

News • Opinion • Reviews • Exclusives • Intel

The Circuit

ISSUE
42

For Security And Protection Specialists

TACTICS
Counter-Ambush

Tactical
Tacticool **Vs**

The **K9**
In Protection

Managing Your
Social Media

Q Careers in Protection Search

Deciding How To Start Your
CAREER IN PROTECTION

SURVIVAL TRAINING /// KIDNAP & RANSOM /// TOUR SECURITY

TACTICAL VS TACTICØOL

By: Orlando Wilson

The 'tactical culture' had flourished over the last few years, mainly due to the proliferation of video cameras and increasing engagement with social media platforms, which I believe is causing the lines between reality and the 'tacticool' entertainment world to become very, very blurred... ▶

It takes very little these days to be a part of the tactical sub-culture that is trending, here's how to do it. Simply, purchase a gun, where legal, get your hands on some tactical clothing, buy a bunch of 'black op' accessories, plug into 'Soldier of Fortune' social-media channels and perhaps even take some no-fail tactical training courses, then after a few months, hey presto, you're an expert! Whereas, in the good old days, the only option, if you wanted this lifestyle, was to join the military - preferably the Infantry!

I understand the tactical industry is about selling, it's about making money, no different than selling kitchen products and cookery classes or golf clubs and golf lessons. To be honest, working in a kitchen with sharp knives, boiling water, hot surfaces etc. is more dangerous than

most taticool entertainment classes. From a business perspective, the mainstream tactical and gun industry is not about dealing with the reality of violence; it's about selling products and providing entertainment in a safe environment. Which, I see no problem with until people start believing that their 'play world' can transfer into the real world.

Stress Training

I would say, that due to my background, my training influences at base level are what I learned in the British Army and then more importantly what I gained from experiences in Eastern Europe and South Africa in the 90's, followed by other adventures in different locations where I've had to quickly learn what worked and more importantly, what didn't.

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that people can't handle being stressed. I've had clients on firearms courses in the US getting very irate when they have been given constructive criticism. Nothing is anyone's fault these days, right, so blame the stupid gun! I have had angry students argue because I have not issued them with pass certificates because they were not up to standards but in their minds, they'd paid for the course and therefore deserved a certificate.

So, how can you provide stress training in a comfortable and safe environment where everyone is pampered and happy? FACT - YOU CAN'T! A gentleman recently inquired as to whether we include such things as press-ups or tannerite pyrotechnics to make our drills more realistic. Well, sometimes we do, this adds to the show, but does it really add to the stress? I understand for some people just picking up a firearm is stressful, I respect this and respect them for going outside of their comfort zones. Stress training is all about taking people outside of their comfort zones.

Providing realistic tactical training in the US and Western Europe is virtually impossible due to excessive safety rules and regulations, which are needed to prevent taticool warriors killing themselves and others by accident when attempting to replicate something they have just seen in some computer game.

I run a tactical police training course in Mexico where we use live rounds in a derelict building and have people between the targets. Now, I am sure many of you will think that this is not safe, and while I can respect your point of view I would emphasize that we are training specialist teams to deal with high-risk situations and not weekend warriors seeking macho selfies for facebook!

The only way to understand what it's like to be shot at is to be shot at. The only way to be confident in your ability to shoot past someone and hit the target is to do so in training. Were people hurt by flying debris and ricochets; yes of course, but they sucked it up and understood that we were conditioning them for the situations they ►

would be facing. If you find such training unsafe and scary, then I suggest you stay away from hostile environments. If you disagree with our methods that's your prerogative but the people you'll see in these videos prove our methods to be effective, and on many occasions, to the extreme!

Things need to be kept in perspective and for me, if someone is serious about training they will want to work hard, be open to criticism and accept that they need to be taken outside of their comfort zone. For example, if someone who is not a "gun person" is seeking to own a firearm for self-defense then as simple a thing as drawing from a holster can be outside of their comfort zone, and I can respect that. If someone is into the tactical culture and wants to dress up and play soldiers, then I can appreciate that also. Some airsoft enthusiasts that I have met have been very cool and realize what they're doing is a sport. A sport that can be physically demanding, where you will fail at some point and can be very painful when hit with a BB. However, there is a big

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difference between dressing up in the latest tactical fashion and stepping outside of your comfort zone!

Perspectives - Reality vs Tacticool

I was recently speaking with a gentleman who'd served in the U.S. Military, worked in law enforcement, and been a DOD contractor, and he was telling me how he turned down a government job in Abuja, Nigeria because he could not carry a firearm; "Got to have a gun in Africa"! I think he was trying to impress me, but I have spent time in Africa, mainly unarmed. I have been out partying in Abuja and worked there providing bomb prevention services to Churches, unarmed! Abuja is a pretty safe city so

long as you're sensible, as with any major city, and is generally considered one of the safer places in Nigeria.

To put things into context, around the same time that Mr Tactical Ted was telling how he would not set foot outside the U.S. without a gun I had someone handing out terrorist attack and bomb prevention booklets to churches in the volatile parts of Nigeria. This 'someone' was a young lady I knew, Ms Jenny, and who was a local student at the time. There have been numerous terrorist attacks in her area, but she was still traveling around distributing the booklets, unarmed. I am sure to Mr Tactical Ted the distribution of these booklets would have needed an armored convoy with air

support, but things are different in reality, outside of the taticool world!

So, in terms of self-confidence, composure and operational effectiveness who would you say rates the highest; Mr Tactical Ted or Ms Jenny? I think Ms Jenny wins hands down on a job well-done and way before I expect Tactical Ted would have finished writing his kit list!

For the record, I am pro-gun and think everyone one should have the right to carry a firearm when they are adequately trained to do so. But, for many guns

and the tactical culture are viewed as a means of empowerment. Just having a gun does not make you a tough guy, and those that think it does should not own firearms!

When I am on shooting ranges, including nice air-conditioned indoor ranges in suburban South Florida, I see shooters, including instructors, dressed with plate carries, chest rigs, daggers and drop holsters trying to look mean and macho like their YouTube heroes. I find this attitude quite worrying as I know for a fact many of these guys never joined the military and I expect most have



never been in a fight since they were bullied at school, so what are they trying to compensate for? I'm pretty sure that many could get their thrills elsewhere and for a lot cheaper than the thousands of dollars they spend on guns and tactical gear. I also think that psychologically it would be far healthier too!

Maybe they need to get some perspective from someone who has successfully operated in high-risk areas, like Ms Jenny. Instead of worrying about the speed of their magazine changes she could teach them to be confident by improving their situational awareness. Instead of stressing about what the best holster is for their new gun she could boost their self-worth by demonstrating how to move around covertly without drawing attention. Maybe then they would become empowered

enough, armed with their new skills, that they could occasionally leave their guns and taticool accessories at home when they ventured out to the local grocery store!

In closing then, it's fair to say there is a big difference between reality and the world of taticool highs. I am sure many see this world as a fun and empowering place, and I hope they are happy and enjoy it. But in the real tactical world where people get hurt and killed, there is nothing cool or glamorous about it. If you are serious about entering this world then pain, injury, discomfort, stress, and being outside of your comfort zone all go with the turf. So, as every former and serving infantryman knows, everyone one wants to be a Grunt until it comes to doing Grunt shit, right?

Stay safe.

Orlando Wilson has worked in the security industry internationally for over 25 years. He has become accustomed to the types of complications that can occur, when dealing with international law enforcement agencies, organized criminal and Mafia groups. He is the chief consultant for Risks Inc. and based in Miami but spends much of his time traveling and providing a wide range of kidnapping prevention and tactical training services to private and government clients.