



Matt and Joe doused in stage-blood

G'day guys,

I just thought I'd give you a quick hello to fill you in on how training is going over here. Training with Jim Wagner has been excellent. I still have two days to go ... This week I've been - stabbed hard in the chest with a metal training blade that I was tricked into believing was a real knife prior to the attack. This didn't hurt but simply scared the crap out of me - I thought I already had a healthy respect for knives but that episode really opened up my eyes. (My training partner didn't realise it was a metal training blade either and said his mind was going nuts, thinking Jim had just stabbed me - LOL.) Getting shot all the time with a BB gun has been pretty funny. It leaves little welts so we can't lie about whether or not our gun-disarms and defences worked; same goes for our scenario training. I've got a couple more days left so we'll see what else happens! I can say, though, that it truly has exceeded my expectations.

Have a great day guys,
Matt

paintball guns and stage-blood. The cold, stark nature of the place certainly worked to take me out of my comfort zone and bring me one more step toward preparing for real-world conflict. Jim mentioned that he liked the concrete walls because they don't break when objects and people slam into them, and at that point I realised I was not in Kansas - or *The OC* - any more.

For my RBPP instructor course, I trained both privately and semi-privately with Jim. My training partner and fellow instructor candidate was a guy named Joe who had just returned from a nine-month deployment in Iraq. Considering his martial arts experience and his size (six-feet-four-inches tall and weighing over 100kg), I knew Joe was going to be a great training partner and, as luck would have it, he also turned out to be a great bloke. Jim also brought in one of his local instructors to assist us in our multiple-opponent scenarios.

A great quirk, unique to RBPP, was that throughout the entire week of training, we had "clean debris" strewn across the floor. The clean debris included the likes of egg cartons, cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, plenty of papers and other such items in an attempt to create a more realistic training environment. The presence of obstacles and debris during all our training helped tremendously with putting our footwork and movement methods to the test. The reasons behind the RBPP philosophies on stance and movement quickly became apparent when doing full-

speed scenarios among the debris. A poorly balanced movement or lack of attention to my surroundings could result in a rapid meeting with the concrete floor, with my attacker bearing down on me. Cardboard boxes were stacked to represent concrete columns or windows and penalties resulted for those who inadvertently bumped into them. I found the environmental challenges of RBPP to be a leap forward in giving a real-life feel to my training and I highly recommend that anyone interested in self-defence begin decorating their training area with a little clean debris.

Low-light training was also part of the RBPP course and the use of stage-blood added a bit of extra realism, both tactile and visual, in the scenarios. Throughout our training we always wore street clothes, such as jeans and a t-shirt. We always wore shoes too, except during a brief stint training on some thin jigsaw mats, as the friction of shoes on mats can pose overly high risks to knee joints.

The courses I undertook and in which I gained certification were:

- Defensive Tactics
- Ground Survival
- Knife Survival
- Crime Survival
- Terrorism Survival

Most of the titles seem quite logical for a self-defence system, but I know some of you may have already rolled your eyes at the course titled "Terrorism Survival". I must admit that when I first read the title, I too thought it was a bit extreme, but I was soon swayed, as much of the Terrorism Survival course contained material of great value, even to us civilians.

Throughout the various courses, we dealt with multiple attackers, stabbings, robberies, being held at gunpoint, protecting a third party and the essentials for surviving if the fight goes to the ground. Jim's general method of teaching was to first put us in the scenario to see how we would survive with our current knowledge and abilities. He would then talk with us about how we handled things, what we did well, what we could have done better or what we messed up entirely. He would then teach us the RBPP method for dealing with that particular event (and its likely ramifications) and then he would show us by putting himself on the spot and having us play the attacker/s. Finally we would go through drilling the scenario using the RBPP methods we had just learned, until we could demonstrate a thorough understanding of the methods and an ability to make those methods work under pressure.

A favourite drill of mine saw one person having to fight their way out of a corner while an attacker came at them at full speed