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THE ESSENTIAL NEED FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TO TRAIN IN MARTIAL ARTS/SELF DEFENSE:

How the Art of Bruce Lee's Contemporary Jeet Kune Do and Isreali Krav Maga Kept Me Safe from the Jail to the Streets

By Deputy Sherman Garnett

NOT ENOUGH TRAINING IN SELF-DEFENSE

These days, it seems as if Law Enforcement is not respected and everyone is looking to challenge an officer. Many seem to paint the picture that law enforcement officers are corrupt and using excessive force. The public seems to say they know their rights and that they have the right to resist arrest. And when you as an officer have to act to take them into custody, a fight breaks out. And what do you see if the incident is captured on video most of the time? You see an officer with poor or sloppy techniques, throwing wild hay makers. You also see officers either not using enough force, officers afraid to engage a combative suspect, slow to react to a combative suspect, or using too much force to quick, like drawing a gun on an unarmed citizen, resulting in a deadly force encounter. That is why it is important to train continuously in hand to hand combat, looking for pre-assault indicators in situations and using reasonable force for every situation.

Very rarely do you see law enforcement officers training in martial arts or self-defense off duty. I believe officers should be training at the minimum, at least twice a week, especially with the violent encounter's that occur with calls for service on daily basis. Most departments nationwide only require a very minimal amount of force training for the year and also have only a minimal amount of training in the academy for Weaponless Defense as a recruit trainee. And what I mean by force training and weaponless defense is personal body weapons, such as punches, kicks, elbows, gun/knife disarms,

etc. Not enough quality training is provided for officers in this area of law enforcement. But many departments are unwilling to pay for more self-defense training due to budget reasons and would rather pay out on the cost of law suits. By the time I finish writing this article, another officer will have encountered a violent altercation with a suspect who is willing to take on the police and another officer will have been injured in a fight altercation with a suspect, due to lack of self-defense training.



Jeet Kune Do and Isreali Krav Maga Kept Me Safe from the Jail to the Streets

TRAINING REQUIRED:

So, again when you look on the T.V. or check out YouTube videos of officers involved in a fight or dealing with a hostile or violent suspect, what do you see? Most of the time you see officers getting their butts kicked or not knowing how to fight. The public response to Law Enforcement is becoming increasingly hostile and more and more people are willing to take on officer in a violent fashion. In California, you have had what is known as AB 109 prison reduction, where it reduced convictions from felonies to misdemeanors and released a lot of violent offenders back into society. Also, with technology and the use of cell phones, people are able to call in crimes which are in progress a lot faster, so response times to an active in progress crime are greater than ever and encountering a violent situation is most likely.

So why don't more officers train in martial arts or self-defense?

I know many officers who indicate they do not have time, or they say they are lifting weights, involved in CrossFit training or taking a cardio kick boxing class. Additionally, I have officers who tell me they are taking ground fighting Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. BJJ is a good thing and you must know your ground fighting game in case you end up on the ground. But as an officer, you have several pounds of gear on, a side arm and a gun belt you are wearing which changes the ball game completely. Your first option should not be to engage in a ground fight.

As an officer you should not be looking to take suspects to the ground and grapple with them. You are going to end up banging yourself up against the concrete or messing up your back or your knees, or if you have multiple hostile suspects around you, they are going to start stomping and kicking you in the face on the ground and try and take your gun. I always state this fact when officers tell me that there going to the gym or cross fitting.

"Going to the gym, lifting weights or cross fitting is good thing, but that does not mean you know how to throw proper punches, kicks, elbows or know how to defend yourself, how to create distance on someone rushing you with a weapon or knife when you can't draw your gun out." I explain to them real fighting is raw, violent, brutal and uncut. The concrete is unforgiving, so if you get slammed on the ground, the concrete is not your friend, nor is it a soft mat for landing on.

Recently, we had an officer recently who responded to a call of a mentally ill person. When the officer arrived on scene near the suspect in a parking lot, the suspect rushed them as they were getting out of the patrol car with a knife. The officer was slammed on the ground and stabbed several times. During the incident the officer was able to brandish their gun and shot the suspect. However, the suspect was so aggressive that the officer was overpowered.

VIOLENCE AMONG CRIMINALS RESPECTED:

With the rise of Mixed Martial Arts and Mix Martial Arts studio training facilities, many violent criminals have taken these classes or have been studying the moves they view from the televised matches. I remember working in custody when the inmates were watching UFC fights and afterwards where practicing the moves on each other in their cells. In-



mates have a lot of time on their hands, so practicing for a fight for them makes sense, since it is also survival for the fittest in a custody type of environment. The more violence you have in your jacket known as a rap sheet or criminal record, the more respected you are. Assaulting or beating an officer down in the street or in a correctional setting gains you much respect amongst the inmates. In other words, the more violent you are, the more street cred or respect you gain.

As an Officer on the street or working in a custody environment, plain clothes or whatever assignment, you need to be on top of your game in Self-Defense and in officer safety. It is necessary to train in Self-Defense as a Law Enforcement officer. Finding a combat discipline to train in, which specialize in that type of training is crucial, such as Contemporary Jeet Kune Do. You need a style which is not going to convert to just a singular style such as ground only, stand up, or only weapons fighting. You need something that is going to train you as an all-around, hand to hand fighter, from ground, to stand up, to weapons, knife/gun, multiple opponents etc....

VIOLENT ENCOUNTER IN THE JAIL:

As a Deputy Sheriff, you usually start off your career after you graduate from the academy by working the correctional system, which is the county jail. The inmates are not in there because they are nice guys but are more than often violent offenders. If you work a jail or correctional facility, you are going to be in a fight. You are often outnumbered as a deputy. There are more inmates than deputies and you have to go into segments to check on inmates and know the condition of the environment. It is often like a concrete jungle.

As a deputy, you do not have a firearm on you in the correctional setting or baton. You may have a taser or some pepper spray. So being with minimal back up options is where knowing hand to hand, close quarter combat, comes into play. Training for multiple opponents is crucial as well. There are several times when officers or deputies are attacked by multiple inmates, which is a fight for your life. It is just the nature of the environment and you don't know if an inmate has a shank (jail made knife), razor blade or other type of weapon they have made on him to strike at you.

Back in 2008, while working in the county jail, I had been in a violent fight with an inmate who was a known gang member and was in custody for murder. I was working the High Security units, for inmates who are prison gang members or just high-profile violent criminals in for murder, assaults and other violent crimes. The inmate was exiting the cell to be unchained and placed in the yard, meaning he would have some exercise time. There were only two that



came out at a time. I was with my partner at the time and he searched one inmate, while I dealt with the other one.

I searched the inmate out up against the wall for any weapons or contraband. After conducting my search, I began to unhandcuff the inmate who had leg shackles, and handcuffs on. After doing so, the inmate appeared to put something in his sock, which I thought, I must have missed something during the search. I was not sure what it was, but inmates are very good at trying to hide items on them such as weapons like jail house made knives, kites or razor blades for stabbing another person. A kite is a written jail house note to another inmate. Thinking that the inmate had placed something in his sock, I immediately told the inmate to get up against the wall so he could be searched out again. The inmate appeared agitated and began to walk slowly to the wall, looking back at me which indicated to me that there was something he was not supposed to have. Again, I told the inmate to get up against the wall, because he was not listening to what I was telling him to do. This time the inmate walked slowly over to the wall, facing the wall and stood there, but appeared to keep looking back as if he was going to attack or fight, which is a pre-assault indicator. I told the inmate to place his hands behind his back. The inmate did so, but I noticed he kept trying to look back to see if I was coming. As soon as I grabbed a hold of the inmates hands, the inmate spun around on me and rushed me to tackle me to the ground in a MMA style take down. Luckily, I had been studying martial arts since 1999, in which we learned ground fighting in the art of BJJ and defending against take downs. As soon as the inmate

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rushed me, I immediately sprawled out with my feet, knocking the inmate to the ground and rendering the take down ineffective. The inmate began trying to knock me off of him right away and began trying to swing at me. The fight was on, which was violent indeed. From my top positioning, I immediately proceeded to strike him with repeated elbows to the face, in which his face hit the concrete several times over, rendering the inmate unconscious and with a broken orbital eye socket. That fight was over in less than 10 to 15 seconds if that. If I had not been trained in the combative art such as Contemporary Jeet Kune Do or Krav Maga, I would have been for sure fighting longer and would have probably gotten beat down and hurt as the inmate was violent and aggressive. The inmate was in custody for murder and had nothing to lose when he attacked me.

WHY TRAINING IS NECESSARY:

With the increase of mass shootings, school shootings, terrorism and violence in our communities, officers need to train in a practical combat disciplines. You never know who you are going to encounter as an officer. You may contact someone who is wanted for murder, assault, robbery or any other charge and you never even knew it. They think you know

what they are wanted for and you have no clue. All a sudden your attacked and in a fight for your life. You don't treat the fight like a rules-based UFC match. There are no rules and you fight to win. As an officer, you don't get the opportunity to study film on your attacker for several weeks and know his weakness. You must be ready and use the tools necessary to deal with the attacker. You have to be able to put down and end the attacker, violently and as quickly as possible. They longer you stay in a fight with someone, the more potential there is for you to get hurt.

Officers should be aggressive when dealing with and actively pursuing violent criminals who are the stalkers of the innocent. Officers should be exquisite, highly trained good hearted and killers when needed, with people skills and tactical communication skills. You must have the mindset that I am at one call where it is just a paper only call, speaking with a decent citizen and the next call I go to, I may have to engage in physical combat or take a suspect's life, to protect my life or the life of others if the situation calls for it. You have to be able to turn that combative instinct switch on when faced with a threat or to protect others from danger.

Officers should be equipped, highly skilled and dangerous in empty hand to hand combat. Why? Because you are not always able to pull out your gun, baton, pepper spray, taser, etc. to deal with a violent person. When dealing with a violent person, they could go off in seconds and attack you, close the distance and take you out, before you ever had a chance to draw your duty weapon or any other tool you are carrying. That is why it is important to have good hand to hand combat skills to control suspects effectively in a violent situation.

Most fights with officers don't start out with someone coming out and fighting you right away. They turn ugly when you try to put them in handcuffs or they say they are not going to jail or you have been in a foot pursuit with the suspect and you are tired and exhausted. The suspects try to make an overt movement to throw you off your game, so you must be ever ready. Training in Jeet Kune Do gave me the sensitive to feel the body energy of a person and recognize the body patterns and movements in which I could feel or see a person's energy or sense and see a person becoming aggressive, agitated or violent. It gave me the skills and ability to adapt to different ranges of combat that take place during a fight, from close quarter, to ground fighting, to weapons, to control

holds, and multiple opponent's encounters. It teaches you to improvise, adapt and overcome your situation, flowing like water as Burce Lee said, which means adapting to whatever combat situation presents itself and overcoming that situation through your training.

As an example, I was working patrol in the city of Victorville, California, in 2010, when I responded to an unwanted subject call at about 2a.m. The suspect had crashed a party at a house and would not leave. The individual was approximately 6'4, 290 pounds and a known violent gang member. After telling the known gang member to leave the house and verbally warning him that if he returned, he would be arrested for trespassing, he left the house.

I left as well, thinking everything was good. About 10 minutes later, I received a call from dispatch telling me the subject had returned. I return to the house with my partner and see the guy standing in the kitchen. I immediately tell him to put his hands behind his back, that he is under arrest.

At that point, the gang member turns around. I approach him from behind and began to put him in handcuffs. As I began to place the handcuffs on the gang member, I feel him tensing up right away. As I felt him tensing up, the suspect pulls his right hand away from me and begins to turn towards me to attack me. Due to his size and strength, I did not waste any time with him and came up and put my hand around his neck and leg sweep him right away to the ground. The suspect falls to the ground and tries to get back up to fight. I was on him right away and followed up with aggressive strikes such as hammer fist strikes and elbows to the face. The fight was over in within a matter of seconds. The suspect was handcuffed and taken into custody.

If I did not have that sensitivity and energy training from Jeet Kune Do, again the suspect would have got the drop on me and most likely taken me out. But due to my training I was able to sense it right away. I was able to improvise, adapt to the situation and overcome the violent resistance right away.

Fighting a person under the influence of Drugs:

Fighting a person under the influence of illegal drugs is completely different than fighting a person who is not on drugs. If you have an individual who has been smoking narcotics such as methamphetamine for several days or who is under the influence of PCP, bath salts or any other extreme drug, and they want to fight with you. You are going to be in for the fight of your life. A person under the influence of strong stimulant drug does not feel pain and keeps coming at you to attack you when you think you have taken the fight out of them or they should have normally been down and out with the strikes you landed on them. This is where stress

training in Self-Defense and in a combat discipline becomes a must for officers. The will to stay in the fight and survive the fight, to keep going when you are exhausted.

The average time in the nation for law enforcement back up to arrive to a call is approximately 2 minutes and 20 seconds. A fight for your life during the interval time is exhausting. Training in Jeet Kune Do and Krav Maga, with the drills of taking on multiple opponents for 2 to 3 minutes prepared my mindset and for the preparation of such an event. This type of training you will not get at a police academy or during an annual use of force training for most police departments. This is where finding a martial arts/Self-Defense facility that specializes in a combat discipline of this type of comes into play. Most real street fights do not last that long, but a person on drugs is a different story as they just keep coming at you, even though you are throwing everything you got at them. You are going to be exhausted at the end and feel like you went 20 rounds in a few minutes, especially fighting a person



under the influence of stimulant narcotics.

I have been on a domestic violence call, while working patrol and I did not even realize what I was walking into at the time. The suspect was under the influence of PCP, and extreme narcotic drug in which you feel no pain hardly. It was about 01 a.m. in the morning, and I had received a call from dispatch to check on an obscene phone call coming from a house location. Reading the call, it said that someone had called from the house location to a friend to report an argument at the house. The call did not make much sense to me, so I call the person who called in. They tell me that their

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teenage daughter is staying over the house for the night and had sent a text message for help because there was a problem at the residence.

I asked the person if they had anything further besides what she told me. She told me no. I told her I would check it out and call her back when I'm finished with the call. I go over to the house location by myself, thinking that its nothing. I get to the house and it is looks like everyone is sleeping and nothing is going on. I don't hear any noise or argument either when I walk up to the door. I knock on the door and an elderly woman answers the door. I explained to her that someone called the police. She tells me, thank God you are here.

I don't know who called you, but I'm so grateful to God. I ask her what is going on. She tells me, that her daughters estranged husband had broken into the residence earlier in the day, took all the phones away and threaten to kill anyone if they called the police. She tells me the husband was holding her daughter hostage in the upstairs bedroom and was beating her. I was shocked by the information, so I asked her if this is happen right now. She said yes, you better get up there now and help her.

Immediately, the hairs on the back of my spine went up and my Spidey sense told me something was wrong here. I contacted dispatch and began telling them to send me back

up immediately. Dispatch asked me if I was ok. I told dispatch, I'm ok for now, but send back up. I get upstairs to the bedroom and the door is shut. I listen in and I could hear the suspect threaten the victim in the room telling her he is going to kill her for calling the cops.

I draw my gun and knock on the door right away announcing myself as a deputy with the Sheriff's Department and to open the door. The suspect tells me, alright, hold up, I'm coming. After he says that, I can hear the suspect again tell the victim, you called the police with some expletives and I'm going to kill you. Again, I bang on the door and tell the suspect to open up. The suspect again says, ok, I'm coming, and I again hear him tell the victim that he is going to kill her right now for calling the cops.

I immediately kick in the double door and have my gun drawn at the suspect and tell him to get on the ground. The victim takes off running to the bathroom in the bedroom as the suspect begins to drop to his knees. His height and weight were approximately 6'2 230 lbs. He drops to his knees and I'm telling him to get on the ground. He keeps stalling me, telling me ok, ok which meant I knew, he was going to try and do something. Again I tell him to get on the ground and he says ok, but for what. I tell him one more time, get on the ground. He begins to go lay down on his stomach. As he does so, I put my gun away in my holster and getting ready to go and grab him and place him in handcuffs, because you cannot handcuff someone with your gun out.

The suspect starts to get up from the ground. I tell him to get down again and he says for what, and rush me to tackle me to the ground. I stop his rush and leg sweep him to the ground and throw several rapid straight blast punches to his face, including hammer fist. The suspect was laid out on the ground on his stomach after the strikes and I was on my feet standing over him. I'm thinking the guy is done, I have just swept him and straight blasted him and hit him with several hammer strikes. I tell the suspect to place his hands behind his back. The suspect gets another adrenaline rush and lets out a growl and aggressively rushes me again to take me down to the floor. Fear set in me at this point, because a normal person would be out from the amount of strikes, he took in the beginning.

I told myself I must fight harder than ever before. I used the suspect's momentum as he rushed me to tackle me and I



picked him up and spun with my hips throwing him across the room into the bed post which breaks, and he hits the floor. I waste no time in getting on him right away and he is trying to throw punches at me. I just let loose with over 15 elbow strikes to the face. While I'm striking him in the face about the 15th time, I hear a loud snoring and I'm thinking to myself what is that noise. It turns out the suspect was unconscious. I immediately handcuffed him and I was extremely exhausted. I told the elder lady who watched everything to call 911 and send back up, because they had not arrived yet.

Back up arrived a short time later, and they thought I killed the guy with my bare hands. It turns out the suspect had been smoking PCP and broken into the home and had violently raped his estranged wife, took away all the phones and held everyone hostage inside and threaten to kill them if they called the police. PCP is one of those drugs which heats up your body and make you feel no pain when you are struck. They only way to take someone out on PCP is to either kill them or render them unconscious, otherwise they will keep coming at you to fight. If it weren't for the grace of God and my martial arts training in Contemporary Jeet Kune Do and Krav Maga, I would have been killed. This was a very violent encounter with a very aggressive subject on drugs who felt no pain.

Conclusion: Training and Staying Prepared is the Best Way

You have to continually train in a combat discipline, which deals with multiple opponents, ground fighting, stand up fighting, close quarter fighting, and weapons such as knives, guns, bats, sticks, etc. You have to be prepared for whatever range of combat presents itself, whether its, punching, kicking, trapping, grappling, weapons. It has been said that when you are attacked or in a violent encounter you are going to rise to the occasion. That is not true!!! You are going to revert back to whatever training you have had whether good or bad. And under stress, it is going to be even harder to perform. That is why close quarter combat, hand to hand fighting skills is so important and finding an art such as Contemporary Jeet Kune Do as an officer is very important. It is a perishable skill if not trained continually, so stay safe out there. 🐉



About The Author

Deputy Sherman Garnett

Began his career in law enforcement in 2004. Has been employed as a Deputy Sheriff for the Orange County Sheriff's Department and for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, current employer. San Bernardino county is the largest geographic county in the United States and is larger in square miles than four U.S. States. San Bernardino County is ranked 3rd in the nation as to the number of documented gang members living in the country. Over the course of his career, Sherman has worked custody/corrections in the high security gang/violent offender units, street patrol, street patrol as a field training officer, Multiple Enforcement Team, Street Level Narcotics, Major Narcotics and as a Gang Enforcement Officer for several years, dealing with the worst of the worst. Sherman has often had to engage in violent encounters with dangerous suspects, such as murders, violent sex offenders, gang bangers, etc. to take them into custody

Sherman is a certified expert in Defense Tactics, a Firearms Instructor, a Force Options Expert, certified gang/narcotics expert and an Academy Instructor for the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department. Sherman began his training in martial arts/self-defense at the age of 19, training in Jeet Kune Do, under Sifu Dennis Blue. I later trained in Israeli Krav Maga, under KM Instructor Mike Johnson, which was an affiliate of Krav Maga World Wide, and in Contemporary Jeet Kune Do, (Progressive Fighting Systems), under Sifu Paul Vunak. Sherman is a certified Full Instructor under Progressive Fighting Systems, as well as a Military Edged Weapon Instructor, Rapid Assault Tactics Instructor and Clinch Rapid Assault Tactics Instructor which is for Ground Fighting and Kuno Muati bite flow. Additionally, Sherman is a certified Krav Maga Instructor for civilians and a certified Law Enforcement Krav Maga Instructor. Sherman is the owner of a Self-Defense studio known as Inland Empire Fighting Systems in Corona, California.

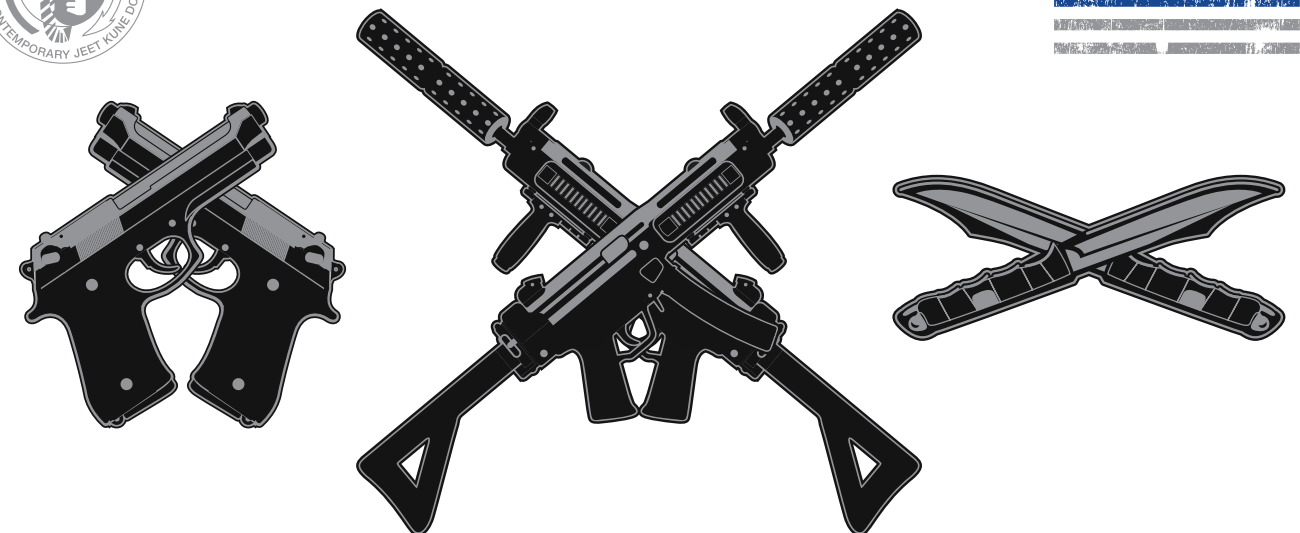


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who trains my hands for war,
and my fingers for battle.”*



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During my time as a Deputy Sheriff, I have witnessed various types of violence and have had many encounters where I had to respond with force and violence to protect myself or others which is the nature of the job as a Law Enforcement Officer. You must realize, when you sign up for law enforcement, you're going to get into a fight and you're going to come up against people who do not want to go to jail, who are willing to fight you, kill you, take you on, or do whatever it takes to get away. There is no nice way to take a violent person who is willing to fight, into custody.

When I bring training to others, I bring it from a realistic perspective of street combat and violent encounters, many of which I have been into and draw my experience from. I do not teach or bring training based only on theory or from a dojo training perspective, or from a person who has never been in a real-life fight or violent altercation. I bring it from a real street fighting perspective. Training for me and my students, must be practical, make sense and work in a real-life violent altercation, street fight or combat situation. You should not be training moves for the sake of tradition or because it looks cool and, in the end, has no real value or application in combat or fighting. 🐉