

Have You Ever Had To Use It?

An Anecdote From Brian

This question does come up from time to time. I've been studying martial arts for over 40 years, so students guess there's a pretty good chance I've applied it once or twice. So they ask. "Have you ever had to use it?" There have been times. I rescued a police officer who was losing a fight to a maniac on PCP. I backed off an armed assailant (a hatchet, if I recall correctly). Some other, minor stuff. But that's all the physical side, where I spent my younger years.

So today they ask: "Have you ever had to use it?" "Yes."
Their eyes get big. "Tell us; Please."

OK.

I attended an after-work event with some friends in high-tech. It was a pretty big group, and we took over an entire back room of a favorite haunt. Sitting at a counter, drinking my orange juice on the rocks, I enjoyed watching the interactions of the group.



This guy walks in, goes to the first table, and immediately tries to start something with a couple of the engineers. They exchange some harsh words, but it doesn't turn physical. On to the next table. He makes some crude comments to a couple of the ladies, and gets a similar response. Still no big bite. He moves on. After working through the room, and upsetting a lot of people, he comes my way.

Everything about him says "fight". Strong chin, cold eyes, closed hands, aggressive stance. He moves closer, and I stand up. I read him. My heart sinks. "You are profoundly sad. Who did you lose?" He takes a step back. It hits him hard. He tries to find the words, and stammers. He's trapped, and has nowhere to go.

I invite him to join me. We chat. Drink orange juice. This is the energy side of martial arts.