

*Have a plan,
old man.*

*Follow through
on that plan if
attacked.*

PERSONAL DEFENSE SOLUTIONS: LESS-LETHAL OPTIONS

[BY BRUCE N. EIMER, Ph.D.]

As we all know, the elderly are considered easy prey by violent criminal predators.

This is because typically in a fight there will be a notable disparity of force between a younger, stronger person and an older, weaker one. So, if an elderly and physically challenged person is attacked by a younger, stronger person and the older person believes they are in imminent deadly peril, this disparity of force may justify them deploying a deadly weapon—such as a handgun—in self-defense.

However, most physical confrontations are *not* deadly force confrontations. Most confrontations typically involve one party employing intimidation or aggressive rudeness. Unless such confrontations escalate rapidly and markedly up the level of force continuum, they are not likely to justify a deadly force response. Thus, it is necessary that we all have available to us *personal defense solutions* that are well-rehearsed, ready to use, less-lethal response options. It is also a fact that if you are attacked, the attack is going to be up close and personal. If you have been selected as a victim by a criminal predator, he is not going to attack you from across

the street! For example, if you are carrying a handgun, and you are surprised within bad breath distance by a man with a knife who is intent on cutting you, while such a deadly force confrontation justifies a deadly force response, you just may not have enough time to get to your gun. Unless you act effectively, you are going to get cut; and you may still get cut anyway! So, how can you minimize your exposure to the blade? What can you do? The answer is, *it depends*. That is, it depends on your level of prior preparation and training for this sort of thing. The upshot is that it is a grave error in thinking to assume that you are safe, secure, or well protected, just because you can shoot and carry a gun. You need to learn how to fight! Remember the old cliché that if the only tool you have in your tool kit is a hammer, then everything just may look like a nail! The problem is that in real life, you do not want to make the mistake of confusing a human assailant with a nail! Therefore, we all need more than one tool in our personal defense tool kit or arsenal. We all need to learn multiple personal de-

fense solutions for multiple problematic social confrontations.

It is important to remember that any weapon is only an extension of your mind; that is, your level of mental preparation and training. Our minds are always the superior weapon. Techniques can be learned, but they are not enough. We also must learn and rehearse tactics. I am defining tactics as *how we choose, combine, and employ techniques in any given dangerous, threatening or life-threatening situation*. Here we are referring to mental decision making under stress. In order to be able to make good decisions under the stress of a violent, in your face, encounter, it is necessary to have rehearsed responses to the kinds of violent situations you are likely to face one day. Of course, you cannot prepare for every situation, and each situation will be a little bit different, so when the balloon goes up, we will need to take into account the *totality of the circumstances*. However, when you have rehearsed and practiced responses to a variety of likely scenarios, when a situation does arise, you will have a reflexive

set of responses to implement. You won't freeze. You will act with decisiveness, and decisiveness is the key to survival. Herein lies the solution to the problem of disparity of force between we who are older, smaller, and weaker and an attacker who is younger, larger, and stronger. Good tactics can save the day, and good tactics involve *determination, decisiveness, and deception*. If you have access to the internet, go to www.personaldefensesolutions.net/WiggPreview.htm and observe a three-minute demonstration of a "little middle aged man" employing empty hand techniques in response to a younger and stronger assailant armed with a knife or a handgun. This is a video clip of an empty hand self-defense techniques class taught by Dr. Richard Wigginton who is an internationally respected "World Black Belt Living Legend" and an NRA Certified Defensive Firearms Instructor. Dr. Wigginton, who is an armed, young senior citizen himself, is currently co-producing a DVD series intended for women and the elderly, entitled *Close Encounters Of The Worst Kind*. He looks like a small middle aged man, but woe unto any fool who selects Dr. Wigginton as a potential victim!

Keep in mind that how you train is how you will fight. Therefore, we all need to learn and practice less-lethal as well as lethal techniques, especially if we carry a gun. This is because when we carry deadly force, with the greater power over life and death that we have in our pocket or on our hip, there comes a greater level of responsibility to exercise good judgment and restraint, and to have multiple less-lethal personal defense solutions and response options.

What are some less-lethal personal defense options? In my opinion, everyone who carries a gun, especially seniors and women, should carry OC spray (aka "pepper spray.") If you carry an effective OC Pepper spray dispenser on your key ring, you can train to effectively deploy it to repel an attacker and give you time to get away. The strategy is to interrupt an assailant's plan of attack, which will buy you time to run like a gazelle if you are capable of doing so, or if you cannot get away, to deploy a more serious weapon in self-defense, if necessary. Again, if you have access to the internet, check out www.personaldefensesolutions.net/spitfirevideo.

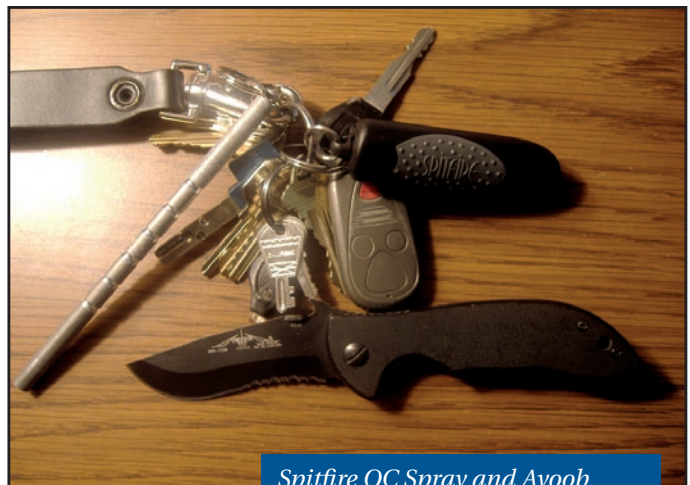
htm for an audio-visual demonstration of how you can be trained to deploy Spitfire pepper spray in a manner that is consistent with the natural movements of your hands and arms (i.e., simply point your thumb at your attacker's face and spray.)

Another product of great utility is the ASP Key Defender series manufactured by ASP, Inc. This Kubotan (a palm-sized self-defense baton or stick) contains pepper spray and attaches conveniently to your key ring. It can be used with your keys as a flail, or the stick can be used as a contact weapon and pain compliance tool to target an attacker's vital pressure points and temporarily disable him. You can strike or flail your attacker and then spray him with your ASP OC Key Defender, and then get away and call 911.

Some effective pressure point targets that can be struck, pressed, or pushed hard, to cause immediate pain to an attacker and jolt and disable him temporarily include: (1) strong pressure with two fingers or a two-fingered jab or strike right under the throat at the jugular notch, (2) a knuckle punch to the sternum, (3) a thumb jab or a karate hand strike to the brachial plexus along either side of the neck, (4) a thumb jab to the mandibular angle right under the ear lobes, as well as (5) palm striking both ears hard at the same time (like you are clapping) to create a concussion effect.

In summary, you do not have to devote a lifetime of study to the martial arts to learn how to defend yourself. In fact, many martial arts schools teach skills that are not particularly relevant to street fighting and survival. If you are looking for an instructor to teach you how to fight and survive, you need to find an instructor who has been there and done that; someone who has seen the balloon go up on multiple occasions and who has been victorious. You need to find an instructor who knows how to *Keep It Simple, Simon* (the K.I.S.S. principle). Self-defense move-

ments need to be similar to movements that we are overly familiar with from every day life; for example, reaching, turning, and clapping. Once you learn basic self-defense techniques and the fundamentals of self-defense movement from a competent instructor, repetition is the key to building these movements into muscle memory; that is, imprinting these movements into your subconscious mind. Also, you need the right personal defense tools, such as OC Spray, an ASP Palm Defender, an ASP expandable baton, and a tactical folding knife, and then practice your skills. ■



Spitfire OC Spray and Ayoob De-Jammer (use this in the same way as a Kubotan).

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