

Bare Essential First Responders Self-defense Training ® Part II

Self-defense is your Right



By L Rivera

Bottom line up front; first responders are exposed to violent acts while responding to crisis, disaster and other emergency situations; nevertheless, only Law-enforcement and Military personnel are actually equipped with weapons—lethal and non-lethal—as well as trained in the use of less than lethal force that includes unarmed combat/Self-defense. Although in a perfect world law-enforcement and Military personnel would provide protection for other first responders, they are also expected to protect the communities, businesses and critical infrastructure. The reality is that there are not enough officers to do all of the above and provide security for responders and or care takers.



The relative lack of status, power, and resources has put many women and children at risk of being sexually assaulted after disasters. Controversy still remains regarding incidents of rapes that have taken place in many known disasters because of lack of official reporting. The “Katrina Disaster” represents a multi-impact series of catastrophes (i.e., Hurricane Katrina, several levees breeches, an oil spill, a chemical storage facility explosion, and a later Hurricane

Rita) that together have produced cumulative disaster effects unlike any in the history of the United States. The complete breakdown of law and order during the early phases of the Katrina disaster, when normal crime reporting mechanisms were non-existent, created an atmosphere for the emergence of rumors about rape and other crimes that were widely distributed in the media only to be later recanted. Even though many early reports were dismissed, sexual assaults did occur (Thornton & Voigt, 2006). The fact of the matter is that many of these incidents were examined and confirmed by official reports, victim’s reports, and narratives of first-responders and victim advocates.

The case of a well-known public figure and daughter of a famous rock and soul band, validate the aforementioned claims, and help solidify the argument that first responders are not immune to acts of violence while assisting during disasters and crisis situations. In the aftermath of Katrina, after the waters started rising on the night of August 31, 2005 and two days after Hurricane Katrina struck, the first responder who later became the victim, provided much needed assistance to people in New Orleans by helping victims of the hurricane sought shelter on the roof of a school. She told a story of being raped in an impromptu meeting in an interview with Archbishop Alfred Hughes of the Archdiocese of New Orleans on a local television station:

I had lain down and gone to sleep and somebody woke me up. They put their hand over my mouth, and a knife to my throat, and said.... ‘If you don’t do what I want, I’m gonna kill you and then I’ll do what I want to you anyway and throw your body over the side of the buildin’ (Thornton & Voigt, 2006).

The psychosocial impact of disasters in families, children, and care givers, as well as first responders and aid workers, have been addressed by providing additional psychological training and skills development in an effort to accelerate the level of response and the long term effects of disasters—first responders, teachers, aid workers and community leaders are all receiving this training. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has proposed a different approach to mitigating the risk. They stated that telecommunications are a vital element for the personal safety and security of those working in the service of humanitarian assistance. Their effective and timely use, in the sense of the statement of the Security Council, can contribute to the reduction of the risks to which international civil servants and relief workers are increasingly exposed.

However, it is the author's contention—based on experience in disaster intervention and relief operations, civil search and rescue, hostage rescue and other types of military operations—that communications, techniques associated with defusing/de-escalation of violent situations and psychological training are only part of the answer. Additionally, these proposed solutions do not address violence confrontation, consequently dispensing with the individuals' right to self-defense—in the legal sense—rights that have been recognized throughout the ages leaving the first responder with no other alternative than taking a passive stance. The bottom line is that taking a passive stance may very well lead to increase vulnerability to victimization, or that such non-violent stance may actually attract violence (Lord & Nosunchuk, 1977).

The February 14, 2010 article in RENEWAMERICA.COM written by Kevin Fobbs "Martial arts-trained flight attendants can disable potential airline bombers," addresses the necessity for flight attendants—personnel whom since the terrorists attacks of 9-11 have become first-responders to potential acts of terrorism in the air—to be trained in self-defense. In his article Fobbs makes reference to the case of the 23-year-old Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Detroit-bound Christmas Day bomber who has been indicted on six criminal counts including



attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction and attempted murder of 289 people. According to the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA(AFA-CWA), alert flight attendants were able to thwart Abdulmutallab's terrorist intentions (Fobbs, 2010). Another instance cited by Fobbs in the article is the case of US-Air flight attendant Lorin Gorman. Gorman used her highly trained self-defense skills and awareness to disable a possible mid-air threat from an unruly and quite possibly dangerous passenger who was reportedly under the influence of medical marijuana. During a Fox News interview, Gorman—a martial arts enthusiast that

has taken up self-defense training, and also trained to be more alert since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks—said that when the passenger in question became aggressive exiting the on-board lavatory with his pants down, she went into action and as he continued to ignore her requests to sit down and be quiet, she elected to use a more effective mean of subduing the disagreeable passenger, her self-defense training.

According to the AFA-CWA, "In light of the Christmas Day terrorist attack that was thwarted by the efforts of flight attendants at Northwest Airlines, AFA-CWA is calling for a four-pronged approaches that would help to tighten aviation security. The organization has reissued the call for carry-on guidelines, as well as enhancing communication techniques and hands-on counter-terrorism training." Such hands on training also calls for multiple 2-hour sessions spread over several weeks that include techniques designed to allow flight attendants to protect themselves against physical attack, respond to acts of sabotage, which includes potential suicide bombers, and to prevent attempts to breach the cockpit and utilize the aircraft as a weapon of mass destruction (Fobbs, 2010). This article supports the author's claims that self-defense training enhances first-responder's survivability as a mean of less than lethal force.

The fact of the matter is that, if people are going to be placed in potentially dangerous situations, in which they may very well have to defend themselves from attackers—as is the case with first responders—they must be equipped with the necessary tools to enhance their survivability or protect themselves. Using the case of the known public figure during Hurricane Katrina, as an example; she was attacked in her sleep giving her little chance to use her psychology training to talk her way out of the situation or the radio to call for assistance. Sine Qua Non, had this person received training in self-defense—similar to that of the flight attendant—it would have increased her chances for repelling her attacker and calling for help. In the article Self-defense Strategy, the author talks about the **B.E.A.M.** Strategy. He mentioned **“The Seven Stars”** or natural weapons of the body and how these natural weapons work best when employed against the vulnerable parts of the body—attacking **Soft Targets** with **Hard Bones**.

This article will provide information regarding the weapons of the body and their application to the vulnerable points of the body. The following illustrations will help explicate this concept:



Fist



Fist Application



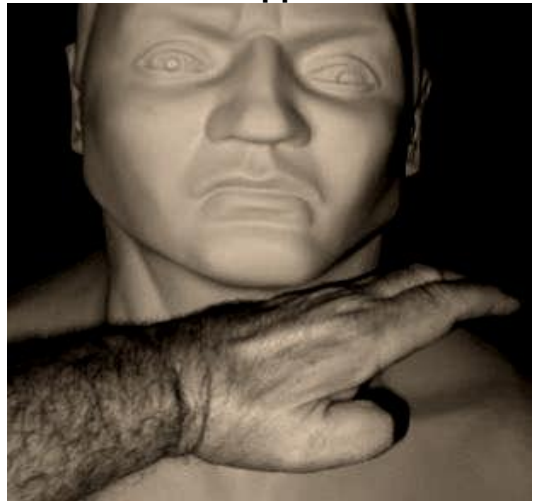
Thumb



Thumb Application



Side of Hand



Side of Hand Application



Heel of the Palm



Heel of the Palm Application



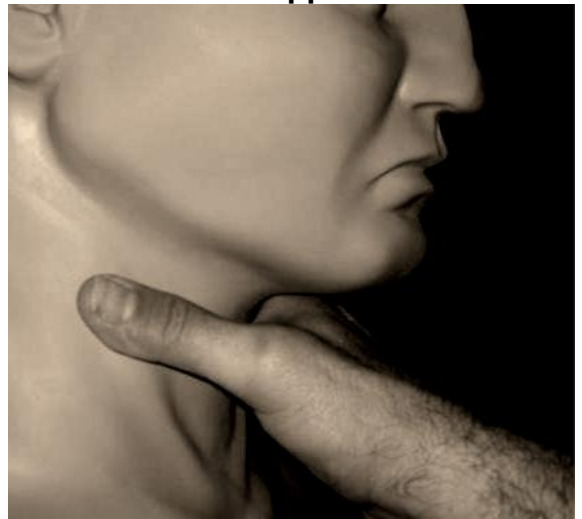
Claw



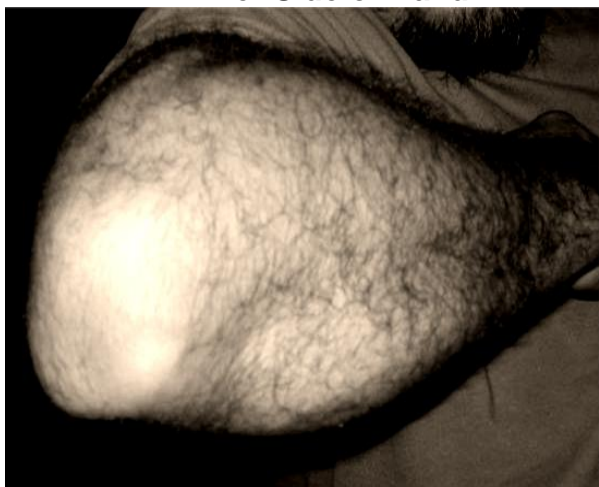
Claw Application



Inner Side of Hand



Inner Side of Hand Application



Elbow



Elbow Application



Foot



Foot Application



Knee



Knee Application

One need not spend years in the training hall or Dojo to be able protect oneself from an attacker, self-defense can be as simple as remembering one word **“B.E.A.M”**—**B**reath, **E**yes, **A**ttention and **M**ovement

- **Breath:** If your opponent can't breathe, he or she can't fight. Take the attacker's **Breath** away, you'll win.
- **Eyes:** If your opponent can't see, he or she would not be able to anticipate the blow and protect against it. Take his or her **Eyesight**, you'll win.

- **Attention:** Take away his or her **Attention**, you'll win.
- **Movement:** If your opponent can't move, he or she wouldn't be able to get away or come after you. Take away his or her **Movement**, you'll win.

“And one can do this simply by putting the seven stars to work for you ...!”

References

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