

TACTICAL

KNIFE DEFENSE BY MARK HUMAN

Issue 2 - November 2019

Knife Defense Tactics

Lessons from the street to survive

Dangerous Formulas

How to identify dangerous advice

Pistol vs. Knife

Crucial concepts of distance and dynamics



Mark Human

Knife Defense

The danger of formulaic tactics in your knife training

Combat Mindset

What it really takes to counter knife attacks effectively

Knife Culture

Why most Western policymakers are dangerously wrong



MARK HUMAN ULTRA CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT INSTRUCTOR

*Knife attacks! Edged
weapons. Knife vs. Gun.*

Mark Human is a trainer for South African Military, Security companies, close protection services, security conservation personnel, police and Metro police including volunteering training time for Metro Peace officers.

Top: Mark Human demonstrates a CQB counter strategy versus a knife attacker on the Wodan Security International Bodyguard Conference 2019.



A lot of people told me: „Stay away from knife attack topics. It is a minefield. Too much of ill advice! Too many tactical ninjas teaching nonsense that gets you killed within seconds in a real knife attack.“ And I knew, these people were right. I knew they meant well. But I also know whom I can trust in the industry. When I heard, that Ralf Kassner of Wodan Security hired an instructor from South Africa, Mark Human, for his International Bodyguard Conference, I knew, that I should

take a closer look into Mark Human's teachings. When I got his first briefing, I was convinced, that I was right: Mark Human has absolutely no sense for tactical B.S.! He knows what he is talking about. Mark delivers insight that are realistic and specific. Real life stuff. Once, a man was nearly stabbed to death in front of me. It was a chaotic mess of pure and incredible fast violence. Mark's thinking and his teaching reflects that. He will give you insights and tactics, that are powerful and realistic.

Misconceptions

To understand where you might be wrong, when it comes to counter knife attacks, can save your life. Sometimes, your own belief system or a false sense of security can more dangerous than the attacker himself.

Pepper Spray vs Knife

The tactical training industry, close protection services, law enforcement, and civilians have different opinions about the efficiency of pepper spray versus a knife attack. I asked Mark Human for his advice.

States of Readiness

To go beyond a formulaic approach for countering knife attacks, your own state of readiness is crucial. Understanding your own state of reaction time, perception, and skill level is your first line of defense.



Knife Defense: Common Misconceptions

What are common misconceptions professional operators, law enforcement, and CPS have about knife defense? And why?



Top: Mark Human

by Mark Human

Over the last few years, edged weapon threats to law enforcement and security services have come under the media spotlight. The recent attack, October 3rd 2019, in Paris: within seven minutes four police were fatally stabbed and one badly wounded before the attacker was gunned down. This is an example of how dangerous an edged weapon opponent can be.

Even skilled empty hand practitioners and seasoned gunmen don't take the time to really understand the mindset, variables and the chaos of edged weapon attacks. They tend to oversimplify their solutions. That's why there is such a big market for answers made of simple steps in one-two-three-four-tactics like:

- This is how the will attack happen
- Don't let the attacker get that close
- Shut his weapon hand down
- Shut his computer (head) down

These basic steps are all viable in the right context and correct circumstances. But in isolation they only deal with the picture of the way the person behind the simple one-two-three-four-step solution perceives how a knife attack will happen. You can't do that.

Because the sad truth is: Any variation or change can destroy even a good defense tactic within seconds. And it will happen to you if you look at knife attacks in such a formulaic way.

Of course, in training, or when facing a criminal approach, you have to prioritize what is most likely to happen. But at the same time you must avoid the trap of oversimplifying how you think a knife attack will happen to you. Knife attacks aren't formulaic.

With formulas, you are buying yourself a false sense of security. And maybe you have to trade your life for this illusion of security one day. Don't let this happen to you.

Officers in uniforms and carrying a firearm often develop a dangerous „this won't happen to me“ attitude, when it comes to knife attacks. I have heard this been called the *Batman Syndrome* because they feel a false sense of control and invincibility.

The problem starts, when your Batman Syndrome is not backed with training commitment and skills required to survive real violent encounters. You need to know that many people and cultures have no respect for your uniform, firearm, values and social beliefs systems. They will stab you.

Top: A more realistic range training



They will stab you furiously, in random, chaotic ways and take your firearm away without a second thought. You can't counter this moment with a

Students have to know that at close range they will have to move and shoot. And lot of shooting will get done one handed. They need to avoid to shoot themselves.

formulaic approach of wisely calculated steps. These formulas just calm your own fears, but they won't calm the violent randomness you will face on the streets. Luckily, more and more officers and operators understand that.

From an actual skills and training programs point of view it seems that more and more people are appreciating the threat that knife in the

hands of someone with bad intentions and a committed mindset can result in.

But dogmatic institutionalization and blind belief in static firearms training programs often fail to address

the chaotic nature of edged weapon attacks.

Trying to force a set of skills from the range world into the world of edged weapons defense will only give you a small piece of the puzzle. I am a firm believer in solid modern day fundamentals of safety and marksmanship, but if this is all you have, then you have a very limited ability to deal with any variations. Students have to know that at close range they will have to move and shoot. A lot of shooting will get done one handed, and they need to avoid shooting themselves.

Right: Mark Human during a training.

Top: Mark Human discussing a very close range attack.



Especially, they need to avoid shooting themselves if their support hand has to go forward of their muzzle to push, defend or strike.

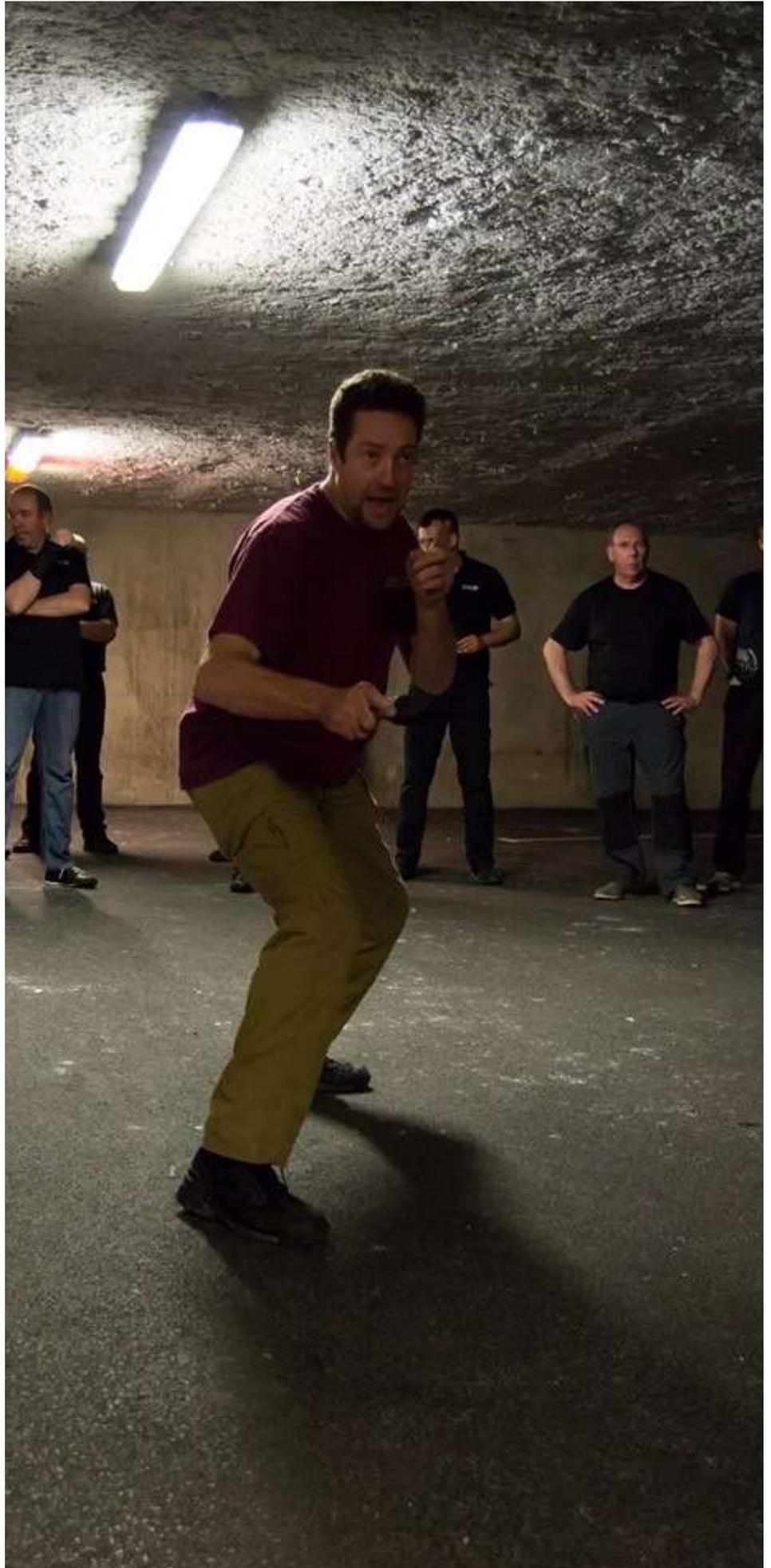
Looking at attacks from a knifera's perspective is key to developing counter edged weapons training.

This is not just stuff that they need to be made aware of but something that has to be structured and trained constructively if it is to be functional out in the field.

Yes, this training will be uncomfortable and ruffle a few feathers of modern day range officers but if properly planned and presented this can be done safely.

About Mark Human

Mark has been a trainer for various South African Military, law enforcement departments, private law enforcement, security companies. His focus is on CQB, specialized segments of HRT, and "anormal" scenarios practices and skills.





Top: Mark Human

In many first world countries law-abiding citizens no longer have a knife culture. Carrying a knife is taboo and criminalized. The end result is that criminals have a very good understanding of the damage a knife can do while regular citizens and even law enforcement officers are either terrified or they totally underestimate the knife as a weapon. At an administrative level, policymakers are too slow to change while seeking politically and socially correct answers to a problem that simply does not care about their social values. • Mark Human

Pepper Spray vs. Knife

Pepper spray: A great tool to stop aggressive attacks and create painful distraction? Or just an unreliable defense weapon that depends too much on circumstances and environment? We asked Mark Human for his advice.

Pepper spray can be a very effective tool, yet results and reactions are too inconsistent to be relied on as a tool on its own.

First, anyone who decides to carry pepper spray should practice. Especially, accessing it under pressure. Second, you have to understand: even though it can be an effective tool, yet results, reaction time, and any reactions to been sprayed, can be very inconsistent. Don't feel too safe, just because you are carrying spray. Just like any tool selected for personal protection you should know the advantages and limitations of that tool.

Over the years we have probably sprayed hundreds of resisting suspects, many armed with edged weapons. Pepper spray gave us mostly positive results mixed with some total failures.

With the use of OC, in MDW/ACT we have categorized 5 key reactions to OC Spray. It is our MDW Multi-Dimensional Warrior (MDW) classification for reaction to OC Spray and appropriate use of batons.

For example: Effective compliant. When the attacker is sprayed with OC Spray their reaction is cease resistance and

to comply with instructions. It is not necessary to use any other force to gain compliance.

Or, effective non-compliant, non-aggressive. When attackers are sprayed with OC spray their response is to cease resistance yet not comply with instructions, often curling up in a foetal position. This can be a dangerous situation for our team members. Because it requires empty hand control tactics that can expose them to weapon threats that may have been concealed. On the other hand, any use of force such as striking with the baton will be viewed as excessive force, now. This could be a dilemma, especially for LE officers.

Another category: Effective not compliant and aggressive. It is not an uncommon reaction for attackers even though OC spray has a painful effect on them to continue to launch aggressive attacks. In these situations, the use of the baton or even firearms are necessary to disrupt and stop attacks to avoid injury to team members.

And of course: Ineffective or delayed response! Should an attacker not be affected or have a delayed response to OC spray, a baton should be in position to disrupt the continued attack.



Top: Mark Human

How crucial is distance to counter a knife attack?

What is the crucial distance? And what to do, if your attacker is too close to draw your firearm?



I believe that setting a rough framework for distances and pressure can provide a reasonable framework to situations when a gunman, dealing with edged weapon attacks, can stand and deliver rounds on a threat.

A good framework includes: Move off line, base and shoot, shoot while moving, deal with and attack at the same time to create distance, gain access and shoot. Deal with and crash to control the attacker with or without access.

This needs to be a very flexible and fluid framework as there are numerous variables that will stretch and compact these ranges and the decision-making linked to appropriate skills.

There are many variables but I will highlight 3 that are key. Pressure, for these purposes, refers to how hard, and how fast and how ferocious the attacks are, or any combination of these elements.

A good example of how easily things can be changed up is

even when an attacker moves forward into the same range. There will be a big difference between how you counter a hard and fast attack as opposed to a smooth flowing attack.

Your skill sets need to match the energy and nature of the attack. Also, your skill set has to be ready to counter an attack where the attacker leads with the blade or where the attacker leads with his check or non blade hand. Both have very different solutions. Recognition skills and states of readiness linked to effective

an effective way of linking actions to observed threats and or disrupting an enemies actions.

As discussed in the previous question (Common misconceptions): the key to success is maintaining congruency between training and the actual threat in the field environment. Along with this we utilize a States of Readiness to help students understand how to select effective actions to deal with similar situations but where they have either early or late

Your skill sets need to match the energy and nature of the attack

action are crucial here.

The use of observing, recognizing threats and linking an action is very well expressed by John Boyd's OODA Loop. I think many trainers use their own version of this (Observe, Orientate, Decide and Act) as

threat recognition. Often, it is helpful to leave the question of a „crucial distance“ aside and change one's perspective to readiness. Because distance is a relative parameter: a three meters distance can be too much, if you are too distracted with other stuff going on, and

Left: Mark Human at Wodan Security's International Bodyguard Conference



Right: Mark Human demonstrating techniques at IBC4



the attack is concealed or comes from a person you have not identified as a threat until the attack happens. Or you have innocent bystanders close. That's why it is helpful to understand that *your* crucial distance and *your* point of no return is where your readiness to act accordingly can be fully triggered, or not. That's why I work with a three „States of Readiness“ concept.

Mark Human's States of Readiness

Pro Active Ready: You recognize a situation or threat early enough to select and simplify the options you require for quick decisive action.

Reactive Ready: You are ready for something but you require more options. You have not clearly identified threats or there are numerous other variables influencing the situation. You require a broader scope of options and linked reactions to deal with a number of variables that present themselves.

Reactive: You are ambushed. Your reactions are limited, because of limited information or reduced time to process information. Decision making time for these scenarios require simple decisive reactions that have been predetermined in training or by luck and experience.





BIOGRAPHY, FRIENDS AND COOPERATIONS



Mark Human is currently based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Mark has been a paid trainer for various South African Military, National and Provincial law enforcement departments, private law enforcement, security companies and local nature conservation team members.

His focus is on CQB, Specialized segments of HRT and “anormal” scenarios- to complement existing sound practices and skills.

Mark has done training programs and workshops in South Africa, Kenya, Mauritius, Brazil, Panama, USA, France, Norway, Sweden, Lithuania, Austria, Australia, Thailand, Finland, Poland, Greece, and Malaysia. FOR ACT and MDW Mark is head of training for curriculum and course development but also maintains regulatory qualifications. PFTC Full qualification SAQA ID: 5048 and SASSETA assessor for NQF (National Qualifications Framework) unit standards.



Thomas Lojek

Author of thriller novels. Writer with close ties to the world of special operations and tactical training.



