

ANIMAL DAY



**PRESSURE
TESTING
THE
MARTIAL
ARTS**

**GEOFF
THOMPSON**

SUMMERSDALE

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Important note

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

About the author

Geoff Thompson has written over 20 published books and is known world wide for his autobiographical books *Watch My back*, *Bouncer* and *On The Door*, about his nine years working as a night club doorman. He holds the rank of 5th Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1st Dan in Judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage, screen and TV in development with Destiny Films.

He has published several articles for GQ magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has been featured many times on mainstream TV.

Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine and self defence columnist for *Front*.

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Foreword

Fairbairn and Sykes

By Pete Robins

The underlying theme of this book on *pressure testing* that you are about to read is introducing and retaining a sense of reality in training. I have been asked to comment on this aspect of combatives from a historical viewpoint. Pressure testing is an aspect that has been readily overlooked, misunderstood or simply ignored by many of today's instructors in the martial arts. This is quite understandable as it is a subject that brings home the sheer horror of a real fight. A horror that most of us would prefer to avoid.

Only people who have stood up to a real fight understand that technique alone is not enough. Technique for its own sake, no matter how technical or *advanced* it is, no matter how pretty or pure it is, will not necessarily win the day. Many martial arts practitioners are led to believe by their instructors that physical effort is sufficient and pay little heed to the mental side of the equation. Often the instructor knows no better, but he should. Whenever he links in self-defence with his description of his system, he should be aware of all that self-defence, or rather self-protection, entails.

It is instructors like the author of this book, Geoff Thompson and his partner in the *British Combat Association*, Peter Consterdine, who should be listened to whenever the subject of self-protection rears its ugly head. These two men know what they are talking about, know what they are teaching and have carried out what

must rate as one of the most comprehensive studies in our time of the least understood and talked about factors of fighting.

They are following the footsteps of two remarkable men who have been through a similar learning curve some 70 years ago. This empirical study had been carried out half way across the world in China. To be precise, Shanghai, famed as being in all probability the toughest city in the world. It was in the international settlement of this cosmopolitan city that W.E. Fairbairn, a member of the Shanghai police (SMP) from 1907 and E.A. ('Bill') Sykes, a police special from 1926, began their work together that has been recognised as the foundation of what we today term *Close Quarter Battle (CQB)*.

These two men could not just rely on the theories about what might or might not occur in lethal encounters, they were dealing with harsh realities. They and fellow officers had to go into the myriad streets and alleyways, houses and opium dens that were the hideouts of their deadly enemy, to pursue the Chinese gangs that were the scourge of all Shanghai, and face these ruthless killers. What they found and knew was this: to face up to and survive a real encounter demanded nothing less and nothing more than simple and effective techniques. Methods that had been tried and tested. Any spurious or fancy manoeuvre would most likely fail and get them and their fellow officers maimed or killed. They honed and simplified their methods so that they could be taught to all the men of the SMP, not just the gifted few. They had to use techniques that could be retained under conditions of extreme stress. One might say extreme fear.

In all the training that Fairbairn set for the SMP in his role of chief instructor in self-defence - arrest and restraint, shooting, disarming, house-raids, bodyguard work and riot control techniques, he strove for a sense of realism. His men were *pressure tested* in all they did.

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To give an example of his thoughts in that direction I refer to the findings in connection with actual shooting affrays that he and his men were involved in.

We go on to say that beyond helping to teach care in the handling of firearms, target shooting is of no value whatever in learning the use of the pistol as a weapon of combat . . . in the great majority of shooting affrays that distance at which firing takes place is not more than four yards, very frequently it is considerably less . . . It may happen that you have been running to overtake him. If you have had reason to believe that shooting is likely, you will be keyed up to the highest pitch and will be grasping your pistol with almost convulsive force. If you have to fire, your instinct will be to do so as quickly as possible, and you will probably do it with a bent arm, possibly even from the level of the hip . . . It may be that a bullet whizzes past you and that you will experience the momentary stupefaction which is due to the shock of the explosion at very short range of the shot just fired by your opponent - a very different feeling, we can assure you, from that experienced when you are standing behind or alongside a pistol that is being fired. (Shooting To Live)

Our sole concern is the use of the pistol as a fighting weapon. We have nothing to do with such matters as shooting with much pomp, ceremony and deliberation at passive black spots . . . Probably considerably more than eighty-five per cent of actual pistol fighting takes place at close quarters, in a hurry. Close quarters means anything from one yard to ten - it is difficult to define it more exactly. Hurry means a hell of a hurry - there is no difficulty in that definition. ('Bill' Sykes)

What they both knew was that the existing methods of shooting would in no way prepare men for actual combat conditions. What was taught in those days was target shooting which had no bearing at all on a shoot-out with an armed foe. There was no emphasis on speed, movement, lighting problems and the all important element

- stress. Both knew the fear that hit a man at a time of grave danger, the surge of adrenalin that played havoc with the physical and mental system. Both knew that when danger *bursts through the door*, fancy technique and guesswork theories *fly out of the window*.

Fairbairn and Sykes understood that target shooting was to score points and was for recreation; combat shooting was for winning and for staying alive. The former cannot take the place of the latter. So they geared the training towards realism, to put as much pressure as was possible on the trainee.

This example may be seen to be well removed from the problem of a confrontation that anyone might encounter today or tomorrow, but the underlying message is the same. If you do not train or strive for some kind of realism and are never placed under pressure you will never quite be sure of how you will react.

Geoff Thompson is following in the footsteps of W.E. Fairbairn and 'Bill' Sykes and is to be lauded for that. He brings truth and common sense back into the gamut of 'self-defence' training, where nonsense and ignorance had reigned. Like Fairbairn and Sykes he has the courage and spirit of a warrior, but more importantly like Fairbairn and Sykes he has the compassion and control of a gentleman.

More than ever in the martial arts today, we must be seen as *sleeping tigers* and not as *rabid dogs*, bearing in mind that the sleeping tiger should not be of the paper type.

Read on, enjoy and like myself be amazed and educated by what this book contains.