

Law Enforcement and Security Consulting Inc

Take the Initiative Observe- Orient- Decide and ACT!

Learn the Strategy and Tactics Essential to Avoiding, Defusing and Resolving Conflict.

It does not matter which professional discipline you are from law enforcement, security, or the military. Whether you are the cop on the street being sent on the call, security officer on a roving walking post who comes upon a group of youths acting rowdy, a soldier or marine in a hostile country observing an approaching vehicle; whatever the circumstances taking initiative, strategically doing something that makes sense to keep you and those around you safe! ALIVE! "Lets you go home at the end of your tour" is what it is all about when we are tasked with handling dangerous encounters.

When danger presents itself in an obvious manner; "we know it is a bad set of circumstances we are walking in to" a fight, shots being fired, hostage situation, high risk warrant services etc. in these types of circumstances we professionals handle ourselves quite well. We put ourselves in "win" position, we establish command, identify kill zones, set up inner and outer perimeter, we set up command posts and staging areas and bring in the resources necessary to bring about a successful resolution.

The focus of this writing is not these types of incidents. I would like to discuss the unknown risk calls we handle, the disturbance, the car stop or encounter with the unknown individual, the alarm, and the trespasser etc. These so called "routine" things we do that are getting us injured and killed. Why is it happening? Is it physical skills or lack there of? Is it Training? Is it fear? Fear of getting in trouble with the administration, fear of being sued, criticized, ridiculed by the media? Is it complacency or the "it" will not happen here attitude?" Probably all of these contribute some degree to the friction that slows down the decision making process and makes us vulnerable to attack.

It seems to me from doing this work for quite sometime now that we professionals let our guard down and put ourselves at great risk, because we simply do not look for the signs of danger. Oh yah! We look for the move to the waist band or the move under the seat, the fists come up and punches start our way or the crazy person doing something so outrageous we know we got trouble. But what about the

professionals being killed not even getting their gun out of the holster or worse yet getting their gun taken and used against them by the bad guy?

I do not want to get into statistics in this article but one that has stuck out in my mind over the years I have been training is from the FBI Officers Killed in the Line of Duty publication that stated; "in gunfight situations where law enforcement professional were killed in the line of duty 98% of the time the suspect fired first." 98%! This statistic has scared the hell out of me for years now. I thought why? What are we doing wrong in the field to have the bad guy get the upper hand on us in 98% of the situations?

The last 6-7 years I thought often of all the training I have had over the years from my days in the USMC as an infantryman and the 20 years in law enforcement as a street cop, patrol sergeant and now lieutenant. With all the defensive tactics training, firearms training, impact weapons, OC spray, handcuffing techniques, CQB, active shooter, sniper training etc. Most professionals get this type of training or some semblance of it through the years, so, why? Why are we still getting caught in disadvantageous positions? My answer; my opinion; we are not paying attention. Not paying attention to the signs, subtle signs of danger that lurk on the calls we respond to. It is the mental mindset or lack thereof we put ourselves in, that costs us in the end.

"You alone can deny victory to the enemy. Only your enemy can allow you to win." ~Sun Tzu

So what can we do? What can assist us in gaining the advantage and keeping it through out our contact with the unknown? The answer lies within the concept of the Boyd Cycle.

Much has been written on Colonel John Boyd and his O-O-D-A Loop also known as the Boyd Cycle over the last few years. His ideas on conflict and how we process information during it have had great implications on the military and how we now fight war. Boyd's work on conflict including 327 briefing titled "a Discourse on Winning and Loosing" spanned close to 50 years. From his time as a fighter pilot over the skies of Korea in the 1950's till he died in 1997. He was dedicated to understanding conflict and teaching those of us who handle conflict how too get the advantage or "take the initiative" as he put it. He discovered that Conflicts are time Competitive **O**bservation, **O**rientation, **D**ecision, and **A**ction cycles! The O-O-D-A Loop! The Boyd Cycle gives us protection professionals an advantage by giving us a

better understanding of conflict how it unfolds and how we can control it and keep our advantage. Basically the O-O-D-A Loop gives advantage through better SITUATIONAL AWARENESS! This in turn keeps us alert to the information exchange between "us and them" if you will. Information both verbal and non-verbal is huge to staying ahead of the curve in conflict. The more we know the better tactical decisions we make. The decisions we make help us to take and maintain the initiative, or we lose the initiative because we make lousy decisions. We see; yet do not orient to the dangers presented to us early on in the contact. It is imperative we pay attention to what is going on around us from beginning to end of contact.

We must look for signs of cooperation or non-cooperation as I like to call it early in the encounter. If we note anything that leaves us uncertain about the potential outcome of the situation we must do something, something based on the current situation and our current environment with regards to the contacts we make whether we resolve them through verbal persuasion or some other level of force.

"Plan an advantage by listening. Adjust to the situation. Get assistance from the outside. Influence events. Then planning can find opportunities and give you control." ~ Sun Tzu

Example: Three officers respond at 3AM to the call of a disturbance. When they arrive there are three people present, two males and a female. One male is intoxicated; I will only focus on him for the purpose of this example. Intoxicated male is spoken to by responding officers. They tell him to call it a night and to go to bed and sleep it off. He says he will and turns to go into the house. The officers continue gathering information identifications and such for the report they will have to file. While speaking to the other two people involved the "intoxicated Male" comes back outside to talk, he is mellow and is again told to go back inside or he will be placed in protective custody for the night.

The officers spend another 5 minutes gathering information, and are about to leave when they see the "intoxicated male" standing at the front door waving good bye. The officers decide to bring him to the police station for his safety. At the station the booking process is done by the Sergeant, during which the "intoxicated male" talks about police beating up innocent people and asked several times if they were going to beat him up. After booking, the sergeant and one patrol officer went to put the man in a cell for the night and all hell broke loose. A fight broke out in which the subject attempted to escape. He punched,

kicked, clawed and scratched the three officers inside the station and made his way outside where a fourth officer got involved in the altercation. An attempt on an officer's gun was made by the subject without success thankfully. In the end four officers were injured on duty, three were out for over a week, the other returned to duty that morning. In the end we were lucky no one was seriously hurt. What caught my attention later were the reports filed by the officers involved. Every report I mean all of them stated **"The individual was cooperative throughout contact including the booking procedure until we went to place him in the cell."** All the facts as described above were in the reports all the indications of non-cooperation were present from the time the officers arrived and through booking. Why did these officers not see them? Or better yet why did they see them and not orient to the possible dangers? Let's also note that these are outstanding officers handling this incident that I personally know and have worked with throughout my career. So why and what is it they did not relate to, what is it they missed or saw and ignored and why did they ignore it?

During an after action review of the situation, the officers involved stated they did not think of his coming out of the house after being told to stay in and sleep it off as a sign of non-cooperation, even after the second time, even when they were bringing him in. When asked why they brought him in they responded he was not doing what he was told. At this point we all began to laugh a little although the circumstances were not funny the responses I got were both funny and alarming. We continued the discussion and agreed the individual was indeed non-cooperative and therefore a possible threat, requiring close "monitoring and control" from contact to release.

This left me with the realization that we Protection Professionals do look for "obvious" signs of danger but most of us do not look for the "subtle signs" of danger and that ATTENTION TO DEATAIL is critical to survival.

We do not look for the subtle signs of conflict, as we should, in the majority of cases we are involved in. Obviously some professionals are more attuned to their surroundings than others because they train themselves to be, they take initiative to educate them selves and become tactically proficient in all areas, mental, moral and physical aspects of conflict. This fact gives these 5% an advantage over the subjects they come in contact with because they understand the phases of conflict and prepare. They understand conflict is unpredictable and that they need a strategy to win.

Conflict is described by the Marine Corps in Warfighting as:

"The essence of conflict is a struggle between two hostile, independent, and irreconcilable wills, trying to impose itself on the other. Conflict is fundamentally an interactive social process. Conflict is thus a process of continuous mutual adaptation, of give and take, move and counter move. It is critical to keep in mind that the adversary is not an inanimate object to be acted upon but an independent and animate force with its own objectives and plans. While we try to impose our will on the adversary, he resists us and seeks to impose his own will on us. Appreciating this dynamic interplay between opposing human wills is essential to understanding the fundamental nature of conflict."

The definition says it all it "us vs. them" and "them vs. us" There are at least two people involved in the conflict. Have we lost this aspect of it somewhere in our training or sometime during our careers?

Another angle I have thought about is the equipment we have, is it hindering our ability to think on our feet? We have state of the art stuff to make our jobs easier. Bullet proof vests to make us safer, thermal imaging for tracking and pursuits, semi-automatic pistols and now rifles, portable radios for constant communications, K-9, stop sticks, etc. you name it the list goes on. This is all necessary equipment I know. I think sometimes however it makes individual professionals in our field feel safer than they actually should feel. Take a look at this quote below from a law enforcement trainer that gets to my point.

"Today's environment of accelerating scientific discoveries and technological change bring ever-improving hardware to the end user. In this climate is it easy to overlook and even abandon the core foundation of any weapon system, the interplay and perceptions of the human mind in a combative situation."~ Ken J. Good (article: got a second, Boyd Cycle-OODA Loop)

"The interplay and perceptions of the human mind" Boyd said it best with this quote: "Machines don't fight wars. Terrain doesn't fight wars. Humans fight wars. You must get into the minds of humans. That's where the battles are won." Just replace the word "war" with "conflict" whether we are talking war or individual conflict, the interplay of the human mind is the most critical aspect of winning. I am not saying the physical aspect is not critical it is, you must always be able to do what needs to be done, but if you were Gandhi (communicator), Bruce Lee

(hands on DT) and Carlos Hathcock (firearms) all rolled into one, "what a human weapon" you would be. All these skills you can handle any situation; verbally, hands on or if necessary deadly force. But if you were not making good observations (using all your senses), that tell you something (orient) then the decisions you need to make and the action you need to take would not get done because you basically were not paying attention to your surroundings. How do you take "initiative" if you do not see a problem to respond too?

Enough on what we do wrong. How do we fix the problem is the question? As Sun Tzu said; *"Position yourself where you cannot lose."* Good observation, orientation, decision and action cycles are as Boyd said "Time Competitive" therefore we need to position ourselves on the winning side of the loop. Use our observations all our senses to get the full picture of what it is that is going on.

This picture or "snap shot" of what our senses are telling us about the situation is critical. The orientation phase of the cycles is based on all our senses and I do mean all; sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. I believe our 6th sense the so called hunch or better described as intuition is also critical. The way we see things is based on our backgrounds, previous experiences, education, cultural traditions, new information which is continual throughout the situation, and how we breakdown (analysis) and put together (synthesis) the circumstances we are observing. Based on our observations and what we believe is happening (orientation) we make decisions. Decisions to take initiative and control our circumstances in our current environment and then we do it, take action. This action could come in the way of words, tactical communication, movement whether it is to move in and control the subject with any level of force that is reasonable under the law. To move away, redeploy to keep the subject confused and not quite sure what you are doing, deceiving him till you are in a position of advantage.

"Warfare is one thing. It is a philosophy of deception." ~Sun Tzu

The goal as Boyd put it is the *"ability to operate at a faster tempo or rhythm than an adversary enables one to fold adversary back inside himself so that he can neither appreciate nor keep-up with what's going on. He will become disorientated or confused. Unless such menacing pressure is relieved, adversary will experience various combinations of uncertainty, doubt, confusion, self deception, indecision, fear, panic, discouragement, despair, etc., which will further: Disorient or twist his mental images/impressions of what's*

happening: Thereby Disrupt his mental/physical maneuvers for dealing with such a menace: Thereby Overload his mental/physical capacity to adapt or endure: Thereby Collapse his ability to carry on." In a simple word we "confuse" him with the unexpected so he does not know what to expect. And when the timing is right you move in and control the subject. Control the subject from first contact till you release him or close the cell door behind him.

We must remember we cannot create an opportunity. We do not control our competitive environment. We control only our position within it. We are constantly looking for an opportunity to advance, but that opportunity must be provided by others who leave us an opening. Remember the quote above from USMC Warfighting: *"It is critical to keep in mind that the adversary is not an inanimate object to be acted upon but an independent and animate force with its own objectives and plans."* The skill of positioning through fast tempo O-O-D-A Loops is putting us in the right place at the right time to take advantage of the opening presented. We can, however, confuse others about our intentions and abilities so that they don't know what to expect. Play the "Barney Fife" or "Colombo" role; pretend you know nothing when you know more than enough. Move around instead of standing still. Keep conversation friendly when you want to shout stern commands. This deception will possibly confuse the adversary or at least keep him guessing as to your motives are. Opponents will make mistakes and give us an opportunity, but only if we mislead them about our true condition. We have to be patient. Eventually, we will discover an opening that will allow us to move forward.

"Be skilled in attacking. Give the enemy no idea of where to defend. Be skillful in your defense. Give the enemy no idea of where to attack." ~ Sun Tzu

When to move in is something I believe cannot be taught by a trainer. It must be taught by the individual he or she in the arena based on his or her perception (orientation) of what is taking place. Sun Tzu said; *"Victory comes from knowing when to attack and when to avoid battle."* The individual protection professional can be taught strategy and tactics but the individual alone must develop the feel for the circumstances he is in at the time. This can be done through training but the exact of how and when comes down to the individual. Tactical survival skills must be practiced and developed continually.

The Boyd Cycle based on Col. John Boyd's dedicated work and service to this great country is a tool every cop, security officer, soldier or

marine should know thoroughly if we are to improve on our safety in the field. Understand this! Winning a fight actually has very little to do with what you are armed with and a great deal to do with what you are thinking at the time! Don't just stand there! Take the initiative and develop your O-O-D-A Loops and strategy to win.

What is the aim and purpose of strategy?

"To improve our ability to shape and adapt to unfolding circumstances, so that we; (as individuals, as groups, as a culture, or as a nation-state) can survive, on our own terms." ~Col. John Boyd

Fred T. Leland (Instructor) is a current Police Lieutenant and a former United States Marine. He is an experienced trainer with over 20 years training law enforcement, military and security professionals with a Bachelors Degree in Law Enforcement. He is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy Class 216 where he specialized in terrorism related topics as well as leadership and management. His classes are interactive with use of real world examples to bring the point home. His specialties are handling dynamic encounters, terrorism awareness, use of force, impact weapon techniques, chemical spray, handcuffing, firearms, small unit CQB, and patrol procedures.

In addition to the references below I would like to mention the names in the training realm that have influenced my career and methods of training. Anything written here is influenced in some way by these organizations and people, some I have met personally some I have never had the pleasure of meeting but they all have had great influence on leadership and survival in the protection professional fields.

- The United States Serviceman their dedication and sacrifices to this great country and others around the world has always inspired and influenced my life.
- The United States Marine Corps "SEMPER FIDELIS"
- International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors
- Massachusetts Police Training Committee
- Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy
- National Tactical Officers Association
- LT. COL. DAVE GROSSMAN, U.S. Army (Ret.) Director, Killology Research Group, www.killology.com
- Poole, John *The Last Hundred Yards - The NCO's Contribution to Warfare* www.posteritypress.com
- Bruce Siddle, Sharpening the Warriors Edge
- Gabe Suarez, Suarez International www.suarezinternational.com
- Chet Richards, Defense and National Interest (www.d-n-i.net web-site dedicated to Boyd)
- Robert Taubert IACSP Tactical Advisor
- Smith and Wesson Academy

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