

I have always been a stickler for doing things as I was taught. In the Ventura County Sheriff's Academy we were told, "perfect practice makes perfect". I took comfort in this as I made every effort to do things the same way, every time. It was explained that a person must do something the same way at least 2,800 times in order for it to be "second nature" or in your "muscle memory". I practiced my weapons and survival techniques with these concepts in mind.

Years later, when I became a Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Instructor, again, I heard these truths. We taught our students that they needed to practice their techniques so they would be able to react when put in a possible life-threatening situation. We introduced them to the "Survival Mindset", simply put; "I WILL NEVER GIVE UP AND I WILL SURVIVE!!!" Another concept we taught was Fight or Flight; the survival reaction to a threat, to take on the fight or flee for your life. I always did my best to explain the kind of adrenaline one experiences when fighting for one's life but had never actually had to do so, until January 23, 2005.

On that night, I had just finished helping the Oxnard Police Department with their first RAD simulation and graduation. I returned to the California State University Channel Islands Police Department to finish my patrol shift. I was working alone that night which was not uncommon at the time. I responded to a "subject disturbance" at the Student Housing complex. Needless to say, the contact did not go well. The male subject attacked me, from the front, so quickly I did not have time to think. So quick...no time to think...but time to REACT! And react I did. My weapons training kicked in as I had practiced over and over and over.

It is truly amazing how quickly your mind can determine "if what you are doing" is not delivering the desired effect. I used my baton and then my pepper spray but he still kept coming. Now I knew the real meaning of the "Survival Mindset". I was not going to give up, EVER. According to eyewitnesses, he engaged me in hand-to-hand combat, which resulted in me receiving several injuries. One of these injuries was to my head and that is why I did not remember that part of the fight. I was truly in a fight for my life and experienced the Fight or Flight decision I had been teaching in our classes. Unfortunately, flight was not an option for me. I had to contain this situation at all costs lest this violent person be loose on the students in their own housing complex.

This fight for control ended in a single, non-lethal shot. Even with a bullet through his waist he still fought me. With the help of someone nearby we were able to secure him. I knew I had a head injury and was in a great deal of pain. Help arrived soon and we were both transported to local hospitals. My body was shaking uncontrollably and my concussion prevented me from answering basic questions. I was in physical shock from the enormous amount of adrenaline used during the fight and I recognized the Fight or Flight situation.

Due to the extent of my injuries I was never able to return to full-active duty as a Police Officer. Even though I had training in what people experience after a traumatic incident it was only a glimpse of what was to come. Police Officer, Firefighter, Military or "Jane Doe" we are all human beings and shall react accordingly with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). I spent several

months in “victim” mode and finally made the transition to being a “survivor”. Those who fall prey to such attacks usually go through this, but we must choose to be a SURVIVOR and not let our experience hold us hostage as a victim.

In May of 2006 I was medically retired and began a new journey. Ironically, I had been teaching women how to defend themselves and the very skills I passed on to them saved my life. I know it is now my responsibility, as a survivor, to tell my story of success to others and help empower them do the same if ever put in a difficult situation.

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