

YEAR I - MAY 2023 - N. 1

ISSN (PRINT) 2974-8321 - ISSN (WEB) 2974-8585

# URGENCY

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESCUE AND DEFENSE SCIENCE

GOVERNANCE, POLITOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY - CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINALISTIC - ANITERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM  
STRATEGIC MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND NETWORK - SELF AND CIVIL DEFENSE AND RESCUE - BIOETHICS AND NEUROETHICS  
PSYCHOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC, BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL, CYBER, AND NUCL.FAR WARFARE - INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY DISASTER  
MEDICINE AND PSYCHOTHERAPY DISASTER - EMERGENCY NEGOTIATION AND PEDAGOGY - OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE

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## DIRETTORE RESPONSABILE

O.N.G. 170559

## AGENCY OWNER

TRUST 'ARCHIVIO FIRENZE' (C.F. 94187380483) - FLORENCE (ITALY)

## PUBLISHER

EMERCRIM EDITION (C.F. 94280730485) - FLORENCE (ITALY)

## DIGITAL TYPOGRAPHY

S.E.A.T.I. (C.F. 008876801149 - LA SPEZIA (ITALY)

## REGISTRATION

TRIBUNALE ORDINARIO DI FIRENZE N. 6117/2020

## PUBLICATION SITE OF THE JOURNAL

LOCATION OF THE INTELLECTUAL REPRESENTATIVE - PORTOVENERE (19025) - SP (ITALY)

## PERIODICITY

SIX-MONTHLY PERIODICAL WITH MONOGRAPHS AND SPECIAL EDITIONS

## BINDING

THREAD SEWN BINDING

## WEBSITES

[www.antiterrorismo.it](http://www.antiterrorismo.it) - [www.emerccrim.it](http://www.emerccrim.it)

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## FORMAT OF THE PUBLICATION

PAPER AND WEB

## POSTAL ADDRESS

EMERCRIM C/O TRUST 'ARCHIVIO FIRENZE' - P.O. BOX N. 1 - 50123 - FLORENCE (ITALY)

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## DEFENDING YOURSELF DURING A TERRORIST ATTACK

## DIFENDERSI DURANTE UN ATTACCO TERRORISTICO

This article is also published in Italian by 'Male Edizioni' (Rome)  
contacts: [www.maleedizioni.it](http://www.maleedizioni.it) - [info@maleedizioni.it](mailto:info@maleedizioni.it)  
Il presente articolo è pubblicato anche in italiano da 'Male Edizioni' (Roma)  
contatti: [www.maleedizioni.it](http://www.maleedizioni.it) - [info@maleedizioni.it](mailto:info@maleedizioni.it)

### DOI

10.57658/389-410



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Gruppo Radiotelevisivo Mediaset); ha partecipato a numerose trasmissioni televisive e radiofoniche su reti nazionali. Ha rilasciato più di cinquanta interviste a vari quotidiani nazionali su temi quali la sicurezza, l'intelligence, la pirateria marittima, le tattiche delle forze speciali e il terrorismo. Ha collaborato con Università e con la Commissione per i Servizi di Sicurezza del Parlamento Italiano sul rischio rapimento di turisti e cooperanti in zone ad alto e medio pericolo. Ha partecipato ad un'audizione della Commissione Difesa tenutasi presso il Senato italiano. Nel 2016 è stato portavoce a Bruxelles in occasione del convegno organizzato dalla NATO sulla sicurezza informatica ed energetica.

#### **CITATION**

Biffani C., *Defending Yourself During a Terrorist Attack*, in 'Urgency', DOI: 10.57658/389-410; N. 1, 2023, 389-410.

Biffani C., *Difendersi durante un attacco terroristico*, in 'Urgency', DOI: 10.57658/389-410; N. 1, 2023, 389-410.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Terrorism, antiterrorism, personal defense, risk mitigation, emergency, rescue.

Terrorismo, antiterrorismo, difesa personale, mitigazione del rischio, emergenza, soccorso.

#### **RECEIVED, ACCEPTED AND PUBLISHED DATE**

MARCH 11, 2023 - MARCH 27, 2023 - APRIL 30, 2023

11 MARZO 2023 - 27 MARZO 2023 - 30 APRILE 2023

#### **ABSTRACT - INTRODUCTION**

(by Davide Frattini, Middle East Correspondent for Corriere della Sera)

In Tel Aviv, I often go for a stroll around the *Carmel Market District*. The stalls selling grocery or fruit, bread or Halva (middle eastern sesame dessert) lean on Iron cubes now covered with rust, nice and tight. 'It is a great spot to dive in and find shelter' I had to explain, and wanted to explain, to my 12 years old daughter. Together, we use to watch *Elementary*, a TV series about the adventures of a contemporary Sherlock Holmes, who moved to New York. An episode helped me explaining her the difference between being a victim and becoming a survivor. When somebody starts shooting - should somebody start shooting - around you, that doesn't mean you're doomed. As Carlo Biffani writes, it is possible to put in place several strategies that may allow us to stay alive in a critical situation. First and foremost, I believe, is being vigilant, even if it may introduce tension as a constant companion in our lives. In Israel, a certain amount of paranoia is almost inevitable, the amygdala grows like a muscle after frequent use. The 'fight or flight' mode is there, ready to step in. It is important to be aware when moving knowing that surprise hits everybody, civilians or soldiers, with conflict experience. As a journalist I followed American troops in Afghanistan, especially in summer 2010, during the offensive against the Taliban. One day the patrol I was moving with got caught in an ambush: the first shots encumber movements, as if bullets were pressing the slowmotion key of a day that was normal, up to that moment. Soldiers don't seem to believe it yet, the heaviest series of machine-gun shots kicks off automated behaviors. The initial shock is natural, it can only last some fractions of a second, though: it is fundamental not to get immobilized by fear.

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Let instead the thought 'yes, this is really happening to me' have the upper hand. Shock is like a tsunami. It overflows everything, even 101st division officers, but then you need to react: I instinctively got to the ground and from there I crawled into a drain pipe. The brown waste water promising anyway much more health than staying exposed to enemy fire. Europe is not Afghanistan for sure, and neither it is Israel, where attacks are much more frequent: since October 2015 attacks have been perpetrated mostly by what secret services call 'lone wolves'. Young Palestinians setting down their plan in the dark of their rooms, then going out with a knife they found in the kitchen or using a car as a weapon to hit pedestrians. The impact might seem lesser than an assault in the heart of Paris or Berlin, yet the rate, almost daily in certain periods, amplifies the effect. Last year in Tel Aviv, it was June the eighth, two Arabs - state prosecutor says they were inspired by the Islamic State - opened fire on the customers of a well known shopping mall, killing four. The night after, the streets were crowded with people: it's not a matter of recklessness. Israel people know well that life must go on, and they have strengthened their defense strategies throughout the years. And I mean the personal ones, the ones we all, unfortunately, have to train in these times.

A Tel Aviv vado spesso a fare una passeggiata nel quartiere del Carmel Market. Le bancarelle che vendono generi alimentari o frutta, pane o Halva (dolce mediorientale al sesamo) si appoggiano su cubi di ferro ormai ricoperti di ruggine. È un ottimo posto per tuffarsi e trovare riparo' dovevo spiegare e volevo spiegare a mia figlia di 12 anni. Insieme guardiamo *Elementary*, una serie TV sulle avventure di un contemporaneo Sherlock Holmes, trasferitosi a New York. Un episodio mi aiutò a spiegarle la differenza tra essere una vittima e diventare un sopravvissuto. Quando qualcuno inizia a sparare - se qualcuno inizia a sparare - intorno a te, non significa che sei condannato. Come scrive Carlo Biffani, è possibile mettere in campo diverse strategie che ci permettano di restare vivi in una situazione critica. Prima di tutto, credo, è essere vigili, anche se può introdurre la tensione come compagna costante nelle nostre vite. In Israele una certa dose di paranoia è quasi inevitabile, l'amigdala cresce come un muscolo dopo un uso frequente. La modalità 'lotta o fuggi' è lì, pronta per intervenire. È importante essere consapevoli quando ci si muove sapendo che la sorpresa colpisce tutti, civili o soldati, con esperienza di conflitto. Come giornalista ho seguito le truppe americane in Afghanistan, soprattutto nell'estate 2010, durante l'offensiva contro i talebani. Un giorno la pattuglia con cui mi muovevo è caduta in un'imboscata: i primi colpi ostacolano i movimenti, come se i proiettili premessero il tasto al rallentatore di una giornata che fino a quel momento era normale. I soldati sembrano non crederci ancora, la serie più pesante di colpi di mitragliatrice dà il via a comportamenti automatizzati. Lo shock iniziale è naturale, può durare solo qualche frazione di secondo, però: è fondamentale non farsi immobilizzare dalla paura. Lascia invece che il pensiero 'sì, mi sta succedendo davvero' abbia il sopravvento. Lo shock è come uno tsunami. Trabocca tutto, anche gli ufficiali della 101<sup>a</sup> divisione, ma poi bisogna reagire: sono arrivato istintivamente a terra e da lì sono strisciato in un tubo di scolo. Le acque reflue marroni promettevano comunque molta più salute che rimanere esposti al fuoco nemico. L'Europa non è certo l'Afghanistan, e nemmeno Israele, dove gli attentati sono molto più frequenti: dall'ottobre 2015 gli attacchi sono stati perpetrati soprattutto da

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da quelli che i servizi segreti chiamano ‘lupi solitari’. Giovani palestinesi che stabiliscono il loro piano nel buio delle loro stanze, poi escono con un coltello che hanno trovato in cucina o usano un'auto come arma per colpire i pedoni. L'impatto potrebbe sembrare minore di un assalto nel cuore di Parigi o di Berlino, eppure il ritmo, quasi quotidiano in certi periodi, ne amplifica l'effetto. L'anno scorso a Tel Aviv, era l'8 giugno, due arabi - il procuratore di Stato afferma di essersi ispirati allo Stato islamico - hanno aperto il fuoco sui clienti di un noto centro commerciale, uccidendone quattro. La sera dopo le strade erano gremitte di gente: non è questione di temerarietà. Il popolo israeliano sa bene che la vita deve continuare e negli anni ha rafforzato le proprie strategie di difesa. E intendo quelli personali, quelli che tutti, purtroppo, dobbiamo oggi allenare.

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## DEFENDING YOURSELF DURING A TERRORIST ATTACK

Carlo Biffani

### 1. Foreword.

The terrorist threat that is emerging and that, according to the experts is going to be part of our lives throughout the next twenty years, has radically changed and it dramatically sees us more and more as protagonists. I believe the time has come to face the problem from a different perspective, starting from a painful consideration: this new breed of assassins has common people as a target, and common people do care very little of what intelligence services or soldiers may do to defeat Daesh in Syria, or anywhere else in the world. I think common people are more concerned about how they could behave in the unfortunate contingency they get caught in the middle of a terrorist attack. I believe they care about how they could try to protect themselves in the subway, at a bar, in a restaurant or on the streets.

In this scenario, it is fundamental to acquire a prevention - oriented mindset, and it is impossible to talk about prevention without first having a clear vision about how and why these attacks take place. Terrorist attacks carried out as commando actions, like massive shootings or IED strikes, always take place to show tactical abilities. The groups who organize these assaults, do it very often with the aim of taking a given space. Dominating it. Controlling it for a certain period of time, generating as many fatalities and injuries as possible, transmitting a sense of powerlessness, but most important spreading fear and a feeling of helplessness against such an amount of violence, among the victims and in the target country.

What they create for sure is surprise and terror in equal shares, that is the kind of emotions which will prevent potential victims from reducing their exposure to threats and from thinking in a clear and coherent way. On the basis of this brief but substantial premise, let's try focusing on a key concept, to learn it by heart and subsequently recite it as a mantra: reducing the risk to which you are exposed or getting away safely is possible, and you can do it by developing the right attitude, controlling emotions and start thinking positively, even in dramatic situations. To begin, it'd be good to keep in mind that, as much determined and fierce they may seem, Daesh fighters are far away from being the perfectly trained warriors that many of us wrongly believe them to be.

Watching them decapitating people, brutally killing and acting cruelly against unarmed victims. Watching them conquering vast areas up until setting the borders for an actual state, turned them into unbeatable soldiers in our eyes, but we need to observe the situation from another point of view. Even though it's true that many among them are nothing more than psychopaths out to kill, it is just as correct to think they're not infallible soldiers, they're not sufficiently trained and most important, they're not immortal.

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The firmness they show in spreading terror must be the same you will use whenever you should be called to defend yourself. **Determination and the awareness that you can get away safe are extremely powerful weapons.** I'd like to add a piece of news that may help you: they feel pain and bleed as well. To know the enemy's not invincible, let alone flawless. To know that he makes errors during attacks, or that he has weaknesses you could exploit at your own advantage, is vital for those who are forced to "play defense". In most of the cases, in fact, you would find yourself in the middle of a similar situation, unarmed, tactically untrained and forced to fight hard against the attackers, but most of all against a terrible and crippling enemy: fear.

If fear takes control, it could make its way to an even more dangerous panic. Maybe because you were caught in your routines, in your everyday comfortable life and you'd never expect those ordinary activities to get you in front of an assault rifle, in the middle of an attack with explosives or on the path of a truck running over the crowd. Anyway, you must push yourself through a series of actions. In case this happened, just keep in mind that your first goal must be immediately to gain back control of the situation, and this can happen only if, instead of passively accepting the way events develop, you begin analyzing the scenario and correctly interacting with it.

**Switching to action is the best antidote against fear**, and the first among the necessary actions, the one generating the most suitable reaction to the situation we're going through. The reaction unchaining almost magically all the other reactions enabling us to avoid or to get away from peril, is one and only one: **START THINKING AGAIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Terrorist organizations have only one goal, and it obviously is to spread terror. You have a much nobler one, and that is to get out of there alive and to rescue those in need of your help. Having a goal of such an extent is important, but having a feasible one is even more decisive, so try analyzing things and most of all try acting one step at a time. **The defensive strategy has to be planned and enacted gradually, one goal at a time.**

## 2. General premises.

If you take into examination the footage from attacks carried out during the last years in Paris, Brussels or in Nice, Berlin or Istanbul, it's hard not to see how the terrorists, however ferocious and resolute, actually show a very poor degree of tactics and military technique. Let's be clear, they're even too good at 'the job of killing', but in some fundamental passages they leave out loopholes that allow even the common citizen to organize and enact a defense. If they actually received military training and accurately planned their actions, for instance in Paris, they would have blown themselves up outside the stadium during the entrance or the exit of the audience. In November 2015, if the Paris commando members were actually trained marksmen, we'd have a body count at least double, considering the weaponry they had, the number of ammunition they had and the time they had at their disposition before getting caught or blowing themselves up.



If during the assault at Reina Club, in Istanbul, 180 rounds have been shot and the fatality percentage sums up to a quarter of that number, maybe, and luckily, we aren't dealing with super soldiers. They are instead, luckily for us, nothing more than pseudo warriors. Even though talking about luck in similar situations may really sound like mockery. Extremely dangerous and resolute, yet only shabby and grotesque imitations if compared to what they'd want us to believe they are. They're ruthlessness champions, usually under the influence of drugs, who only manage to spread fear in fighting unarmed civilians. **Time has come to teach unarmed civilians how to defend themselves.** Let's analyze the most widespread and substantial attack mode, the one which, following statistics, is most likely to involve you.

### 3. Cluster style attacks with firearms, massive shootings: main elements.

Let's focus first of all on a statistic gathered by a branch of western authorities who study such phenomena. Among the cases examined until now, raids carried out as multiple attacks in the last decade using both assault weapons and explosives add up to just 30%. So in the disgraceful event you find yourself in a possible terrorist attack and start hearing shots being fired, it's very likely you'll 'only' have to worry about firearms. It'll be then very unlikely for you to find IED (Improvised Explosive Devices) along your escape route or that during the attack some of the assailants will decide to blow himself up.

You could be in a shopping mall, in a train station, an airport, at mass or walking by the streets of your city. Let's reflect about something first: if you found yourself in what is considered to be a hard target, so airports and train stations, you could be sure that these places are under control and well protected, and so the conflict scenario in which you've been unwillingly involved, as much violent as it may seem, **is doomed to end within minutes.** However, if it happened to you, it'll happen in a moment during which you'd be for sure relaxed and reasonably. Your senses would be in a state of calm and your reactions would be for sure very slow as well as altered and inhibited due to the shock and the perception of something terrible and unseen before, something you weren't prepared for and something about to unravel in a matter of instants.

The time it will take to you to fully understand what's happening and start interacting with the environment around you by using useful and sustainable solutions, is generally directly, linked to your 'training level', and in many cases much long. We're talking about dozens of seconds. You will, anyway, have to be quick in doing something to understand what's going on and, most important, to hide. Time is precious. **Priority one: to find an adequate shelter.** The assailant, or the assailants get in and start shooting, often with a "saturating" tactical approach, so firing a large amount of rounds without accurately aiming at their targets. It's basically quantity over 'quality'.

They're going to use their assault guns, most of the times Aks, weapons built and engineered to kill an enemy soldier even several hundred meters away (so don't think you're safe just because you're far from the source of fire).

These weapons are often used in auto mode, to make as much noise and chaos as possible, as well as to hit as many people as possible, to scare them, to show 'Who's in charge now'. By doing this, terrorists are on the other hand forced to go into action taking with them a large number of ammunition, so a notnegligible burden. They'll run slower than you and they'll be focused on lining up the weapon sights to target their victims. And all of this will be happening in a place where, after an initial shock, everybody will be running in all possible directions. Their peripheral vision will be limited, and they will hardly pay attention to the things happening on the outer section of their field of vision. Moreover, terrorists showed a remarkably low tactical ability in simple actions like swapping ammunition magazines or dealing with jammed or malfunctioning weapons, as you can see in the video published by the Daily Mail after the November 2015 attack at a bistro in Paris. Civilians under fire might use these displays of sloppiness at their own advantage, having enough time to get away, taking cover o taking a better cover. In that specific circum-stance ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mN\\_-AnIm-rH4&t=61s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mN_-AnIm-rH4&t=61s)) the terrorist attacking the Bar and getting close to the unarmed woman lying on the ground needs around six seconds to realize that his gun is jammed, try fixing it in vain and go away, leaving the victim unharmed. If you make a sensible use of those six seconds, it can be a lot of time.

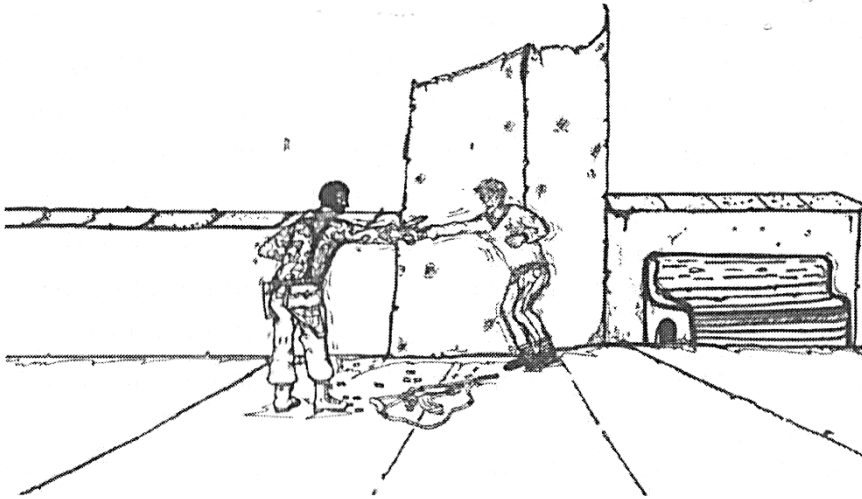
**In six seconds I can get ten or twenty meters away from the threat, swap my hideout with a better one, abandon the place where the action developed, or as a last resort, try neutralizing the aggressor.**



To fully exploit a similar opportunity though, You must have clear ideas about what you need to do as soon as you have the chance, and to do that, you'll have to carefully observe what happens in your surroundings, as well as hypothesizing solutions and tactical options.

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All of the previous will only be possible if you'll have set a pre-Defensive Strategy.

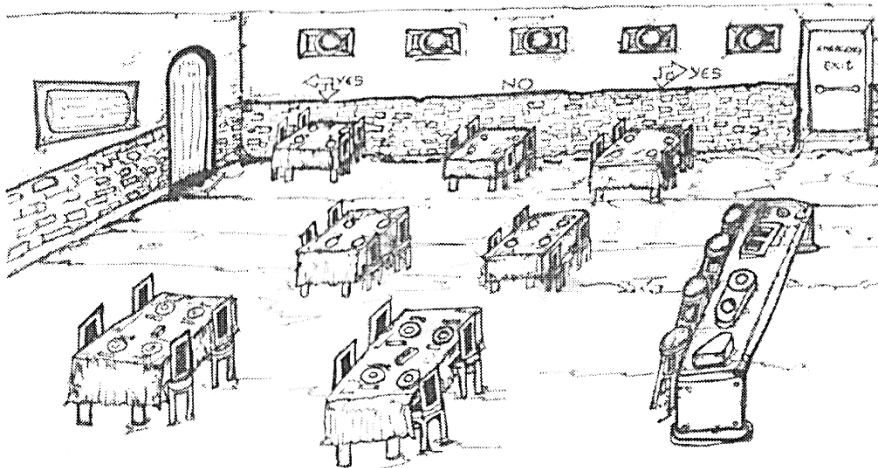


**But what does it mean to elaborate a Defensive Strategy?** You'll be surprised by learning that it's something you already use to do, that it's a tool you're already familiar with and that it's part of your set of situational and cognitive experiences. A Defensive Strategy is what makes you slow down when driving near a crossroads, it's what makes you keep your fingers away from the blade of the knife you use to slice your bread, it's what makes you fasten your baby to the high chair before feeding him or before starting to drive, It's what makes you pay attention on how you lay your feet on a smooth or slippery surface. Basically, it's a way of thinking taking into consideration what could happen, and it's about acting in order to minimize the risk, behaving in a planned manner and defending your own life, in case a bad event should happen.

I completely understand we're talking about two dramatically different scenarios, one being the hypothesis somebody doesn't respect a 'give way' signal and slowing down according to the imagined risk, while the other is previewing what to do in case someone got into the bar where you're having your meal and started taking shots. Believe me if I say that the first thing to do is to start thinking and interacting with our surroundings in a way that differs from the usual. All of us are capable of this shift.

You'll need to build a personal Defensive Strategy, thinking about scenarios and operating choices based on the kind of threat you'd be facing in a given place. At first it may sound like something impossible to do, like a task for the adepts or the long time professionals. But if You start from the basics, like in a game, you'll find yourself interacting with the environment in a different, more aware manner, sooner than you think.

**Let's start planning, beginning from the easy things. First rule. Always be in the best possible position to observe what happens around you**, especially if you're not moving but still, static. So, for instance, when choosing a table at a bar or at a restaurant, you should choose one from which you have a good observation point, even better if on the inside and at a higher floor, possibly close to secondary exits like a back entrance or an access to the basement or to an even higher floor. If you're on a higher floor and you see 'em coming, because you'll have chosen a seat allowing you to see what happens on the main way in, you'll have an advantage compared to the on-es closer to the threat, who will notice the trouble only when the assailants start shooting.



**To see things on time, realizing as soon as possible what's about to happen, is fundamental.** After this, there's a very important thing to take care of. That is to have multiple preemptively evaluated options about where to run or to hide, instead of starting from scratch or having to decide on the fly. This point is vital, but it implies that you actually use that aforementioned **'previewing ability'**, so that you trained your brain into finding rapidly effective solutions in the least time possible. There's a parameter that is bound to finding the best possible seat, the table allowing the widest and farthest view or the terrace to keep an eye on the restaurant's entrance. We're talking about the time factor. Something that is vital in these cases. An acceptable amount of time, even a couple dozens of seconds, will allow you to enact your Defensive Strategy. Your ability to defend yourself will once again be determined by the time it will take to you to gain awareness of the threat, by what you will have planned to do on advance, and as we just said, by the time you'll have to put your plans into action. Having some twenty seconds before the terrorists reach your position could allow you to elaborate the most suitable and performing response.

**To realize in the least possible time what's going to happen or the beginning of a high risk situation** might grant you a great tactical advantage and excellent possibilities of running away safe and helping the people with you. I perfectly understand how difficult this may sound, not to say almost impossible, to put into practice for the average person. When things go south, we are usually unprepared, and end up behaving in a totally passive way, getting stuck without thinking. Let's take a look together at the video about the New Year's Eve attack at Reina Club in Istanbul (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OF8mHAJpZft3>). Look at the behavior of the couple at the entrance of the club. The terrorist starts shooting while he's still on the road, the people you see on the video, once they realize something's wrong, stay still, almost paralyzed from fear.



The person on the left tries reducing his own silhouette, kneeling and giving the back to the aggressor. The terrorist inevitably hits him as soon as he's close enough. It is evident how little time you have to think, but you need to exploit that handful of seconds and imagine another approach to the scenario, if you want to have a chance to survive. It's totally understandable. The idea of choosing a restaurant, or a table or a seat on the basis of what tactical advantage you'd gain in case of a terrorist attack may sound halfway between ridiculous and silly.

Sometimes you might even think it is a form of surrender to the fact that terrorists want to inhibit your freedom. But these things happen, and **it's up to you to decide whether you want to pretend everything's fine, or you want to try a different approach.** There is also another aspect to consider. We often think that the only alternative to not worrying about similar things is to necessarily become paranoid and seeing perils everywhere. It is time to take back into consideration an example we made.

Biffani C., *Defending Yourself During a Terrorist Attack*, in 'Urgency', DOI: 10.576 58/389-410; N. 1, 2023, 389-410.

Do you or your friends consider yourself a paranoid just because you slow down at crossroads or because you wear seat belts? If you can take some advantages, why not doing it? I believe time has come to start thinking about a different set of behaviors, and about how they should integrate with our average way of life. Obviously you won't develop similar abilities in interacting with the environment or in operating choices even within the most consolidated routine in a handful of months, but we should all start familiarizing as soon as possible with a similar approach.

#### 4. When things go south.

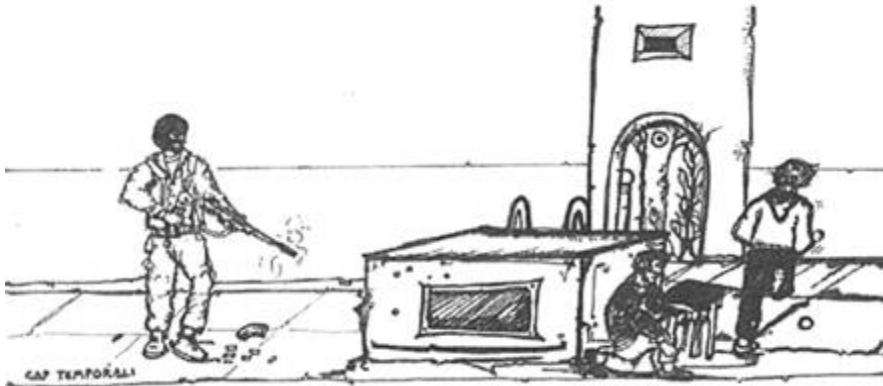
I found myself in what we'd define a critical situation more than once, and in these cases the most immediate thought is usually something like No, this can't be happening for real, not to me! even if in my experience what I've always thought sounds more like OK. It's happening now, right now, to me. I'm telling you this because I'd like you to familiarize the idea of taking a moment for yourself, to gain consciousness and awareness of what's happening. Because that's what you'll have to do.

Anyways, the drama's taking place right where you are, or some meters away, and it's time to immediately switch and change your ways of thinking and acting. You'll have a great benefit, from a biochemical point of view, in switching from being under the control of your parasympathetic nervous system to the sympathetic nervous system in a matter of milliseconds. Without getting too technical, we're talking about the 'operating mode' Mother Nature provide us with in order to switch to 'Fight or Flight' in the most rapid and efficient possible way. If you'll have to run, jump or fight, you'll be doing it in a way you'll never done it before, you bet.

So once you get at this point, I'm sure you understood your body is completely able of interacting even with a tough situation like the one you've been presented with so far. So let's understand what needs to be done. First of all, if, unfortunately, you find yourself in a similar situation, it's vital **to find a cover**, then you must take a moment to observe and evaluate what's happening. But what kind of cover? We'll see it in a moment. **Keeping on thinking** is important. It allows to operate sensible choices, following a reasoned strategy rather than the emotions of the moment. Also, thinking reduces the room for fear and anxiety in your mind.

Force yourself into thinking that you're perfectly capable of finding a solution. That rescue teams will be there soon to fight against and defeat terrorists. That terrorists won't have an easy time for too long, that you're in your city, in your country and not in a war zone, and that everything will end well and soon, as long as you keep on thinking. The idea of action is the exact opposite of passiveness, and if there's something you can't afford to do in a situation like the ones we discussed so far, that is being passive!

**Decode the scenario in the least possible time. Exploiting a shelter, shrinking the silhouette, don't run on a straight line, run away!** The most important thing to do as soon as shots are fired is **getting away from the line of fire, shrinking your silhouette and hiding behind objects with a good consistency.**

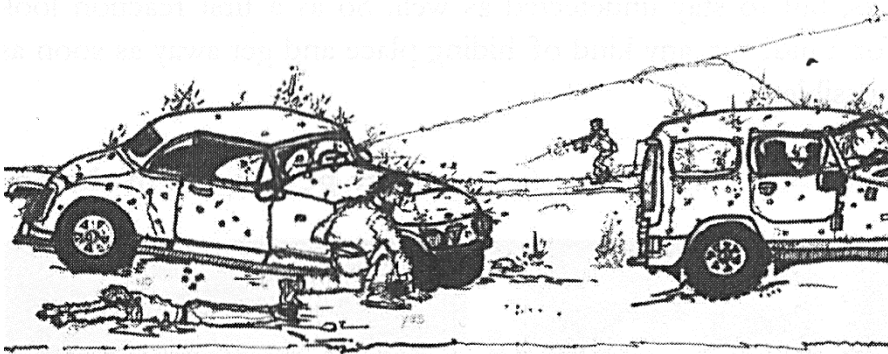


Think of the weapons and ammo used in Paris, or at the Mall in Nairobi (the attack carried out by Al Shabab terrorists <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WUr6eYx-d6A&t=2s>) or also the recent attack at Reina Club in Istanbul. You want your cover to put a considerable toughness between the bullets and you. But it'd be wise to consider another aspect. You could use your cover not only to protect yourself from bullets, but to stay undetected as well. So as a first reaction look for a hideout, any kind of hiding place and get away as soon as possible. But let's go back to your first necessity, **getting out of the line of sight**: to do it in a sensible way you'll need to understand where the shots are coming from.



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The weaponry and ammunition used by terrorists in attacks such as the ones we previously discussed are particularly efficient and capable of piercing objects of low to medium resistance while keeping their lethal force almost unaltered. Think of drywall or not so thick walls, the metal plates of a car, advertising panels, glass windows in a house or in a car. This kind of weapons, together with allowing a great volume of fire, can easily hit a target at hundreds of meters, so don't consider yourself safe just because you put four or more streetlights between you and the gun (streetlights are usually 20/25 meters apart from each other).



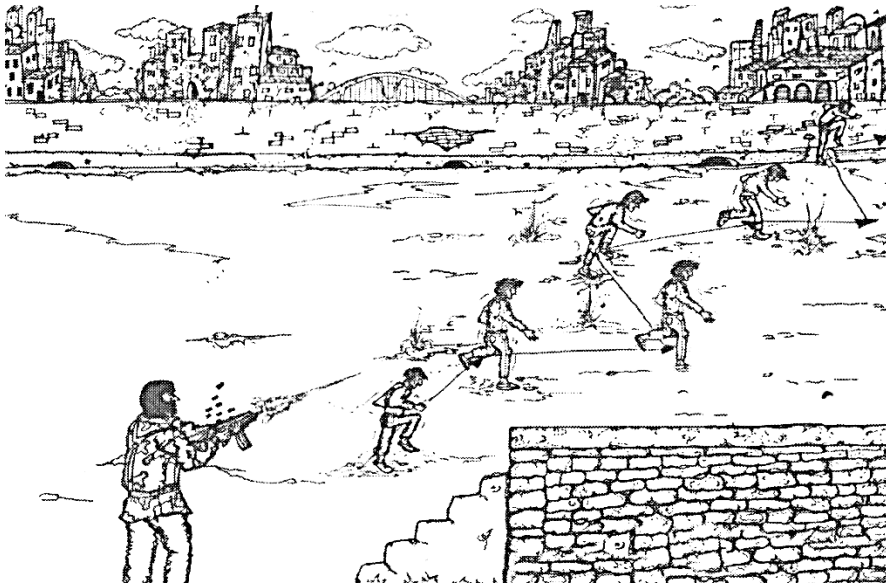
Take a look at the Paris attack footage and notice how the terrorists outgun the cops in ballistic and tactical terms. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeHHYQVhmeE>). The french police tries containing them, but they are forced back in their covers every time the assailants shoot. Concrete planters, core columns, vehicles in correspondence with the engine compartment or with wheels, retaining walls, are just some examples of how some covers could be more efficient than others. If you were hiding from the beginning, that's fine. If the shelter you chose on the fly is a good spot to hide while not being ballistically protective, choose a better one as soon as you have the chance to be safe from gunshots.



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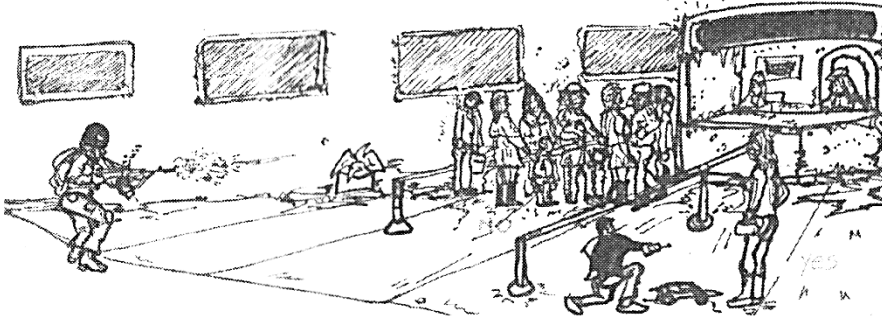
You might have to move for a number of reasons, because your cover is not safe enough, because you can swap it for a better one. In any case, you should try synchronizing your movements with the pauses the attackers take from shooting, or move when they're firing in a direction different than yours. You might have to move because they're getting dangerously close to you also. But to do that within an acceptable safety margin (relatively to that specific situation) **you will need to observe what they're doing**, or at least try listening the noise they produce. If you have a good opportunity to move towards a better shelter or to get away, take it right away and don't wait for a better one. In similar situations, decisions have to be taken with logic and reasoning, but indeed they have to be put into action in the least time possible. If, for instance, the assailants give you their backs, you should try and take advantage of that, since you may never have that opportunity again.



Your movements will have to be quick but not too long, proceeding in order to gain a safe position. Make sure you use a different side of your shelter to move somewhere else. When running, **avoid doing it on a straight line**, or at least don't do it on long distances. It would be better to proceed in short sprints, to reach always better covers while avoiding to stay on the same line for too long. Be aware that the attackers will proceed rapidly, knowing well there will hardly be an armed response of any level. It's important to know and keep in mind that the average shooter will anyway need some seconds to wield his weapon, aim to the target align the sights and shoot. So proceeding not on a straight line will give greater chances of survival, by forcing the assailant to aim at a target moving side by side. Definitely not an easy target.

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I repeat, by avoiding to run on a straight line, it'll be harder for him to take a clear shot since he won't have a fixed target in front of him. This will cost him time and will be definitely harder. Make their 'working day' complicated, in any possible way!



Choose carefully your covers and the possible escape routes, if you find yourself in a closed area, like a shopping mall or a subway station. If possible, you should pick wide open areas while avoiding the danger of getting stuck in the crowd. It's not always a wise idea to blend in the crowd like sardines in a shoal, since you could get into serious trouble even by sticking among dozens or hundreds of people fleeing. You could get stepped over, for instance. **Put meters and corners between you and your assailants.** The terrorists will be always shooting at the easiest targets, and unless they came especially for you, **they're very unlikely to follow you.**

They're fighting against time too, and they're aware that rescue teams are on their way, so they'll mainly and necessarily go for the targets that are easier to acquire. You might not be alone, maybe with family or friends, or you might feel the responsibility of helping the ones close to you at the moment of the attack. Keep in mind that it is vital to **communicate in a proper way** with the people around you, be they friends or family.

**To propose easy and simple solutions while keeping calm,** can really make a big difference, as well as having a basic knowledge of first aid. More than that, assuming the right attitude and being providers of simple and proper answers will give you the ability of managing people around you, limiting the possibility of them displaying a wrong or dangerous behavior. It's for their and your safety.

People together with you might get relatively distant or slow in their movements. **You want to avoid being aggressive towards them, since you don't want to add up stress and anxiety** to a situation that is already enough of a trauma. It's a wise idea to suggest behaviors and actions that are easy to enact, such as staying low and still, and to use gestures to indicate the direction where you want people to run in the next sprint or when you want next movement to be executed. Shouting, unless necessarily required by the firearms making noise, might have unwanted effects such as revealing your position and convey attention on you in a moment when you don't want to be of any 'interest'.

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### 5. Kidnapping and hostage taking.

If you've been kidnapped on the inside of a building, the scenario is sensibly different from an open air situation. At first, try individuating as soon as possible a good hideout and don't try fighting back. Especially in the initial phase of the attack, unless you're sure that you have a concrete possibility of eliminating the assailant or the assailants in a quick and definitive way, or unless it's your only option. In the beginning of the attack, you'll see the peak of aggressiveness and determination. Every expression and activity perceived as potentially hostile will be harshly punished. While you're running away and seek for a cover, try understanding at least at a glance, how many attackers are there, try memorizing their positions, who seems to be in charge and how well are they equipped. Do they have long or short weapons?

Do they have any backpacks or any element suggesting they might hide something like explosives charges? How tall are they, what are their features like? Should you have the opportunity of hiding and calling for aid, it'll be vital to tell how many assailants did you see, where are they located inside the structure and how many people do you think they might be keeping at gunpoint. Moreover, if from your observation point you manage to see wounded or dead people, you should be able to describe them, to tell who's in charge, how do they communicate and which language do they use. In case you're about to be overtaken or you've been chased up to your hideout, **coverings will be of no use**. Unfortunately, at that point, your one and only option to avoid being wounded or dying is to **FIGHT**.

Attending a good self-defense course would help you for sure, but it's good to know at least a couple things. In case you get to close quarter combat, in narrow spaces, **you should shorten the distance and hold tight onto the aggressor. This way will prevent him from freely and easily use his weapon against you**. Hit your enemy in any possible way, preferentially aiming at the eyes, or the throat, the groin, or bite them if possible. Meanwhile, try grabbing a hold of the muzzle, or the upper receiver of the weapon, in order not to let your aggressor to point it against you.

You might have some more chances of getting away, if you'll answer back with the same determination and ruthlessness. I'll tell you something that might be of some help. As I wrote at the beginning of this analysis, he too feels pain and bleeds, right as every other human being in the whole world does. And he feels fear as well. Most likely, they really didn't expect to be face to face with somebody ready to fight back. So the shock resulting from this could even grant you the precious time you need to overwhelm your aggressor. If you were doomed, don't you think you'd give it a try? Eventually, the only difference would be to face your death while fighting or waiting for the death blow crawling under a desk. The choice is yours. If you want, you can spend some time watching the footage from the attacks in Paris, in Mali, in Nairobi, in Brussels and Istanbul airports or at Reina, always in Istanbul. You will notice the terrorists proceeding always, or almost always, on a straight line, acquiring close targets and shooting in short bursts.

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What I can guarantee to you, because there's scientific evidence backing it, is that during the action they experience, as well as the victims, a series of physiological effects resulting from fear as a consequence of their actions. They have a limited field of vision, a weak control of their motions, a distorted sensory perception and limited hearing. They should be actual soldiers trained for close quarter combat to be able to counter these handicaps and to successfully manage the situation they produced. So far they didn't show this. **So let's learn how to exploit their errors and issues, and how to take advantage of opportunities.** Remember that these guys won't easily move in couples, or alternating movements and shooting like true professionals would do.

Neither they would stay close one another, especially in case they have to keep wide spaces under control or move through shopping malls. Even though they have assault weapons, even though they can use them, even though they want to kill and they are dressed with tactical clothes, those things don't make them foolproof commandos. Do you need an example? Look at the video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijm-FtZTkOIs&t=2s>) showing the two terrorists after the Charlie Hebdo attacks and ask yourself what kind of soldier would do what the assassins do without a proper cover. They feel safe, self confident and they behave like arrogant, stupid, inapt people as they are.

Observing, evaluating, counting how many of them there are, understanding how and in which direction do they move, being aware they'll soon have to change the magazine of their weapon, might enhance your chances of getting away or even overwhelming them. Don't be passive, and I suggest you once again to keep on observing and analyzing. Once you'll be sure you got an adequate shelter, make sure you put your mobile in silent mode, take a deep breath and remind yourself that you managed to survive to the first extremely dangerous moments of a terrorist attack, that you're doing a great job and that soon there will be trained personnel to take care of you and save you.



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#### 6. What should we do in case of blitz of friendly Forces?

Should you be at the center of a hostage rescue on behalf of friendly forces, don't think you're safe unless the special Forces personnel authorize you to move and leave the location. Very few situations can be as dangerous as being unwillingly actors in a hostage rescue. It is therefore wise not to consider yourself safe until everything is actually over. Find a shelter for yourself and, in case you shouldn't find one, stay still in the fetal position with your hands in plain sight. Everything's gonna be over in minutes. Keep on repeating this in your mind and keep on thinking that eventually someone's gonna rescue you. Listen carefully to the instructions the rescue team will shout out. Don't move in a sudden or violent way don't be aggressive. Keep on moving slowly with your hands in plain sight until special forces personnel leading the action will tell you to behave differently.

Should you remain injured at any moment of the attack or the kidnapping, make sure to wrap the wound with bandages, even rags will be fine, and stay hidden where you are. Don't worry too much about infections or aspects that could be adequately dealt with by more competent people on due time. That will be an easy issue to cope with for those who are coming to rescue you in short time, but you should stick to staying safe and stop the bleeding. Keep in mind that our organism is a machine capable of resisting stress, threats and wounds way better than you can imagine. There are hundreds of cases testifying about victims who kept on running and escaping for long distances, even though they were shot, stabbed or hit by shrapnel caused by IED, only to realize they were injured just after getting away safely. The adrenaline generated by shock and scare will allow you to run faster, to handle better the pain due to eventual wounds and to resist stress in a more efficient way. You will do it, and you'll manage to help people around you with saving their own lives.

#### 7. Attacks carried out using trucks and vehicles as weapons.

In similar situations, which unfortunately are getting more and more frequent, there's not much you can do to be reasonably safe. The only real piece of advice I feel like distributing is: keep in mind that the times and spaces to maneuver a Truck weighing several tons are seriously limited, so once you understand what's happening, try running away in a direction that will prevent the driver from aiming at you and running over you. Once again I suggest that you think about the fact that you can't run away on a straight line, and that compared to when you're escaping from gunshots you can't look for shelter from a truck driver behind planters or other smaller objects. Also, hiding behind parked vehicles or gazebos wouldn't grant a substantial protection, so the most sensible thing would be to actually run away following trajectories that would give the driver a hard time in trying to run over you, moving yourself against terrorist direction.

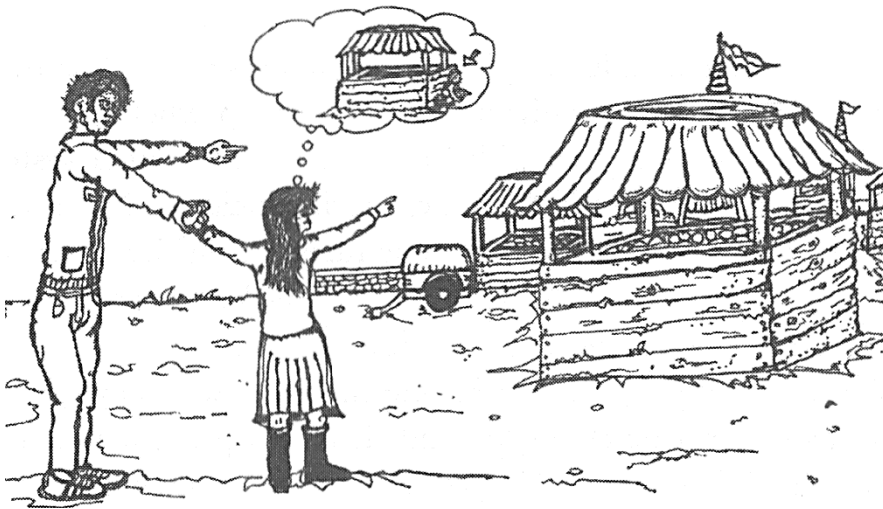
And keep remembering that, as big as it may be, that vehicle is coming towards you at dozens of kilometers per hour and it can cover considerable distances in a bunch of seconds, so be quick in taking the best possible decision. As always and once again, you'll have a second to think and enact your Defense Strategy, so think using the best of your abilities and possibilities.



#### 8. MASS SHOOTERS. Examining Las Vegas.

This manual takes a look at a series of actions carried out by attackers who either act individually or in a group, whether suitably armed (that is, equipped with firearms) or using other systems of attack. Regarding the dramatic, specific incident that recently took place; I would like to add some further considerations. You can only defend yourself from similar attacks by moving away from the scene as quickly as possible (which, in order to do so safely, quite simply presumes having chosen to wear closed shoes that allow for a quick escape and that help prevent foot injuries while doing so) or taking cover. A cover or shelter can have two characteristics, serving two roles: the first being hiding from sight, or using the cover to shield yourself from the rounds fired. The first of these options (hiding) allows us of course to remain out of the shooter's sight, and the cover chosen, although not able to mechanically withstand the shots, hides us from the your eyes, preventing us from becoming targets.

If he cannot see me I do not exist, and as a result, the terrorist is more likely to turn to targets that can be seen and engaged. The second option is to stand behind something that effectively acts as a barrier. This differs from the hiding place in that it can withstand the penetrating force of the ammunition used by the terrorist, which in the case of Las Vegas, was particularly marked. In order to be shielded effectively, stand behind or under objects of a certain size, such as trucks or vans, or lie behind structures made of brick and mortar. Often in similar situations, the police intervene with armoured vehicles behind which they shield and move the victims so as to remove them from the crime scene.



One must bear in mind that a vehicle generally does not provide a safe enough barrier from a ballistic point of view, but most certainly can prevent us from being seen by the attacker, and as injured and the screams. Move out of the line of fire as quickly as possible, find a hiding place or cover, observe what is taking place and if you have valuable information, refer it to an emergency number. Always remember that you are not done for, and that you can survive.

#### 9. TOPICS.

- Gain an advantage position while assuming the correct attitude and elaborating a Defense Strategy.
- Keep an eye on the ways in and out of the area you're in.
- Observe what happens and imagine your reaction in different situations.
- Give yourself short term objectives, like reaching a particular hideout or resisting for the few minutes it will take to rescue teams to come.

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- Get an adequate shelter and put your phone in silent mode, keep it always on.
- In all circumstances that allow it, always wear shoes that permit you to escape without hurting yourself.
- If locked in a hideout, activate energy saving mode on your mobile phone.
- Don't run away on long straight lines.
- Exploit pauses, distractions and issues of the assailants.
- Face one problem at a time.
- Memorize as much as possible about your assailants.
- Propose solutions to those who surround you or are running away with you.
- Prepare to fight as a Last Resort.
- Staunch the bleeding wounds.
- Remember that every instant passing by is a moment less separating you from the end of your nightmare.
- Keep repeating yourself you're doing a good job and rescue personnel will come soon.
- If you're at the center of the scene during a hostage liberation action, stay safe, avoid strange gestures.

**THE AUTHOR DECLARES:**

that no competing interest exist; to be the only author of this research paper; that he has not received specific grants from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit-sectors; that the views and opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Agency Owner and Publisher; that this article followed all ethical standards for carrying out research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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YEAR I - MAY 2023 - N. 1

ISSN (PRINT) 2974-8321 - ISSN (WEB) 2974-8585

# URGENCY

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESCUE AND DEFENSE SCIENCE

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GOVERNANCE, POLITOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY - CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINALISTIC - ANTITERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM  
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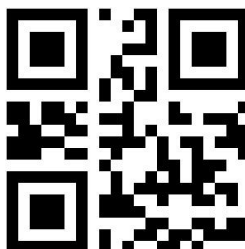
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YEAR I - MAY 2023 - N.1

ISSN (PRINT) 2974-8321 - ISSN (WEB) 2974-8585

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MEDICINE AND PSYCHOTHERAPY DISASTER - EMERGENCY NEGOTIATION AND PEDAGOGY - OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE

ANNO I - MAGGIO 2023 - N. 1

EDITORE EMERCRIM® (CODICE FISCALE 94280730485 - FLORENCE - ITALY)  
LEGALE RAPPRESENTANTE DELL'EDITORE: PATRIZIO BORELLA  
DIRETTORE RESPONSABILE DEL PERIODICO: PATRIZIO BORELLA (O.N.G. 170559)  
SEMESTRALE CON NUMERI SPECIALI, MONOGRAFICI, ANTOLOGICI (ID. N. + M)  
PUBBLICATO PRESSO LA SEDE DEL RAPPRESENTANTE INTELLETTUALE  
(SALITA AL CASTELLO MEDIOEVALE, 13 - 19025 - PORTOVENERE - SP - ITALY)  
TIPOGRAFIA S.E.A.T.I. SRL - VIA GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI, 62 (19126) LA SPEZIA (SP) - ITALY  
REGISTRAZIONE PRESSO IL TRIBUNALE ORDINARIO DI FIRENZE AL N. 6117/2020  
PERIODICO LEGATO COL FILO REFE PER LA LUNGA CONSERVAZIONE  
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YEAR I - MAY 2023 - N. 1

EMERCRIM® PUBLISHER (TAX CODE 942807304859 - FLORENCE - ITALY)  
LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE PUBLISHER'S: PATRIZIO BORELLA  
JOURNAL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: PATRIZIO BORELLA  
SIX-MONTHLY PERIODICAL WITH SPECIAL ISSUES, MONOGRAPHS, ANTHOLOGIES (ID. N. + M)  
PUBLISHED AT THE SEAT OF THE INTELLECTUAL REPRESENTATIVE  
(SALITA AL CASTELLO MEDIOEVALE, 13 - 19025 - PORTOVENERE - SP - ITALY)  
S.E.A.T.I. TIPOGRAPHY S.R.L. - GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI STREET, 62 (19126) LA SPEZIA (SP) - ITALY  
REGISTRATION N. 6117/2020 COURT OF FLORENCE  
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