SAW IT COMING

USING THE HOLMES-RAHE STRESS SCALE TO ASSESS POTENTIAL VIOLENCE IN YOUR LIFE.

KRIS WILDER AND LAWRENCE KANE

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Thirty percent of female murder victims in the United States are killed by their husbands or boyfriends, a remarkable number considering that less than ten percent of male victims are killed by their significant others. Nevertheless, more than 100,000 men are violently assaulted by their wives or girlfriends each year. It is not always as newsworthy as having one's penis cut off thrown out the window of a moving car (Lorena Bobbitt, 1993) or flushed down the toilet (Kim Tran, 2005), or having a testicle torn off by someone who subsequently tries to eat it (Amanda Monti, 2007), but being on the receiving end of such violence is never a good thing. Worse yet, male-on-female violence is roughly six times higher than the other way around.

Any way you slice it, domestic violence is a serious crime, one that affects men, women, and children, even pets. It often stems from learned behavior, which means that children who grow up in dysfunctional households are much more likely to become abusers themselves. The danger can occur on multiple levels, everything from controlling behaviors to stalking, physical or sexual assault, or murder. And, these situations tend to escalate, with multiple minor incidents preceding more dramatic ones. Consequently it is vital to understand threat behaviors before it becomes too late to do anything about them.

The all important question, of course, is how to go about doing that, which what this article will tell you. But first, we need to set the stage…

Repurposing

During World War II, repurposing was a way of life. With limited resources the "Greatest Generation" learned to make do. With a little thought, a little creativity, you too can find innovative new purposes for things you've likely overlooked. They won't necessarily be perfect, but they will get you what you need.

An example of this repurposing ingenuity is the use of an old soup can. Puncture an empty soup can with a nail multiple times and you create a serviceable cheese-grater. All you need to do is hammer a good sized nail through the side of the can, then pull it downward before removing it to create a sharp leading edge that will shave the cheese. The end result, when completed works just a well as a purpose-build grater costing hundreds, if not thousands of times more. You'd be hard-pressed to tell the difference between what comes out of the soup-can shredder verses what was shaved off a block with an expensive tool (or pulled out of a package) once it was placed on your spaghetti or chili.

What does all this have to do with domestic violence? Well, we're going to show you how to use a tool developed in 1967 called the Holmes-Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale to aid you in assessing threats to your safety, particularly threats from domestic partners. Repurposing it a bit, much like our grandparents did with soup cans, turns an old psychological analysis into an incredibly useful tool.

But why do you need it, you might ask. Aren't warning signs obvious? Well yes and no. Yes they can be obvious, but they are often overlooked. And, potential victims oftentimes do not take into account in intensity or volume of what they have experienced.

The Fog of War

The fog of war a real phenomena that is used to explain how in combat, or military operations, issues of life and death can become clouded. The metaphor of fog is brilliant; if you have ever driven in fog then you know the difficulty of decision making, the slower reaction time, the intentional slowing of action, the second guessing and deliberations that are made. Even in instances where you

have driven on that particular stretch of road before, the uncertainty of the environment creates uncertainly in your thought process.

As an old karate *sensei* used to say, "When stress goes up, intelligence goes down." Abso-damn-lutely! Yet, if you have a map or GPS, especially prepared by others in a position of authority, you are likely to follow that map with less hesitation and with more confidence. In effect the fog is lifted just enough that you can function efficiently.

So what's that mean on the domestic front. Let's say a man goes off, killing former co-workers or loved ones. Pretty common, right? It used to be that the back story was, "He was a nice enough guy, kept to himself, we really had no idea it was coming." That sort of thing... But Americans have become more sophisticated in recent years. Background stories, at least after the initial news cycle, are much more accurate in painting a picture of these shooters. Reporters are more aware of what to ask and how to ask it. Court records are far more accessible than in the past too, so more pertinent information can now be obtained more easily.

Lets' use a real life example. We'll preface this by saying that our information comes from public sources, specifically a *Seattle Times* article written by Sandi Doughton that was published on Sunday, October 28, 2012, and that it is accurate to the best of our knowledge, but we weren't there so innocent until proven guilty and all that… not that there's much doubt here as you're about to discover:

A History of Violence and "No-Contact" Orders

John McKay, a 48-year-old man who went on a shooting rampage in Renton and Issaquah Washington, had earlier pled guilty to harassment and domestic-

violence charges and was embroiled in a lawsuit with a bank over his used-car business. His estranged wife, Tina, had no-contact orders and warned neighbors to alert police if they ever saw him near her home. Here's what is reported to have happened:

- In May a restraining order was issued against McKay after his wife reported that he had threatened to kill her, her children, and the rest of her family. "He told me to go ahead and get a restraining order," she wrote. "It can't stop a bullet."

- In June McKay pled guilty to felony harassment and domestic violence. In September, he pled guilty to malicious mischief. In both cases, the court issued no-contact orders and banned him from possessing firearms.

- Simultaneously, McKay was embroiled in a lawsuit over a used-car dealership he operated. The bank claimed he and his partners owed more than $163,000. A judge granted a temporary restraining order which prevented him from selling his inventory.

- Tina McKay thought that her estranged husband did not know where she was living. Nevertheless he found her house, broke in, pistol-whipped two people inside, and shot a third. He then drove to his former mother-in-law's home, some 15 minutes away, broke in, chased her into the backyard, and shot her several times. Both shooting victims were hospitalized but expected to survive.

- At the end of the day police found him dead in a rental car of what appeared to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

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The Holmes-Rahe Stress Scale

Developed by Holmes and Rahe, for whom the test was named, the stress scale rates life events and aggregates them to create an overall life stress score. Their goal was to find a link between life stress and illness. There are two version available, one for children and another for adults, but we are only going to use only the adult chart here. Here's how it works, place a checkmark next to each life event that have taken place in the last year. Total the corresponding numbers in the right-hand column for a rough estimate of how much stress is in the subject's life:

✓	Life Event	Life Change Units
	Death of a spouse	100
	Divorce	73
	Marital separation	65
	Imprisonment	63
	Death of a close family member	63
	Personal injury or illness	53
	Marriage	50
	Dismissal from work	47
	Marital reconciliation	45
	Retirement	45
	Change in health of family member	44
	Pregnancy	40
	Sexual difficulties	39
	Gain a new family member	39
	Business readjustment	39
	Change in financial state	38
	Death of a close friend	37

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✓	Life Event	Life Change Units
	Change to different line of work	36
	Change in frequency of arguments	35
	Major mortgage	32
	Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
	Change in responsibilities at work	29
	Child leaving home	29
	Trouble with in-laws	29
	Outstanding personal achievement	28
	Spouse starts or stops work	26
	Begin or end school	26
	Change in living conditions	25
	Revision of personal habits	24
	Trouble with boss	23
	Change in working hours or conditions	20
	Change in residence	20
	Change in schools	20
	Change in recreation	19
	Change in church activities	19
	Change in social activities	18
	Minor mortgage or loan	17
	Change in sleeping habits	16
	Change in number of family reunions	15
	Change in eating habits	15
	Vacation	13
	Christmas	12
	Minor violation of law	11

"You can't stop a bullet." That is what John McKay told his wife when she threatened to get a restraining order against him. A suspended drivers' license does not stop scofflaws from driving, it only stops law abiding citizens. Similarly, restraining orders do keep those who intend violence from carrying out mayhem. For all their legal weight, at the end of the day they are just pieces of paper. Tina McKay told her neighbors that she feared for her life. In retrospect she was absolutely right to do so. Using the scale above, let's look at the long list of warning flairs in the McKay case:

Warning Flair #1 – Divorce

As we pointed out McKay had already been convicted, having plead guilty to domestic violence. His relationship with his wife was over and unlikely to be repaired. His wife Tina was scared enough that she asked the neighbors to watch for McKay and call the police if they saw him in the neighborhood. If they were not already divorced, they certainly were physically separated with a divorce looming in the not too distant future. So, with all signs pointing to "yes" on the divorce life event, McKay gets a quick 73 points. That's the second largest value, right under death of a spouse.

- ✓ Divorce = 73

Warning Flair #2 – Money Troubles

When it came to money troubles, McKay had them in spades. His used car dealership was in arrears $163,000 to the bank which got the courts to put a freeze on his ability to sell cars. While this undoubtedly secured collateral for some of what the bank was owed, it created a proverbial Catch-22. Unless he

had another source of income not obvious form the article, he was unable to generate revenue to cover living expenses, let alone to pay even the interest on his debt. This ticks off three more high-level stressors:

- ✓ Business readjustment = 39
- ✓ Change in financial Status = 38
- ✓ Foreclosure = 30

Warning Flair #3 – Trouble with In-Laws

We don't know exactly what issues McKay had with his Mother-in-Law, Linda Ryan, but it was obviously serious. After all, he tried to kill her. He kicked in the front door, fired several shots at her as she fled the house, chased her into the back yard, and shot her several times. Reports did not describe the caliber of the gun, exactly how many times he shot her, or where his bullets struck, but that really does not matter. McKay undoubtedly believed that he had achieved his goal, leaving her dead or dying as he drove away.

- ✓ Trouble with in-laws = 29

Warning Flair #4 – Changes in Work Conditions

We already touched on the financial issues that McKay was facing regarding his business, so a change in work conditions requires little processing. He had a business that was unable to generate income, so going to work must have thrown his failure in his face, whereas not going to work most likely fed the flames of personal inadequacy. At this point there is nothing positive coming

from this aspect of his life.

- ✓ Change in work conditions 20

Warning Flair #5 – Change in Residence

McKay's had a no-contact order placed against him after the conviction for domestic violence. It is somewhat unclear what his living situation was, but he certainly was not living with his wife. According to reports she believed that he did not know where she lived. So, more points added to an already mounting total.

- ✓ Change in residence 20

Warning Flair #6 – Minor Violations of the Law

The Holmes Rahe scale has no place for felony convictions; it was designed for the average person going through a normal life. Nevertheless, we had to place f harassment and domestic violence somewhere. Furthermore, a mere ninety days after those convictions he pled guilty to malicious mischief, damaging of another person's property. Breaking other people's things is often a surrogate voodoo doll, transferring ill intent toward the victim onto his stuff. Damage to property and pets is very common with domestic violence. Although quite serious in the psychological realm of behavior, our repurposed scale just adds a few more points on the way out the door.

- ✓ Minor violation of the law 11

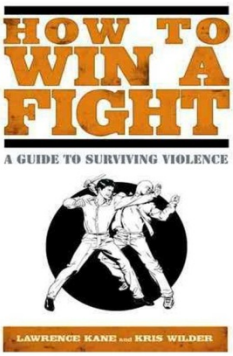
Conclusion

It is important to note that in all of these cases, McKay plead guilty, never fought one of them. It could be that he could not afford a good attorney, or that he had a public defender who recommended this tactic in hopes of a lighter sentence, or it may even be that he had chosen to defend himself and didn't know any better. Or, worse yet, perhaps he had already decided to go out in a proverbial blaze of glory so it really did not matter what the courts said. After all, this was a guy with 260 life change units pushing against his psyche.

While the McKay case may be an extreme example, it's by no means unique. Stuff like this happens so often that only the most egregious cases make the headlines. But, while most domestic violence does not end in murder, it can seriously mess up your life nevertheless. Repurposing the Holmes-Rahe Stress Scale can give you good indicators of when it's appropriate to pay very close attention to your significant other. Even if he or she is not about to become violent, these life changes are times when reassurance and understanding are needed and appreciated.

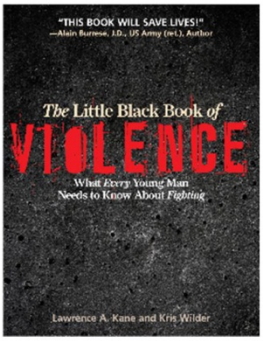
About the Authors:

Kris Wilder, author of seven books, is the head instructor/owner of West Seattle Karate Academy. Kris has trained martial arts across the United States and Okinawa, and teaches seminars worldwide. Lawrence Kane, author of eight books, is a martial artist, security professional, and a senior strategist at an aerospace company. Together they have collaborated on numerous articles and books including *Dirty Ground*, *The Way of Kata*, and *The Little Black Book of Violence*. They also co-host a podcast program which can be found in the iTunes store or at www.martial-secrets.com.



How to Win a Fight: A Guide to Avoiding and Surviving Violence [PAPERBACK]

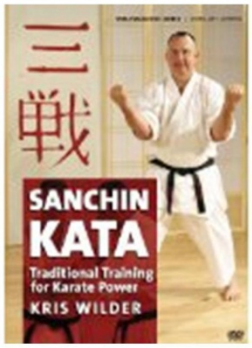
More than three million Americans are involved in a violent physical encounter every year. In these situations, knowledge is power, and few teachers are better equipped to deliver that knowledge than Lawrence Kane and Kris Wilder. Veteran martial arts instructors and masters in their field, Kane and Wilder have teamed up with DC Comics artist Matt Haley to produce a step-by-step guide revealing the secrets of surviving-and preventing-violent encounters.



The Little Black Book of Violence: What Every Young Man Needs to Know About Fighting [PAPERBACK]

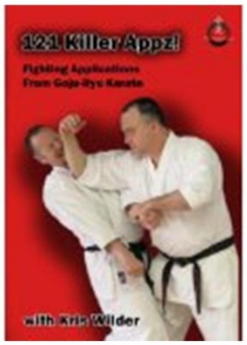
The Little Black Book of Violence will arm you with the knowledge and good sense to make informed choices in hazardous situations. While some yahoo spewing insults about your favorite sports team is worlds apart from a drug-crazed lunatic lunging at you with a sharp knife in his hands and bloodlust in his eyes, there is a large gray area in between these two extremes where hard and fast rules do not always apply. This is where wisdom, oftentimes hard-earned wisdom, makes the difference between good decisions and bad ones.

Best Books Award Finalist - USA Book News 2009
Book of the Year Award Finalist - Foreword Magazine 2009



Sanchin Kata: Three Battles Karate Kata (YMAA) DVD

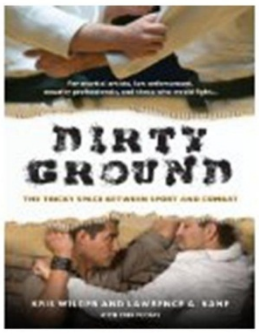
Training Methods for Karate Power The Sanchin Kata, or 'Three Battles Sequence', is an ancient form that can be traced back to the roots of karate. Some consider it the missing link between Chinese kung fu and Okinawan karate. Sanchin Kata is known to develop extraordinary quickness and generate remarkable power. This program breaks down the form piece by piece, body part by body part, so that the hidden details of the kata are revealed. Regular practice of Sanchin Kata conditions the body, trains correct alignment, and teaches the essential structure needed for generating power within all of your karate movements.



121 Killer Appz! Fighting Applications From Goju-Ryu Karate DVD

You know the kata, now it is time for the applications. Karate instructor and author Kris Wilder demonstrates one fighting application after another in this DVD presentation to supplement the katas learned in Goju-Ryu Karate. Wilder does not teach the katas, but rather provides the applications found within the forms for each student to learn, practice, and then build on to fully understand the katas they practice.

Gekisai (Dai Ni), Saifa, Seiyunchin, Seipai, Kururunfa, Suparinpei, Sanseiru, Shisochin, and Seisan Kata are covered. If you ever wondered what purpose a move from a Goju-Ryu Kata was for, wonder no longer. For this DVD contains no kata performed from multiple angels, and no discussion. Just a no-nonsense approach to one application after another. Running length approx: 47 minutes.

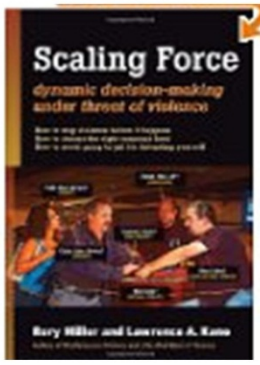


Dirty Ground: The Tricky Space Between Sport and Combat [PAPERBACK]

This book was written to address an important gap that exists in martial arts training. The gap is the space or dirty ground that lives between sport and combat techniques; that is when you need to control a person without severely injuring him (or her).

Techniques in this space are called 'drunkle', named after your drunken uncle at the family gathering who needs to be escorted away before he hurts somebody or vice versa.

This space reveals itself all too often when friends, family, good Samaritans, crime watchers,



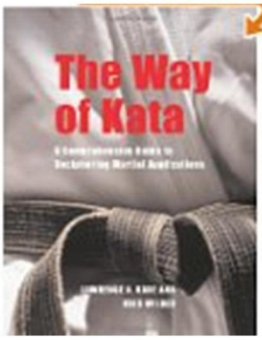
Scaling Force: Dynamic Decision Making Under Threat of Violence [PAPERBACK]

Conflict and violence cover a broad range of behaviors, from intimidation to murder, and require an equally broad range of responses. A kind word will not resolve all situations, nor will wristlocks, punches, or even a gun. *Scaling Force* introduces the full range of options, from skillfully doing nothing to employing deadly force. You will understand the limits of each type of force, when specific levels may be appropriate, the circumstances under which you may have to apply them, and the potential costs, legally and personally, of your decision.

The Way to Black Belt: A Comprehensive Guide to Rapid, Rock-Solid Results [PAPERBACK]

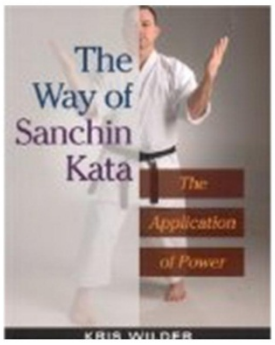
Earning a black belt can be the most rewarding experience of a lifetime, but getting there takes considerable planning. Cut to the very core of what it means to be successful in the martial arts. Whether your interests are in the classical styles of Asia or in today's mixed martial arts, this book prepares you to meet every challenge.

At any age or gender, you will benefit from the wisdom of master martial artists around the globe, who share more than 300 years of combined training experience. Benefit from their guidance during your development into a first-class black belt.



The Way of Kata: A Comprehensive Guide for Deciphering Martial Applications [PAPERBACK]

The Principles for Understanding Kata are Largely Unknown – Until Now. The ancient masters developed kata, or "formal exercises," as fault-tolerant methods to preserve their unique, combat-proven fighting systems. Unfortunately, they deployed a two-track system of instruction where an 'outer circle' of students unknowingly received modified forms with critical details or important principles omitted. Only the select 'inner circle' that had gained a master's trust and respect would be taught okuden waza, the powerful hidden applications of kata.

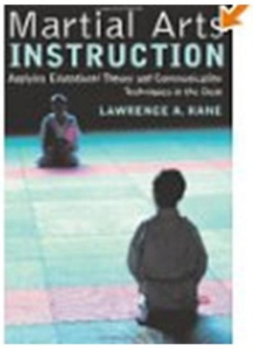


The Way of Sanchin Kata: The Application of Power [PAPERBACK]

Many practitioners believe that Sanchin Kata holds the key to mastering traditional martial arts. It is one of the simplest forms to learn, yet one of the most difficult to perfect. Those who truly understand its teachings find that it facilitates enormous quickness and power in any martial application. The challenge lies in gaining that understanding, which is something we had to uncover ourselves by trial and error... until now. When Karate or "Ti" was first developed in Okinawa, it was about using technique and extraordinary power to end a fight instantly. These old ways of generating remarkable power are still accessible, but they are purposefully hidden in Sanchin Kata for the truly dedicated to find.

Surviving Armed Assaults: A Martial Artists Guide to Weapons, Street Violence, and Countervailing Force [PAPERBACK]

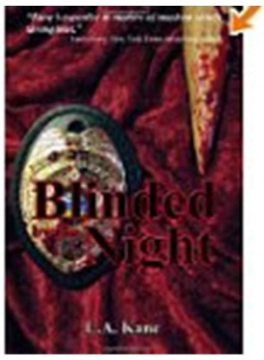
Fair Fight? Not likely. Least of all from a criminal who is looking to make a quick profit at your expense. A sad fact is that weapon-wielding thugs victimize 1,773,000 citizens every year in the United States alone. Even martial artists are not immune from this deadly threat. Consequently, self-defense training that does not consider the very real possibility of an armed attack is dangerously incomplete.



Martial Arts Instruction: Applying Educational Theory and Communication Techniques In the Dojo [PAPERBACK]

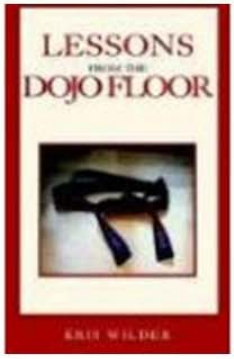
While the old adage, "those who can't do, teach," is not entirely true, all too often "those who can do" cannot teach effectively. This book is unique in that it offers a holistic approach to teaching martial arts; incorporating elements of educational theory and communication techniques typically overlooked in budo.

Teachers will improve their abilities to motivate, educate, and retain students, while students interested in the martial arts will develop a better understanding of what instructional method best suits their needs.



Blinded by the Night [PAPERBACK]

Richard Hayes is a Seattle cop. After 25 years with the PD he thinks he knows everything there is to know about predators. The dregs of society like rapists, murderers, gang bangers, and child molesters are just another day at the office. Commonplace criminals become the least of his problems when he goes hunting for a serial killer and runs into a real monster. The creature not only attacks him, but merely gets pissed off when he shoots it. In the head. Twice! Surviving that fight is only the beginning. Richard discovers that the vampire he destroyed was the ruler of an eldritch realm he never dreamed existed. By some archaic rule, having defeated the monster's sovereign in battle, Richard becomes their new king.



Lessons from the Dojo Floor [PAPERBACK]

Most books on Martial arts tend to be on technique (which most should learn from their teachers) but Wilder's book is a nice change. Gleaned from what obviously is years of training, he goes beyond the gross lessons of training and gives away some subtleties (of martial arts and life) that many never seem to figure out. This is a great collection of insights, and I would recommend it to everyone who is interested in looking a little deeper in their training. Definitely should be on every martial artist's bookshelf.

VÍA DEL KATA SANCHIN, LA. La aplicación de la energía. [PAPERBACK]

El kata sanchin fracciona los movimientos según unos principios de progresividad cuya comprensión resulta impresindible si se quieren adquirir las habilidades necesarias para dominar el arte de la mano vacía.

The Way of Martial Arts for Kids [PAPERBACK]

Based on centuries of traditions martial arts is a positive experience for kids. The Way of Martial Arts for Kids helps you and yours get the most out of class.

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日本の空手家も知らなかった三戦（サンチン）の「なぜ？」-身体構造に基づく姿勢・動作・呼吸・意識で最大のポテンシャルを引き出す！

原書名：The Way of Sanchin Kata:The Application of Power(Wilder,Kris)

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