veneer of civilization, laws written on paper and enforced by folks who are much too far away to intervene right here, right now, standing between you and his wrath. He may very well break off the fight when you



The hornet's deadly stinger was no match for the spider's nefarious trap. Similarly, it doesn't matter how tough you are if you never see the other guy coming. Good situational awareness, on the other hand, can keep you safe.

are curled up into a little ball of agony at his feet. Unfortunately, he may, in his drunken fury, decide to put the boots to you.

Since not fighting is so important, that's what the first section of this book is all about—becoming aware of and learning how to avoid violent confrontations. It explains some of the brutal realities of violence so that, perhaps, you won't want to fight either. You will learn about important concepts such as escalato (the “game” whereby events escalate into violence), victim interviews, predatory positioning, cutting from the herd, verbal self-defense, understanding your adversary, knowing when he's eager to attack, understanding gang culture, and identifying weapons before they can be deployed against you, among other things.

Unfortunately, there are instances when you have no choice but to fight and others where it is prudent to do so. If so, you need to know how to do it effectively. The second section of this book is about what actually happens during a violent encounter, helping you understand smart things you might want to try and dumb things you should attempt to avoid during a fight. It teaches important principles that help you know when you can legally get away with going physical and identifies appropriate levels of force that you might be able to employ while keeping yourself out of jail whenever you have to get hands on.

The last section covers the aftermath of violence, showing that it's almost never over when it's over. Surviving the fight is just the beginning. There is a host of other consequences to address, including first aid, legal issues, managing witnesses, finding a good attorney, dealing with the press, interacting with law enforcement, and dealing with psychological trauma.

The book is laid out as a series of vignettes within each section, each describing a different aspect of what happens before, during, or after violence. You will find quotes from legendary warriors Sun Tzu (*The Art of War*) and Miyamoto Musashi (*The Book of Five Rings*) at the beginning of each vignette, demonstrating that these concepts have been around for a very long time.

Sun Tzu (544–496 B.C.) is an honorific that means “Master Sun.” According to historians, his given name was Wu. His mastery of military strategy was so exceptional that he supposedly transformed 180 courtesans into trained soldiers in a single session in order to secure a generalship with King Ho-Lu. Whether that particular episode is true or not, it is well known King Ho-Lu, with Sun Tzu at his side, defeated the powerful Chinese Ch’u state in 506 B.C., capturing their capital city of Ying. He then headed north and subdued the states of Ch’i and Chin to forge his empire. Sun Tzu recorded his winning strategies in a book titled *The Art of War*. It was the first and most revered volume of its type, one that is still referenced by military and business leaders throughout the world today.

Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645) was born Shinmen Takezō. He grew up in the Harima Province of Japan. Arguably, the greatest swordsman who ever lived, Musashi slew his first opponent, Arima Kihei, at the age of 13. Considered *Kensei*, the sword saint of Japan, Musashi killed more than sixty trained *samurai* warriors in fights or duals during the feudal period where even a minor battle injury could lead to infection and death. He was the founder of the *Hyōhō Niten Ichi-Ryu* style of swordsmanship, which translates as “two heavens as one” or “two sword style.” Like most *samurai*, he was skilled in the

Aggression doesn't have to make sense at the time, and often won't. Whenever the face of violence is glaring at you with that cold, hard stare, however, you must deal with it effectively in order to survive. The brutal reality of a violent encounter is that if you are knocked out, severely busted up, or otherwise placed in a position where you can no longer defend yourself during a fight, you are completely at the other guy's mercy. There is only a thin veneer of civilization, laws written on paper and enforced by folks who are much too far away to intervene right here, right now, standing between you and his wrath.



Violence is almost never over when it's 'over.' There are a host of consequences to deal with including recovering from physical and/or psychological trauma as well as navigating the legal system, among others.

peaceful arts as well, an exceptional poet, calligrapher, and artist. Two years before he died, Musashi retired to a life of seclusion in a cave where he codified his winning strategy in the famous *Go Rin No Sho* which, in English, means *The Book of Five Rings*.

Each chapter in this book begins with a poem penned by a *samurai* warrior or *haiku* poet on the verge of death. These perspectives are fascinating and, we think, worth your consideration. In the interest of making this book as useful for the reader as possible, however, we have attempted to limit our philosophical commentary in favor of real-life examples and practical advice, using actual people and situations from which you can learn.

A key aspect of this book is the checklist in Appendix A. If you have not already done so as directed in the preface, stop reading the book now, flip to the back, and fill in your answers. This exercise is designed to make you think, putting the information you are about to read into a context that will be meaningful and real for you when you must make decisions under pressure or threat out in the real world. Once you have finished reading the book, go back and do the exercise again. See what you have learned, evaluate



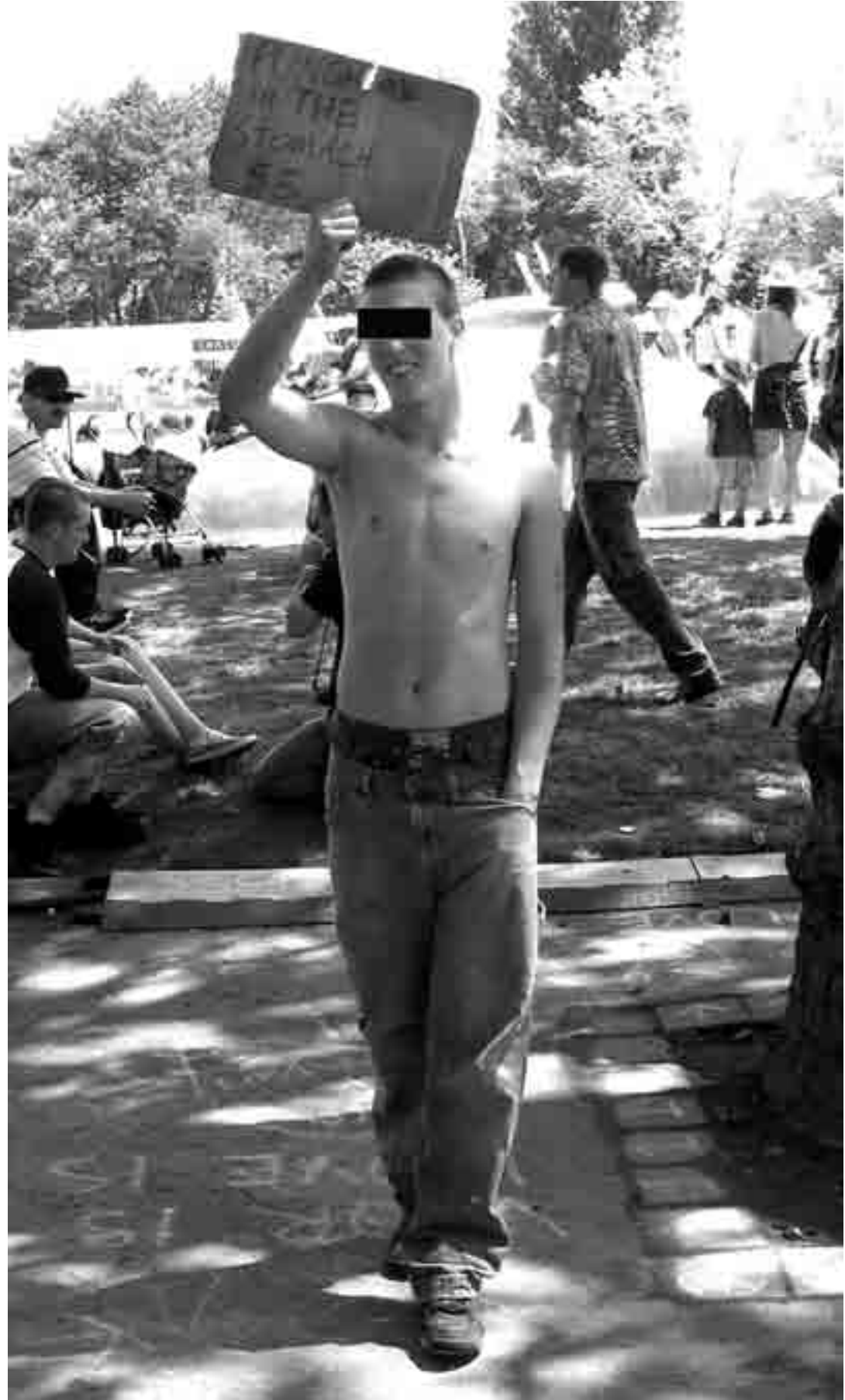
Photo courtesy of Al Arsenault

Self-defense really isn't about fighting; it's primarily about not being there when the other guy wants to fight. Knowledge and good sense are your main weapons for self-defense.

if and how your attitude has changed, and reflect on what you might do next time you run across aggressive or violent behavior on the street.

Our goal is to help you put things into perspective and give you the tools necessary to navigate the world of violence without running into any insurmountable rocks, pit-falls, or traps along your way. It's a serious topic, yet we have tried to make it interesting, meaningful and, most of all, thought provoking. After all, knowledge and good sense are your main weapons of self-defense.





SECTION ONE  
Before Violence Occurs

*When autumn winds blow  
not one leaf remains  
the way it was.*

– *Togyu (1705–1749)*<sup>3</sup>

Rule number one of self-defense is, “Don’t get hit.” Sounds simple at first blush but it’s really more complicated than that. At best, it’s about avoiding situations or locations where violence is most likely to occur. Sadly, we often don’t think about such things or we blow them off as irrelevant, stuff that happens to other guys. Juanita Watkins, a friend of Marc MacYoung’s, summed it up best when she sagely wrote, “Just because something is dangerous doesn’t automatically mean that you are going to get hurt if you do it. I have noticed that the young, inexperienced—or simply imagination impaired—take this to mean there is no danger at all.”

Let’s face it; we all do dumb stuff from time to time. Oftentimes nothing bad happens. When there are no adverse consequences for our behavior, it’s easy to keep on taking risks. Heck, risks can be fun. That doesn’t mean, however, that it’s a good idea to keep pushing the envelope. Traveling through the wrong neighborhoods, hanging out with the wrong people, or frequenting the wrong night spots will have consequences sooner or later, especially if you act out inappropriately while you are there.



Most people who find themselves involved in violence think that they were just minding their own business and when they look up, suddenly this problem comes out of nowhere. It just seems like this at the time, though. There is virtually always some type of build up, something they didn't see or didn't recognize the significance of until it became a problem. That's why it appears to have come out of nowhere. Oftentimes what you think is an innocent comment, gesture, or look is what gets you clobbered.

Self-defense is about keeping your cool, not being the instigator, even inadvertently. It's about paying attention, being aware of and evading threats before it's too late. Less ideally, if the violence is right in front of you, it's about doing all you can to avoid a fight. After all, the only fight you know you'll win, the one you are guaranteed to walk away from with all your parts and pieces fully intact, is the fight you never get into. This is what Sun Tzu meant when he wrote, "To subdue an enemy without fighting is the highest skill," more than 2,500 years ago.

This section covers everything you need to know and do to avoid getting into an actual fight. In addition to helping you identify potential threats and how to evade them, it also helps you develop the emotional fortitude you need in order to walk away from a confrontation when the other guy gets in your face and you really, really want to thump him.

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### Awareness is Your Best Defense

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*To see the sun and moon is no sign of sharp sight; to hear the noise of thunder is no sign of a quick ear.*

– Sun Tzu

*If you know the Way broadly you will see it in everything. Men must polish their particular Way.*

– Miyamoto Musashi

Again, the best self-defense is being aware of and avoiding dangerous people and hazardous situations. When that is not possible, when you've failed to identify and act upon signs of impending threat, self-defense can still be about verbally de-escalating a tense encounter before it turns violent. Fighting is your last resort to keep yourself safe after you've blown your self-defense, when awareness, avoidance, and de-escalation have all failed.

Since it is fundamental to personal safety, we'll begin by discussing awareness. Situational awareness means a solid understanding of time and place and how they relate to you, your family, friends, and others around you at any given moment. In some ways, it's more of an attitude than a skill. Any time you are near others, especially strangers, it pays to be vigilant, striking a good balance between obliviousness and paranoia. If you can sense danger before stumbling across it, you have a much better chance of escaping unscathed.



Whenever someone throws a punch, launches a kick, pulls out a knife, or draws a gun something bad is going to happen. The question is not one of 'if' but rather of "how much."

Whenever someone throws a punch, launches a kick, pulls out a knife, or draws a gun—something bad is going to happen. That's "bad" in a *Ghostbusters* "don't cross the streams Egon" kind of way.<sup>4</sup> If you are on the receiving end, you are the one who is going to get hurt, maimed, crippled, or killed. Fortunately, with a little training the majority of all that bad stuff is easily recognizable and avoidable before it gets to the physical part.

Most self-defense experts agree that nine out of ten dangers can be identified and avoided simply by learning how to look out for them. Since it is still possible to talk your way out of more than half of the potentially violent situations that you do get yourself into, this means that you should only need to fight your way out of three, four, or at worst, five of every hundred hazardous encounters. With good situational awareness, you may never have anywhere near a hundred such confrontations in your lifetime so those odds really aren't all that bad, huh?

Knowing when it is time to leave a party is a common example of good situational awareness. Fights at parties tend to happen after a certain time of night. It's not the hour on the clock that's important, but rather the mood of the crowd. Most people have a good time and leave long before the sh\*t starts. Just about everyone who's going to hook up has already done so; they've found a date, left together, and are off having fun. As the



Good situational awareness helps make you a hard target by eliminating easy opportunities for those who wish to do you harm. Constant vigilance is emotionally and physically draining, however, so you need a process for knowing when to ratchet your level of alertness up or down.

crowd starts to thin, those who have nothing better to do than cause trouble are the ones who are left. Buzzing with frustration and raging hormones, those who insist on hanging on well into the night are the ones who get caught up in it when the fecal matter is most likely to fly. If you pay attention to the behaviors of those around you, however, it's fairly easy to know when it's time to leave. If you're not there when things start to get rough, bad things can't happen to you.

The same thing happens on the street. Criminals may be strong, fast, crafty, and mean, but in general, they are neither exceptionally bright nor hardworking. We are stereotyping here, but seriously, how many rocket scientists or Mensa members are there on death row? Further, many crimes are quick fix substitutes for earning a living the old fashioned way via hard work. Why then would a street thug go out of his way to tangle with a tough, prepared target when easier prey is readily available?

By constantly surveying and evaluating your environment, you achieve more control over what ultimately happens to you. Good situational awareness helps you make yourself a hard target by eliminating easy opportunities for those who wish to do you harm. It's not a guarantee of perfect safety since there truly are no absolutes when it comes to



Remember a time when you were driving along minding your own business when you suddenly “knew” the car beside you was going to swerve into your lane and took evasive action to avoid an accident? This ability to predict what other drivers are going to do is an excellent example of good situational awareness.

self-defense, yet good situational awareness can let you predict and avoid most difficult situations.

Situational awareness is something that everyone instinctively has, yet few individuals truly pay attention to. In most cases, you should be able to spot a developing situation, turn around, and walk (or drive) away before anything bad happens. Once you understand the basic concepts and begin to pay attention to your built-in survival mechanisms, situational awareness can also be refined and improved through practice. Sometimes, however, try as you might to avoid it, trouble finds you and you will have to react accordingly. Good awareness helps you be prepared for that as well.

Can you remember a time when you were driving along the highway, suddenly “knew” the car beside you was going to swerve into your lane, and took evasive action to avoid an accident? Almost everyone who drives has done that on numerous occasions. It is so common that most people forget about such incidents shortly after they happen. This ability to predict what other drivers are going to do is an excellent example of good situational awareness.

However, vigilance in this area is emotionally and physically draining. No one can

maintain an elevated level of awareness at all times in all places. There is a difference between being aware and becoming paranoid. Consequently, many self-defense experts use a color code system to help define and communicate appropriate levels of situational awareness for whatever situation people could find themselves in.

The most commonly used approach, codified by Colonel Jeff Cooper, was based in large part on the color alert system developed by the United States Marine Corps during World War II and later modified for civilian use. These color code conditions include White (oblivious), Yellow (aware), Orange (alert), Red (concerned), and Black (under attack). This code should not be confused with the similar U.S. Department of Homeland

Security threat level alerts that use similar colors.

Any time you are near others, especially strangers, it pays to be vigilant. Bad guys don't want to fight. They want to win. Consequently, tough, prepared targets are usually left alone in favor of easier prey. You cannot, however, walk around in a constant state of hyper-vigilance or paranoia. Self-defense experts often use a color code system to define appropriate levels of situational awareness that help you strike the right balance, paying attention to what's important, and keeping yourself safe. The colors themselves are far less important than the overall concept—different levels of awareness are appropriate for different situations.

The mindset and attitude of each condition are described below. While it is possible to move up and down the entire scale, clearly hitting each condition in turn, it is also possible to skip from one level to another very quickly. Consequently, while it is valuable to think of each condition as a distinct state along a continuum like rungs of a ladder, don't get too hung up on each level. The important concept is that the diverse tactical situations you face will warrant various levels of vigilance. It is prudent to consciously choose the appropriate level of situational awareness.

**Condition White (Oblivious).** In Condition White, you are pretty much oblivious to your surroundings, completely unprepared for trouble if it arrives. You are a lemming, distracted or unaware, thus unable to perceive any existing danger in your immediate area or be alert for any that may be presented to you. Drivers carrying on conversations with passengers, people talking on cell phones, joggers wearing headphones and jamming to their music, and other generally preoccupied individuals fall into this category.

You may remember a time when you were driving along with the stereo cranked up and grooving to the music when suddenly the police officer you didn't know was behind you lit off his siren and lights. Nearly jumping out of your skin, you checked your speedometer only to find you'd been speeding and knowing you'd been busted. That's an example of being in Condition White. While almost everyone has done it, it's not too cool, huh?

An interesting exercise is to do a little people watching, trying to identify those around you in this mode. Their heads will commonly be tilted downward toward the ground in front of them or fixed on a spot in the distance such as one might do when looking at a tourist map, reading a book, or searching for a distant address or landmark. These folks are easy marks for just about any pickpocket, mugger, rapist, or other deviant they stumble across.

Try watching a crowd at a mall, nightclub, or other public area with a predator

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## About the Authors

### Kris Wilder

Beginning his martial arts training in 1976 in the art of *taekwondo*, Kris Wilder has earned black belt-level ranks in three arts: *taekwondo* (2nd Degree), *Kodokan* judo (1st Degree) and *Goju Ryu* Karate (5th Degree), which he teaches at the West Seattle Karate Academy. He has trained under Kenji Yamada, who as a *judoka* won back-to-back United States grand championships (1954–1955); Shihan John Roseberry, founder of *Shorei-Shobukan* Karate and a direct student of Seikichi Toguchi; and Hiroo Ito, a student of *Shihan* Kori Hisataka (Kudaka in the Okinawan dialect), the founder of *Shorinji-Ryu Kenkokan* Karate.



Though now retired from Judo competition, while active in the sport Kris competed on the national and international level.

He has traveled to Japan and Okinawa to train in karate. He is the author of *The Way of Sanchin Kata* and *Lessons from the Dojo Floor* and co-author (with Lawrence Kane) of *The Way of Kata* and *The Way to Black Belt*. He has also written guest chapters for other martial arts authors and has had articles published in *Traditional Karate*, a magazine out of the U.K. with international readership. Kris also hosts the annual Martial University, a seminar composed of multidisciplinary martial artists. He also regularly instructs at seminars.

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### Lawrence Kane

Lawrence Kane is the author of *Surviving Armed Assaults* and *Martial Arts Instruction*, as well as co-author (with Kris Wilder) of *The Way of Kata* and *The Way to Black Belt*. He has also published numerous articles about teaching, martial arts, self-defense, and related topics, contributed to other author's books, and acts as a forum moderator at [www.iainabernethy.com](http://www.iainabernethy.com), a website devoted to traditional martial arts and self-protection.



Since 1970, he has participated in a broad range of martial arts, from traditional Asian sports such as judo, *arnis*, *kobudo*, and karate to recreating medieval European combat with real armor and rattan (wood) weapons. He has taught medieval

weapons forms since 1994 and *Goju Ryu* karate since 2002. He has also completed seminars in modern gun safety, marksmanship, handgun retention and knife combat techniques, and he has participated in slow-fire pistol and pin shooting competitions.

Since 1985, Lawrence has supervised employees who provide security and oversee fan safety during college and professional football games at a Pac-10 stadium. This part-time job has given him a unique opportunity to appreciate violence in a myriad of forms. Along with his crew, he has witnessed, interceded in, and stopped or prevented hundreds of fights, experiencing all manner of aggressive behaviors as well as the escalation process that invariably precedes them. He has also worked closely with the campus police and state patrol officers who are assigned to the stadium and has had ample opportunities to examine their crowd control tactics and procedures.

To pay the bills he does IT sourcing strategy and benchmarking work for an aerospace company in Seattle where he gets to play with billions of dollars of other people's money and make really important decisions. Lawrence lives in Seattle, Washington with his wife Julie and his son Joey. He can be contacted via e-mail at [lakane@ix.netcom.com](mailto:lakane@ix.netcom.com).



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**Lawrence A. Kane** began his martial arts training in 1970. The author of numerous martial arts books, he is a black belt in Goju Ryu karate. Kane supervises security personnel at a Pac-10 football stadium where he has been involved in hundreds of armed and unarmed confrontations. Lawrence Kane lives and teaches Goju Ryu karate in Seattle, Washington.



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