

Myth of the Duel

Recently, I was teaching an impact weapon class and observed an event I have seen a gazillion times between workout partners. One old hand. One new rookie. The experienced hand tells a brand new person how to properly hit him with a stick. Properly! Because his response "won't work" if the rookie didn't attack - properly. The new guy had some flimsy, wrong-wristed, amateur way to strike that was quite lame because he was new to the baton. Honestly, it does remind one of the old Jim Carry skit on the *In Living Color* TV show:

"You are not stabbing me right!"

But, the sad thing is, the new person was actually hitting his partner as he would in a fight. And sadder still, the vet partner was only prepared to fight against the proper veteran angle of a skilled fighter's delivery. The saddest point? That "wrong" way is likely to be how 90% of the population will actually attack you.

Want to see a new counter and response from a tactic or technique? Bring a new guy into your workout class. Man on the street. We can almost guarantee he won't attack you "the right way." Nor will he respond "the right way." He will squirm out of your joint locks. He will step in the direction of his fall and confound your takedowns. He'll pell instead of mell.

The new guy might punch funny, swing a stick poorly or deliver a weird, lame line of attack. He will shoot you, and quite well, like a cowboy from an old black and white western. Martial history is replete with these stories of new people inflicting injuries on vets. Remember the story of the first-day, gangly teen-ager, who accidentally stuck his finger into the eye of a Brazilian black belt and put the veteran black belt out of commission for months?

Several issues for the veteran are at the core of this phenomenon. One is what I have called for two decades now, the ***myth of the duel***. Systems train against the mirror image of themselves and fight against the overt and the subtle methods of their system. It is an insidious little, cancerous problem. Like tunnel vision, only tunnel fighting.

This mistake is easy to read and understand here, yet martial practitioners still suffer greatly at the hands of the radical and different. Conventional warriors suffer at the ways of the guerilla. The rule-abiding cop fights the no-rules bad guy. Kick-boxers suffer at the hands of ground fighters. Wrestlers suffer at the hands of ground n' pounders. Firearm-range, paper-target shooting champions suffer at the rabid, trigger finger of the alleyway thug. The boxer never sees the hammer fist. This bloody list of interdisciplinary mistakes is almost endless. Train to fight the enemy you expect.

Second, remember not just to train in a multi-disciplinary manner but to fight against these so-called, ***"rookie/wrong-ways"*** of common attack. This is a high-percentage probability.

Year-after-year your fighting system, your rules of engagement, engrains itself into your muscle memory. You become use to the lines and methods of hand, stick, knife and gun attack that your system delivers. Then someone spits in your eye and hits your head with a frying pan. Wait now - what belt level was that again?

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– *The Scientific Fighting Congress*

(For your entertainment? The Jim Carry clip. [Click here](#))