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A Simple Treatise on the Origins of Cracker Kung Fu Or Mai Violence

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A Simple Treatise on the Origins of Cracker
Kung Fu

Or

Mai Violence

By

Mark Joseph Runge

*A non-thesis project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Art from the Department of Art and
Art history in the College of Visual and Performing Arts at the
University of South Florida*

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Cracker Boy's daddy's cabin in North Florida.



Cracker Boy's retreat in the woods.

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Preface

Before I came to the United States in 1970, my teacher said, “Zhang Yang Mai, you will be going to a new place where our practice of the martial-arts is practically unheard of. People will be curious and want to learn our ways.” Master Niu could not have been more correct. Each time I return to China to further my martial practice with my teacher, I tell him so.

Since my arrival here in America, I have been teaching traditional Chinese martial-arts. Over the past thirty years, these arts have seen a rise in popularity never reached at any other time in America. Along with their popularity, though, has come a watering-down of the traditional martial, or combat, methods. The original purpose of these arts as systems of self-defense or physical and mental disciplines has turned into aerobic and gymnastic performance activities. Furthermore, all styles of traditional kung fu utilized various weapons that were readily available. Most weapons were simple farm tools and instruments, which depended upon the type of crops or livestock prevalent in that area of China. Today, many martial artists go through years of training with a particular weapon without really understanding where it came from or why it exists. Knowing about one’s weapon allows him to better understand how to use it.

Due to the recent changes in the People’s Republic of China, martial arts there have taken on a unique flavor, one based on the utilitarian role they are seen as fulfilling. That is, *wu shu*, or martial arts, in China is now the national sport. With the aesthetic aspects of the art being stressed and as a result of the persecution of martial artists during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the practical aspects are often downplayed, and it is arguable that the overall level of skill in the combative elements of the arts has greatly declined.

Even more so, then, the ability of the student of traditional Chinese martial-arts in the United States has greatly decreased. Or, perhaps the purpose of the martial artist has changed from its martial aspect to a leisure activity. Either way, through his study of traditional Chinese martial-arts, both in the U.S. and China, Mark Runge, through his life's experiences, training in China, and combat experience and training in a Combat Engineer Company during the first Persian Gulf War, has brought together a practical and traditional system of contemporary martial-arts indigenous to Florida.

The purpose of this book, then, is to not only preserve one of the most dynamic and authentic of Florida's fighting arts in existence, but also to provide the reader with a broader view of the art of Cracker Kung Fu than has previously been available.

This current work is divided into five parts, each focusing on a different dimension of the art of Cracker Kung Fu. Chapter One, "Cracker Boy," offers a spiritual overview in terms of how the creator of Cracker Kung Fu learned his art and developed his principles that enabled him to effectively survive while discovering the foundations of his traditional art. Chapter Two, "Cracker Boy and Gus in China," expands upon the development of the art of Cracker Kung Fu and the direct influence of Chinese culture and thought concerning wu shu, or martial arts. From China, Cracker Boy, Mark, gained valuable insight into the tradition of Chinese martial-arts that influenced his ability to process and create an authentic, Florida martial-art. Chapter Three, "Occupational Tools as Weapons," offers an overview of how and why occupational tools became weapons used in the United States Army. These movements will then be shown in their martial applications through the United States Army's Combatives field manual. In Chapter Four, "Fighting with the Tire Iron," explains the specific applications of the Tire-Iron Form. Cracker Boy goes through the form, or set of movements, and gives a demonstration of each of the applications for the form. Finally, in a flip book, the applications are illustrated as

a set of movements to aid as a mnemonic device for the martial movements. The flip book appears as a poster form in the addendum. The book closes with an epilogue by Moshe ben Avram.

Zhang Yang Mai



Author's note: Zhang Yang Mai trained in wushu at the Beijing Physical Education University in Beijing, PRC, and he is a long-time practitioner of kung fu specializing in the Northern and Southern Praying Mantis styles.

Cracker Boy

About the same time every year, I begin to have nightmares. By the time that Suzy wakes me up, I am aware that I have been dreaming. I hear my own screams. I can't do anything to stop myself by then. I must live the day after my nightmares with the memory, or maybe residue, of my desert life.

There is nothing like the smell of burning flesh. The smell enters your nose, but it lives on in your mouth as a gritty and acrid taste. I brushed my teeth a lot while I served in the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. I was there for only six months and one day, but there were times when I felt as if I was there for a lifetime. I lived and died there, but not like the burning bodies. They would never go home, or, maybe they already were home. They still stank.

Like me, my dad was a soldier. He was in the U.S. Army in the late sixties and early seventies. His main duty station was at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts, where my sister and I were born. My brother was born in Ethiopia. My dad was there to fight the Derg, a socialist military unit that wanted to rule the country. The Derg won. I guess my dad didn't fight too hard.

I didn't know my dad's first wife. She died of leukemia or some such disease. His next wife became my mother. His third wife lives in the sticks outside of Tampa, Florida, somewhere; I saw her at my sister's second wedding. I don't know what happened to his fourth wife. She never liked us kids anyway. He almost married a fifth wife. She now lives across the Tampa Bay with a guy who has six DUI's.

I don't know which wife did him in. I think it was the third. He really fell apart after her. His degeneration was not an immediate process. He and I went fishing once, and we had to drive down a dirt road to get to the river where we would fish. As we got near the river there was an abandoned car on the side of the dirt road. It was obviously stolen and subsequently trashed. Before we put our lines in the water, we drove to a convenience store that was nearby. My dad went inside to get some change to call the police. The clerk was amiable until he saw the Smith and Wesson .357 caliber pistol my dad wore in a shoulder holster under his jacket. The clerk painfully looked from the pistol to my dad's face, but my dad said, "Just the change, please."

As a child, I would go with my dad to meet his friends in places that I cannot remember how to get to because the places were so far in the woods. We would shoot guns, like my dad's 357. We also fired rifles and shotguns. I fired my first M16 rifle in a sand

pit when I was only 11 or 12 years old. All of the guys there were impressed that I could hit my target at ranges as far as three hundred yards.

For my fourteenth birthday I got a twelve-gauge shotgun, some shaving cream, and a bag of razors.

When I was in the army I had to qualify with an M16. I had to hit 20 out of 32 targets that ranged in distances from ten yards to three hundred yards for the basic qualification. The first time I tried to qualify I hit only 19 targets. By the ripe old age of 17, I had the expert marksmanship shot out of me.

There were many farms where I grew up, and I guess we were expected to be familiar with guns. People raised pigs, chickens, and cows. We had to be able to protect the animals so that they would survive to be killed by us.

My family didn't raise animals. But I loved them. I really liked the fact that our trailer had holes in the floor, and the feral cats would crawl inside of them to have their babies in our home. One time I had to go up into the fiberglass insulation in the floor under our trailer to get some kittens out. They were making too much noise, and we knew something wasn't right. The mom never came back. One of the kittens survived. His name was Tippy. He climbed up our Christmas tree one year and knocked it over. My first step-dad was mad about that.

He did not get mad very often. One day my family was outside in the yard enjoying the Florida weather. My brother, who has always been bigger than I was, was messing with me. He wanted to tussle, but since he always won, I had no interest. My brother had other plans. He eventually got on top of me and was doing something that made me cry. My first step-dad picked him up by his leg and threw him off of me. My first step-dad saved me that day.

But it was my brother who saved me many other times. Once, I took a bag of pot and stolen gum from some boys. One of the boys called me and said he wanted it back. I told him to meet me at Hogan's Corner, which was the local convenience store where neighborhood issues were worked out. I showed up at Hogan's Corner, and the four boys were waiting. I resigned myself to the beating I was about to take. Then a car sped into the parking lot and skidded to a halt near the picnic table where all of the problems were to be laid out. Two of the other boys threw up their hands and stepped back. I turned to the guy who called me and asked, "Well?" He said all that he wanted was his pot and his gum back. I



said that I didn't have it, and I hit him in the jaw. We punched and kicked and bit one another for several minutes until he got me in a choke hold and choked me until I was unconscious. I woke up to the sight of my brother smashing the second boy's head against the oak tree by the picnic table. The boy who choked me silly was gasping for air on all fours like a tired dog. He had boot marks on his chest and face. My brother looked at me and smiled.

I kept the gum and the pot.

I didn't smoke pot back then, though. Everyone else I knew did. My brother would find out who was growing pot around our neighborhood and tell me. I would reconnoiter the area where the pot was grown because I was the stealthiest kid in our gang, which consisted of seven boys. Three of those boys are now dead, murdered. The others spent much time in jail ("college," as my family says). Just the other day I picked my brother up from "college" and took him home to the old neighborhood where he would steal peoples' pot after I gave him my thorough reports on the area.

One of our friends in the neighborhood lived near a lake. Some of the people who lived around the lake had boats. We couldn't afford heat during some winters, much less a boat. One winter my mother, sister, brother, and I all had to sleep on the fold-out couch in the living room. My mom borrowed sleeping bags from one of the neighbors for us. It must have been hard for her to return them after I peed in one.

One night when the moon was full I sneaked to the lake near my friend's house. I took off my clothes and snaked into the lake. I swam around the shoreline until I came up to the aluminum boat I had had my eyes on for some time. I slid out of the water and climbed up the bank. I took the boat off of the dock. I took one of the paddles as I moved the boat into the water, and I paddled away. I hid the boat in a ditch for a couple of weeks, and then I moved it to a different lake. I went to use the boat one day, and it was gone. I was so mad that someone had stolen my boat.

One summer I worked for a boat. It was a small fiberglass boat. I had to clean up the yard of the metal shop that was on the south side of my house. I had to pick up scrap metal and trash all summer. It was tough work. I had a good time working that summer because I got to do things I never would have otherwise. I learned to sharpen mower blades on a grinder. I got my first arc welding and gas cutting lessons there. I got along with the boss, but most of the other workers thought I was an annoying kid.



The metal shop is where my second step-dad worked when he met my mom. My mom's first husband (my father) died of a gunshot wound to the chest. My mom's second husband died from drinking too much alcohol. My mom's third husband still lives with her. I used to hate my mom's third husband.

He lived in a trailer near us. He used to cook out on the grill and use candles to save money. His electric bills were in the teens. I should have known he was smart then. But how could a guy who was in a motorcycle "club" in Detroit be smart? He stabbed a guy in a bar fight. Of course the guy was hopped up on narcotics and deserved to be stabbed, according to the other people in the bar. My second step-dad only got probation, so he must have been in the right to stab the guy.

I got stabbed in a knife fight. Well, it didn't start off as a knife fight. I got in a fight with a kid who lived in a neighborhood near ours. Our two neighborhoods didn't get along because we couldn't figure out who was poorer and trashier. I knew the answer, of course, and I told this kid what he didn't want to hear. We fought for a few minutes, but he was outmatched. I guess I should have been satisfied with my victory, and I may have gone a bit far to throw his hand-me-down bicycle into the lake. Still, his brother was a couple of years older than me and quite a bit bigger, so I have no idea why he tried to stab me.

It was just like a B horror movie. He raised the lock-blade knife above his head, screamed obscenities, and thrust it down towards my face. I threw my hands up and crossed them to make an "X" over my face. But he wrenched the knife back and sliced my arm open. Nobody was happy to see the blood, and we all took off in different directions.

I was scared. How could I tell my mom, who worked hard for what we had, that I was a piece-of-shit kid who threw another kid's bike in the lake because he had a second-hand bike while I had to run alongside other kids who had bikes because we couldn't afford one. Well, of course, I didn't.

I did tell the resource officer at our school. He just stared at me. "Tell your mom, or sew it up. You can't leave it like that," he said as he walked away. The look in his eyes the next day when I showed him the stitches I sewed with dental floss was worth the wound I received. He just shook his head and walked away. I smiled. It was great to have that kind of control over others.

I kept the wound hidden for a couple of days after that. But my sister saw it, or maybe I showed it to her. She never could



take blood very well. I remember the first time she went squirrel hunting with my dad, my brother, and me. She had my dad's Remington 12 gauge shotgun. It was the police riot-control model because, as my dad said, you never know. She saw a squirrel, held the shotgun at her hip, pointed the barrel up, and then she turned her head away and fired. We had to bury the squirrel so she would stop crying.

She told my mother about my wound and the stitches that were there. Mom rushed me to the doctor. He looked at the wound, looked at me, looked at my mother, and then he said that I did a fine job and that he could do nothing else but warn me to keep it clean.

My mom was mad. I don't remember my mother ever getting really mad at my sister, my brother, or me. I am sure she did. It is just that I don't remember. She must have been in on the only time I remember getting spanked by my dad. We had just moved to Florida after my father's discharge from the army. We were living in a bus somewhere. I was sick of the color of my bedroom, so I spray painted my walls. I didn't know anything about overspray back then. I only knew how to make do with what I had.

My brother and I built a fort in the swamp that lived next to our trailer. The fort was only four or five feet into the swamp. We constructed it out of the trash that people dumped into the woods. A man who worked at a lumber yard lived down the road a bit, and he used to do a lot of construction on his house. He threw a lot of junk in the woods. Before my dad started to degenerate, he worked for this man.

We were with my dad; we were going to spend the weekend with him. Lightning struck a building where some wood was being kept, and a fire started. My father ordered us to the front of the lumber yard where the office was. He turned and ran to get a forklift to fight the fire. We didn't run; we watched him control the fire.

There was no reason, we thought, that we couldn't control a fire in our own fort. After all, we started it. The only reason the fireman found us was because we were crying so loud. It took the firemen twenty minutes or so to coax us out from under our trailer.

The building that was to become the metal shop where I earned my fiberglass boat stood vacant for some years. We used to sneak into the building to climb the rafters and smoke cigarettes. We also used the building to explore our bodies. I remember that we used to trade boyfriends and girlfriends with one another like



baseball cards. We learned to feel with our hands and kiss with our tongues. We usually did both too hard.

Our best friend's sister was going with this guy from another neighborhood. He lived in a nice house and dressed well. He still had his mom and dad, and they still lived together! He was not what we wanted for our girls. We lured him to the farm where I spent much of my childhood working. We beat him until he was curled up into a ball and stuck between a barbed-wire fence and a ditch. He begged us to stop beating him. He promised not to see her again. I think we were worried that he didn't kiss or touch hard enough. She went on to marry a guy like us. She had a baby. The baby was named after his father, who died in a motorcycle accident.

I have only been in one automobile accident. It wasn't my fault. I was driving my five-ton wrecker in Saudi Arabia. I was on a two-lane road. There was a convoy of deuce-and-a-half, troop carrying trucks that came up behind me. They started to overtake me one by one. I didn't slow down for them. As the last truck came beside me to pass, a truck came over the rise in the opposite lane. Because I was trained in our neighborhood game of "Chicken" to not veer away or give in to your opponent, I still didn't slow down. The deuce-and-a-half driver was forced to cut me off or go off of the road. He slammed into my front bumper, and pushed me to the side of the road. I gained control of my truck, and guided it back onto the road. The other driver was pulling over, and I radioed ahead what happened. I pulled over too. I was pissed because I lost another game of "Chicken."

I grabbed my M16 and rushed up to the deuce-and-a-half ready to shoot the driver. He came towards the rear of his truck yelling, and the flap from the rear of his truck opened to reveal 20 or so angry soldiers—all with their own guns. So I turned my attention to the driver, who was rushing at me. We yelled at one another for several seconds before we realized that we were speaking different languages. Realizing the absurdity of our situation, we both laughed at the same time. We ended up trading money and hats. We patted one another on the back, and we went on to see that our share of death would come to be. This was an important lesson: avoid violence, come away safely and with objects to share with others. But where is the creativity in safety? At the age of 19, I was a war veteran who became aware that one had to use violence in order to create something that another can empathize with.



The Tampa Tribune-Times. Sunday,
January 20, 1991: "Operation Desert
Storm:"

"Letters from the Front" is designed to bring the Middle East crisis into focus through the thoughts, fears and frustrations of the American military men and women stationed there. With the gracious help of families and friends of servicemen and women in the gulf region, we will bring 'Letters from the Front' to you each week. Today, we offer letters from two servicemen. The first is from Mark Runge, a specialist in the Army, writing to his mother and stepfather, Karen and Don Palmer of Tampa, in a letter dated Dec. 3, 1990.—Editor

"How is everything going? Fine I hope. Give me the scoop. I may get it a couple weeks late, but I'll get it.

I was reading the Boston Globe today. There was an editorial in there, [and] I felt a little disheartened when I read it. The man who wrote it was from the Northeast somewhere, I don't recall. He said his job, gas or anything wasn't worth one life that would, God forbid, be spent.

If he feels that way now, how will he feel if, God forbid, hostilities break out? Will he quit his job, walk to church maybe? The way I see it, everything in our society exists off or around oil somehow. I think he should step back and take a look at his life. If he is in the same world as I am, he should support us!



I am not sure if you understand what I am saying without being here, but the support of you [the American public] at home will help us, the soldiers, to justify our part in this. Not that I disbelieve in our cause, because I believe in it 100 percent even though there are reasons you and I will never know about. I would just like to believe everyone thinks our cause is a just one. I know it would be foolish for me to believe this, but I hope. I believe in my God and my country, I hope 'We the people' do also.

Well, I guess that is about it. Tell everyone I said 'Hi.' I love you and miss you both very much. Hope to hear from you soon."

Just like my dad, I guess I didn't fight too hard; I didn't win my war either.

I look like my dad. We both have big, bulbous noses, brown eyes, and squatty-bodies, as we like to say in kung-fu class. He had his hair until his death, though. My hairline is receding, and there is thick hair that is growing in on my back. Nobody else in my family has a hairy back, but I know where the hair on my back came from.

There was a guy from New York in my barracks. He was the quintessential loud mouth that I thought all New Yorkers to be. Like me, he was also new to the unit and trying to fit in. He ruffled my feathers, or I ruffled his; I can't remember. I do remember that my buddy from Florida grabbed him. I thought he was holding him for me; after all, that is the way we fought back home. I hit him in the face a few times before someone grabbed me.

The guy from New York disappeared for a few days. After I became best friends with him, he told me that he flew home because he felt like he didn't fit in the army. We started to work out at the gym together. He got huge, and I got strong. We shot steroids together. The hair is thickest around the spots where I injected myself. My new best friend hit a land mine in Iraq. He is disabled now.



We got the steroids from a soldier in our unit. He had special duty at the gym, which means he got to go work at the gym and exercise a lot. He got me the syringes and the needles. He told me how much to inject and where to inject it. He also used to take money to stand others' guard duty. Some people couldn't stay up for twelve hours during the night. I couldn't. He could. He loved the nighttime. His car was still running in the parking lot of our barracks the morning after he shot himself in the head with his .44 caliber pistol.

I wonder if my dad killed himself. He shot at the police officer with his 12 gauge, (because, as my dad used to say, you never know...) police riot-control model shotgun. The police shot him in the chest. How my dad missed the officer, I'll never understand.

I was mailing a package to China, and it had to be expressed and insured. I went to the post office to send it. The mail clerk looked at me and asked how I pronounce my name. I told him. He asked if my dad was Clifford. I said yes.

The clerk smiled and told me he had worked with my father at a lumber yard some years ago. He asked how my dad was. I told the mail clerk that my dad was dead. He said sorry. He told me a story. The clerk said that one day my dad and some other guy were out in back of the lumber yard with their pistols. There was a piece of wood hanging from a fence quite a distance from them. They wanted to see who could shoot it off the fence. The mail clerk told me that he and some other guys lost money that day. They bet on my dad, who never missed. He missed that day in North Florida.

The clerk told me to come back for more stories if I wanted; he claimed that he had plenty. I never went back. I had plenty, too.

One time I was breaking into a camper trailer with a knife that I got from my dad. I could break into anything with that knife. The owner caught us. The police were called. The owner just wanted to scare us. I never tried to steal from her again.

The police came to our house more than once. One time my sister put gum in a girl's hair. They were on their way home from school on the bus when words were exchanged. So, my sister defended herself. While the police officer was in my house, I broke into the patrol car's trunk with my knife. I took everything I could and ran to the place I knew I'd be safe, the woods. I was raised a few rungs on my gang's ladder after that. Of course, my brother was the best fighter and strongest kid in the gang, so nobody



messed with me anyway. Nobody in our neighborhood messed with my sister, my brother, or me.



Cracker Boy at his Uncle Jim's trailer.

Our trailer was right at the bus stop for most of my school years, that is, before we became nomads. Every day we would step out of our home at the last minute to leave for school. The bus was mostly full when we were dropped off after school. One day, the talking and laughter came to a sudden halt when we pulled up to our bus stop and our trailer had been painted bright blue. Everyone wanted to say something. No one dared to, except Tommy. He limped home that day.

My mother had little money to get our trailer painted, so she hired a guy who lived behind us with his mother. He claimed that the blue paint was on the reject shelf, and he saved my mother money. He later admitted to my brother and me when we skipped school to get high with him that he had been high and that the blue seemed pretty at the time.

We skipped school a lot. I don't think anyone at school cared because we were such trouble makers. During my eighth grade year, my mom got a call from the school. I would not need to attend the last two weeks of school. I had passed all of my classes and would move on. My brother didn't go either. Neither did our five closest friends. We were on a list.

We had been talking about a big fight for some weeks before the exams were to take place. I always talked about fighting while I hung out with a bunch of guys in the schoolyard. Some of the kids I knew and some I didn't know. But we all hung out together. We looked out for one another. We had to.

One day I walked down the hallway at school. There was a chant of "We hate the white," coming from somewhere in front of me. The students in front of me were quickly moving aside for



three large black students who were storming down the hallway. "We hate the white. We hate the white. We hate the white."

I wasn't moving for them, I decided. I dug in, raised my fists, and prepared to get beaten. The three guys stopped and looked back at one another. I saw it in their eyes. I was dead. Then, from behind me I heard ohhhs and ahhhs. My brother flew over my head and slammed into all three guys. We fought hard. Someone in the crowd yelled that the dean was coming. We all ran. My brother and I ended up in a courtyard with a wall. The dean and two teachers were right behind us. My brother threw me over the wall. He got expelled when he wouldn't let the dean paddle him for the fight. He fought the dean instead. I just bled for a while.

My brother was forced to go live with my dad. He had to ride the bus to his new school. He was the only white kid on the bus. One of the other kids foolishly made fun of my brother. The kid got stabbed with a pencil.

My brother got his high school equivalency diploma after I received my first college degree. My sister made it to the 11th grade. My mom got her high school equivalency diploma a couple of years ago while she managed a store and restaurant. My dad got his after he was in the army. I am first generation literate.

Everyone in my family is smart. My brother fabricated and drove monster trucks. He learned to weld from my second-step dad. He wrecked too many times, though, so he had to stick to building them. I don't know why my sister quit high school. She is fast with numbers. My mom had my sister when she was young; my brother came thirteen months after my sister; I came eleven months after my brother. She has always been able to manage things.

My dad is dead.

My dad was creative. That may be where I got the art gene. While we were kids he made all sorts of things. He tooled leather. I can still picture some of the scenes he created by pounding the die tools into the leather. We used to canoe into the swamps to gather driftwood. He created lamps, sconces and other objects out of the scavenged wood. He also started his farming in the same swamps.

We would canoe up the river to certain channels and take them even farther into the woods. Then we would hike until we came to the plot of land that my dad claimed as his own. This was my first experience working with my father to collect and sell his pot. He let us tool leather with him. I made some pretty nice things. I once made a belt. I made a pretty picture with a moose in



it. My sister and brother made things too. One day my sister, my brother, and I were left alone at my dad's while he went out. My sister stabbed my brother with one of the leather tools. He had to go to the hospital and get stitched up. My dad stopped tooling leather shortly after that.

Working with my dad in the swamps started off as no big deal. We just canoed and collected small amounts of pot. When he lived in North Florida, though, the situation became more complicated. It was not complicated because it was tough to get the pot and bring it to Tampa or get rid of it once it got there. The complications started with my dad. The tough part was the look I saw in my dad's eyes.

My dad gave me the creative gene, but my mom gave me the drive to make stuff happen. Even when I was a world away, my mom guided me quietly from home. After I left my first wife and quit art school, I went to Israel. I wanted to talk to god. I knew that there would be no better place to talk to god than his birthplace. I stayed in Har Nof, Mountain View. It was beautiful. I used to get a cheese-and-green-olive pizza and two quarts of beer (all kosher of course) and hike up to the top of the mountain that I lived on. I would look down into Jerusalem and the 5000 years of human filth that people were fighting over, eat my pizza and drink my beer. I never heard from god. I heard from my mom regularly, though. One time when I called her she told me that no matter where I go, there I am. I left for home soon after.

My dad wasn't a bad guy. The first time he went to prison because he saved two of his friends. They were in the military. They were going to have a baby. They could not afford their truck payments and a baby on their government salaries. My dad "stole" their truck for them.

My dad was turned in by a guy who beat up his girlfriend. The guy gave up my dad's name and implied that the couple was in on the theft so he would not get charged with beating his girlfriend. The cops and insurance company told my dad that if he gave up the couple that they would reduce the charges. My dad did his full time. He wasn't fazed after he did the time. He was harder. His eyes were different. He was definitely tied to something now. I came to realize that it was death. He was dead by then, but he hadn't died yet.

The only close family member that died when I was old enough to understand what that meant was my mom's dad. He had a couple of strokes first. I think the third finished him off. I have



only good memories of him. My grandmother tells a different story, though. I believe her story because she says it is the truth. But I didn't live her truths. I remember the good things he did for me.

One of my fondest memories was when we traveled as a family to visit my grandparents in East Pepperell, Massachusetts. Like most kids that visit their grandparents, my sister, my brother, and I got bored. My grandparents had no toys. After an uncle of mine told me that I had freckles because I got too close to a cow and it shit on me, I started to cry. My grandfather took us kids to the store just down the road. He bought us the plastic yard toys that most kids leave around their yards. We didn't go straight back to his house or my thoughtful uncle. Instead, we stopped at a covered bridge.

I had never seen a covered bridge in Florida. The only snow I saw up to that point was the day that schools shut down in Tampa, Florida, because of the snow that fell. There was a television movie series that had just finished airing. It was about nuclear warfare and its aftereffects. I thought snow in Florida meant that the end of the world was here.

I have always been a sensitive kid. I decided that if I was going to die in the initial blast of a nuclear bomb, or worse, survive after the initial blast, I was not going to go to school anymore. I climbed onto the bus everyday because I didn't know how to "miss" it yet. But when I got to school, I would go straight to the library. I would spend my day there.

I finally got caught. I was sent to the principal. She didn't know how to punish me. She made me work in the library during my homeroom period. I learned more about the opossum that year than any seven-year-old should know.

That wasn't the only time I had to go to the principal's office. I went to school drunk one morning. I got sent home. My options were to get expelled and join the ranks of my neighborhood illiterates, or go to drug rehab.

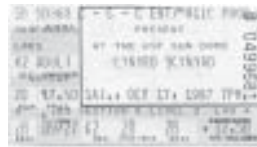
I spent my junior year in drug rehab. I had a psychological exam. I was angry about something, the test said. I had a good vocabulary, it said. I had an I.Q. of 136, it said. I don't give much credence to I.Q. tests anymore. I've always been able to take tests well. But my senior year in high school I didn't take any tests. I didn't take any classes either. I wanted to finish school, but I wasn't allowed to graduate early. I had to get up and be at school by six-thirty in the morning so that I could take my "Life's Skills" class. I



still cannot balance my checkbook. The last entry in the ledger is over two years old. I don't have much in my account anyway.

In my senior year of high school, I got the "Turn-Around Student of the Year Award." In my acceptance speech I didn't tell the well-moneyed people of Tampa who graciously hosted the luncheon for us reformed kids that I had already fucked three girls I met in drug rehab, and I had a fourth on the line. And I learned to make acid from bread and to deal from the bottom of a deck of cards.

When the principal of my high school called me to the office and told me about the award, I had to fill out a form for the luncheon. It asked for the name of parents that will be in attendance. None, I wrote. I lived with a gang of kids in a trailer park. My dean and principal took the seats, and my art teacher got one too. He deserved the seat. He put me up for the award, I later learned. I went to a Lynyrd Skynyrd concert with him. I smoked pot at the concert.



I met a girl in drug rehab who lost her virginity to a man wielding a butcher knife. That man was her father. I cried with her often. My problems shrank as we shared time together. She was gay. I don't know if she was gay before or after her father fucked her. Some people are gay because they are neurotic. Some people are neurotic because they are gay. She earned the right to be either one. I kissed her goodbye when I left rehab. She took an overdose of pills and died while still there in the hospital. I got a note from her after her death. I cried.

The last girl that made me cry before I met my first wife was a federal agent. She would come over to my apartment, and we would fuck. We would talk some, but not a lot. Mostly, we would just fuck. One night she came over, and I went to one of my neighbor's apartment. I got high with them, and then went home. She got mad. She grabbed the bottle of scotch that she had bought me out of the freezer and prepared to leave. "Goodnight," I said. She put the bottle back and we fucked. Another night my brother and some old friends came by. I never told them I was dating a fed. I just told them I was dating a six-foot bombshell. Imagine my



surprise when one of our friends pulled out some pot. We smoked it. I wanted to say something, but there was no time. I knew everyone there except me had a gun, and I knew that two of the guys were wanted by the law. At least it was only pot.

Then someone brought out the coke. My girl passed on everything, and I got the message across that I wanted to be alone. The boys thought they knew why. They had no idea. When they left she went off. She made me look at her badge and gun. She went to the freezer to retrieve the scotch, again. This time though, she raised it like a club and said she should crush my thick skull. I saw the dangerous look in her eyes from others many times before, and I knew she meant it. She didn't do it. She called me a couple of days later and said she changed her phone number and was getting checked for venereal diseases. She said not to call her. I never did.

I wish I could now, though. She was the first girl I felt bad about hurting. I don't know how many girls I fucked before her. I couldn't even remember half of their names or why we fucked at all. I knew her name. I knew I hurt her so bad that she wanted to hurt me, too. I realized the power of violence that day. I had been surrounded by pain almost all of my life. I didn't necessarily understand the difference between pain and violence until that night when I was going to be killed by a federal agent wielding a scotch bottle.

I stayed sober a few days after that to ponder what happened. I tried to think of all of the pain that I caused. That was a tough few days not only because of the sobriety but because I started to consider the violence that I aimed at others and the pain it had caused.

While I was in the army I was encouraged to be violent. We were, after all, warriors. In those moments of sobriety I realized that soldiers were taught to be violent, but we were also trained to control that violence. I now saw a difference, but I certainly didn't understand its significance.

I was introduced to martial arts in the army. We were taught basic killing techniques. The instructors told us we knew enough to get our asses kicked. They were right. As I was going through my training in Washington D.C. to become a patrol officer, a test I took was to enter into a room with "bad guys" and gain control of the situation. There were only two guys in the darkened room when I entered. And they mostly complied with my requests to turn down the music and keep the noise down. I had no idea



there was a third guy until he grabbed me from behind. I fought then. I failed that test.

I tried to use the tools that worked for me since I was child. I tried anger turned violence. The anger is always there. It is a potential energy that is ready to propel me into a violent act. My dad succumbed to it. So did my brother. My sister controls hers, but just barely. The potential for violence is always there for me.

After I moved back to Tampa from Israel to finish my art degree, I stayed away from relationships. I was working on me. I found a way to control my potential violence. I started to run. I made much progress in my art training, and I was physically fit. The anger was pushed down into a place that I could not see or feel. I was in control of myself in the world. Then I met a girl.

We were passionate about one another. We had fun. We made art together. Her brother was a runner, and he and I ran together. She and I loved each other, and we made love good. I had no idea that her passion was so strong because her husband was already chosen for her. He lived up north. She knew all along. She never told me. I became angry again.

But I didn't get violent with others. D.C. had taught me the truth of that. Plus, after having a tooth kicked out and having my eye almost bitten out during separate fights, I was done. I didn't want the violence. It was there, in my genes. I could not get rid of it, but I now knew I could control it. I finished a marathon four months after she left to get married.

I met Suzy. Like me, she had been around the block—from Miami to Paris and back again. Unlike me, she knew herself really well. She was confident. She had a strong mind, strong body, and a strong personality. She didn't take my shit to start with, and she helped me to redirect the shit I gave myself. She encouraged me to go learn something. I found a kung fu school nearby, and much like my drill sergeants in the army when they encouraged me to run faster, she encouraged me to go.

I walked into the kung fu school, and there was the stuff that I remember seeing from the mornings that my dad and I would watch "Kung Fu" and the movies that followed on kung-fu theater. There were weapons in a rack, and Chinese scrolls on the walls. There were musical instruments in the corner and work-out equipment all around the room. One guy was working out in the center of the room. He moved gracefully, but I had no idea what he was doing. There was a guy standing behind the counter reading a magazine. He asked if he could help me. I said I was looking for



something that was a good workout. I told him I didn't want to waste my time with a sissy workout. He just looked at me and said come back tonight to watch class.

I left and went home. I explained to Suzy that I was excited by the look of the place and the demeanor of the guy I spoke to. She said why wait, just join. I participated in my first class that night. I understood very little of what was going on, but my body worked hard and my spirit was better for it. I loved the potential violence, too

I needed to find a place where I could explore myself and my new found experience. I planned for a trip. I finally took one to a place where I could be removed from spiriual safety so I could grow. I went to China..



Cracker Boy and Gus in China



Subj: stuff
Date: 2/21/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy
CC. Sandy and Peggy

The flight was long, but it was interesting. I've never seen Alaska and Russia covered in snow. They are beautiful.

Gus said he saw a polar bear, but I think a glare walked in his eyes instead.

China is interesting place thus far. I will write more when I see more.

I did not get my private apartment. Rather, they put us up in some hotel. I'll let everyone know the name soon.

I love you all.
And Gus loves you all, too.



Gus on the flight over.



Date: 2/23/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy
CC. sifu Tom, Sandy and Peggy, Rozalinda

Hello everyone. Gus and I are fine. We gained weight since we got here, but we hope to start shedding it soon.

“Simo told me to remind you to bargain down on prices. Evidently they do that there.”
Yes, I knew that. They do it in the open markets. I walk through some of them, but I don’t shop there. Too scary. My mission today is to find an apple cap. My kepe is cold.

Today is the coldest day since I’ve been here. But hey, it is Beijing in the winter.

“Also, she said for you to have the hotel write down the place you’re looking for in Chinese before you leave and to carry the hotel’s card with you in case you get lost.”

I’ve done this since day one. Plus I am only walking through neighborhoods close to and between the hotel and school.

Well, that is except for our four-hour walk to the ruined gardens of the Summer Palace where there were only Chinese tourists. It never occurred to me that Chinese people would want to go and see their history in parks? I am growing.

There are so many boroughs. It s like NY; we go from one to the next. We get many looks. There are very few westerners here. We don’t mind.



But two police with clubs eyed us up this morning. I told Danny I would trip him and run; I'd see him later if they started swinging.

"Have you figured out the laundry deal yet?"

I know where it is, and I know how to use it. But I don't have a card to operate it yet. I'll work it out on Monday. I am going to ask my language exchange partner to go to the hotel with me and help me with a few things. I've yet to pay my bill. I owe from the day I got here until tonight. Then the school picks up the tab. They are very friendly at the hotel, but my Chinese is terrible and they don't speak any English. They don't even bother me about the bill.

I read that they offer a free breakfast. I will be looking into that!

"Is there TV?"

Yes. Where do you think I am, the North Pole?

I found this great soap opera-hero show that is on Saturday and Sunday in the mornings from 8-10. It is a kung fu show! Yee! The actors are so very dramatic. I cannot understand what they say, but I understand what they mean. American actors should take lessons (I know I am). There are fifty or so channels on my TV. They are all in Chinese. Sometimes they throw in English, but who needs that crap? Language, it seems to me, is much more a bulwark than an enabler.

This morning I asked for another chair to be put into my room. "ching gay waw yeetsee." "Please bring me a chair." I butchered it, but the girl who cleans my room everyday around 0915 understood and brought me one.

She is very nice. I make my bed every morning, and every morning she looks at me and smiles and says how



poorly I do at her job (speculation on my part, as I don't understand her Chinese) and remakes the bed.

Everyone here is very nice, and they take their jobs very seriously. No tipping please.

I found a great authentic Chinese restaurant, "Mr. Pizza." The menu is in Chinese and the employees speak Chinese, but a picture really does say a thousand words. I grunt and point and they smile and nod. Anyway, you walk in and the employees rush to greet you. Then they form a line to your table so you don't get lost along the way. They take your order (small veggie pizza and a coke), and bring it back quickly. It costs four dollars. No tipping please.

"Have you been watching the Olympics?"
I saw Michelle Kwan fall.

"Did you hear G.W.'s speech to the Chinese people?"
Yes, they dubbed it in Chinese, and he sounded just as unintelligible as I've heard him sound in English.

"I hope you're sleeping okay."
I woke up at 0130 this morning, and I've been awake since. It is 1040, but I must find my apple cap!

"I'm so excited for you to be there. I didn't even know that I'd actually be HAPPY that you're in China. Of course, WE and I miss you BIG HUGE LOTS, but it's really exciting knowing that you're in China, living out your dream."

It is wonderful. But I cannot wait to start training. I pick my electives tomorrow too. I will double up on calligraphy and painting if I can. There is no way that I can become a true kung-fu hero if I only know how to fight. Historically, I would have to study scholarship (know some), alchemy (do it painting with rust),



weaponry (our double-barrel shotgun should count here), practical philosophy (Fukalt, Fucko, what's that name again?), and Chinese medicine (so I can repair some of the damage I do saving down-trodden, Central-Florida farm workers). Well, that is what Gus wants—to be a kung-fu hero, that is. He said he packed light on the clothes and so he has room to take back his knowledge and the necessary materials that go with it.

We walked through the Beijing Language and Cultural University campus yesterday. I saw a sign that they give lessons in making paper cut outs. I am going to call and see if I can do it. I'm not their student, but I am a student.

“Well, got a date with Freud and Foucault.”
You get two guys to replace me in the first week?

Smiles to all



Subj: Re: finished Fucko-Freud
 Date: 2/24/02
 From: Mark
 To: Suzy

I love you

“Did you find your apple cap?”
 No. Damn cap!

“When does school start?”

We get a tour and pick electives and such today. I don’t know what else. Tomorrow I take my “placement test.” As far as I know, I am the only one in the class. I hope I get placed very high. But the truth is that few in America know what a martial artist really is today. Most people who practice Chinese martial arts put on outdated Chinese clothes and expect that an art made to survive in feudal times will serve in its traditional sense in 2002. When these guys in China work out and perform, they wear sweat loose fitting pants made out of synthetic materials here. Go figure.

“What did you find out about breakfast?”
 I learned that my room is dirt cheap, and I should be grateful for a blanket. But Gus and I have a great view and lots of privacy.

“I hope you’re not eating pizza 3x a day.”
 No, no. Last night we went into a restaurant (the name could have been heaven or hell, who knows?). No one spoke English, and the menu was in Chinese. Danny just pointed to a pretty picture (a good choice, but I had to say I could only eat chicken—and cook it! I ended up with a lovely WHOLE chicken boiled in its broth. It was stuffed with rice and other veggies; there was a big ginseng root in there, too. It has been cold here, and I could not have ended up with a better meal! Of course,



it was very expensive. It was 60 kwai. That is seven dollars and some change. WooHoo! I'm gonna be fat!

“Miss you but love you. You're still here—deep in our hearts.”

I love you.
Me



Zhang Yang Mai and Mai Long at dinner.



Subj: Re: Love you
Date: 2/25/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

“Hope the tour went well. What’s this with the line-by-line response to my e-mail?”

It is so that I answer all of your questions. I start rambling about on thing, and then I forget the questions.

“It makes me nervous.”
That is not my intention.

“In any case, at least my questions are being answered.”
Yes, they are, one by one.

“That’s funny about you being the only one in your class.”
I like it very much. I love to be coddled!

You should call me on Saturday morning. That will be Friday night for you. Can you do that? I think there is a twelve hour difference, so if you call at 8p.m. we can listen to COPS! Bad boys bad boys, whatcha gonna do?

Or you could mute the TV, and we could talk.

I love you. I miss you very much. I have been doing much soul searching—being in a desolate mass of humanity does that.

I love you.
Me



Subj: stuff
Date: 2/27/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

Do you really thing I can remember all of these questions?!

“Are you this female badass’s only student?”
Yes. She is a very good teacher, too. She does not laugh at me too much.

“Tell me more about Danny. How old is he?”
Early twenties.

“Where is he in his academic/personal life?”
He is a professional. He works with computers. He is very good at what he does.

“How is his English?”
Very good? And he said the more he speaks the better it gets and the more he remembers.

He is very nice. I am glad that I met him first here. He is a good guy to do stuff with. And he takes his studying and training very seriously. That is an important connection; we talked about that last night. Exercise, meditation, self-defense, we take all of that very seriously; we can both do without the monastery, though. Just think, real kung fu masters would live in a monastery for twenty years or more and study. I believe some could fly!

“Ah poop!”
Clean it up!



“I went to print out your e-mails and the ink ran out. I don’t think I deleted any of them. I especially love the thousand and one ‘I love you’s.’”

I am glad. It was not enough “I love you’s” though.

“Alex and the kids’ situation is great. She’s a winner!”

I am so glad. A dog sitter was a big stressor for me. She is great, though. Tell her I said hello.

“Hey—just got an e-mail. Is it you?”

I don’t know?

“I’ll check it and e-mail you in a second. Should I call at 8:30 on Friday night (your Saturday morning)?”

You better!

“Chat at ya soon. Let’s figure out instant messenger.”

Okay.

“I miss you and I love you super big lots.”

I miss you and love you even more!



Subj: Re: instant message
Date: 3/01/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

"I keep on signing on just as you sign off. How can that be? I will deposit your check on Monday."
Thank you very much. I love you.

"I am gong to have Alex come on Monday and Wednesday next week."
Good. The kids love her.

"I love you so much. I can't imagine having someone in my life more thoughtful than you."
Shucks. You will run out of the hidden love notes soon, I'm afraid.

"How's kung fu going?"
Wonderfully. See below.

"Still eating plenty?"
I am hungrier now that I am studying Chinese and practicing kung fu.

"What are you eating for breakfast?"
I have two big hunks of sweet bread and coffee.

"How's the laundry thing going?"
Unresolved.

I called your mom today. She asked me to have you e-mail her."
I will.

"Have you met any friends aside from Danny?"
I've met other people, but they are not friends. I am not really here for that anyway. Danny is plenty of



kung-fu friend. I just today learned the real meaning of kung fu. Or, at least, I learned that it has many meanings, and I knew only a bit of one.

It can mean learned or possessed of kung fu. Or it can be a task, a piece of work that is to be accomplished, an accumulation of time and work, a generic name for exercise, or any achievement in scholarship or learning of any kind. Another meaning that reflects the facet of the martial arts is fire and time under control. Confucius, the revered philosopher, was called Kung Fu Tzu.

How the hell can anyone in America claim to be a kung-fu master if he never studied in China for more than four years—or maybe a lifetime. We Americans are ignorant to essence of kung fu. I can never know their Truth.

I am going to a gallery with Samantha Zhang this weekend. She is in charge of the wushu program here. She is into art and she speaks Chinese and she speaks English. She is my personal tour guide.

“Are you two the only ones in the program?”
No.

“Tell me about the program.”

It is tough. I am learning one form, nanchuan—southern fist. It is a very nice form. My fundamentals are very weak when compared to Chinese standards. So I am working on strength building and the form itself. There is a flair that Chinese martial artists have; I am looking for that flare. It will be hard work, though. Not getting it, I mean it will be hard work merely looking for it.



They switched teachers on me. I now have a guy. He is very good. He believes in fundamentals. He makes me work very hard. I am very tired today.

“You can respond line by line if it helps.”
Good.

“Does the wushu chick speak English?”
See above.

“Are you learning Chinese?”
Yes.

“When do you study Chinese?”
Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:30-4:30.

“The electives thing was unclear to me.”
Me too. But I am very happy.

“The kids and I are fine.”
Good. You must stay that way until I get back! Then, if you want, you can change.

“I got a little sad today, but then I went to school and felt better. I like teaching. I guess I should just be fortunate that I love my work so much.”
You’re a teacher. You teach. That is what you do. And you do it well.

“Well, luv chipz, I suppose that I will chat at ya next over the phone tomorrow night.”
Yes, in the morning!!!!

We luv you,
Da fambilee
I miss and love you.
me



Subj: Gag-uhh-uhh-gaggg
Date: 3/2/02
From: Mark
To: sifu Tom
CC: Suzy

I wrote an apology before I got this, but I will not write anything else as per the gag order.

They fired my coach—or she quit. She was not very physical. She taught the form very well, but that was all we did. I now have a teacher that stresses strength and flexibility. He works on that for about an hour and a half and then he does the form. It is a tough, tough workout!

He walks behind me and if my arms start to drop he slaps me! I will have great form when my time is up.

He stresses many of the same things that sifu does—only in Chinese fashion. Some of this I understand, and some of this I do not.

I am also going to be shown three other forms. But we learn those in only a few hours, so I don't know if I'll pick them up. They are tumbling boxing, a drunken form, and a mantis form. I will have fun with all three, and I will try to retain them, but you know how it is with seminars. My friend, Danny, is going to video tape me after the last class of the form, and I can refer to that if I have to.

The food is gooooooddddd and plentiful here. And I have had no tummy issues. It is difficult, though, to find no-meat dishes. They consider minced meat as not a meat? I have been careful about no meat, but I have eaten everything else that is not nailed down. I love the



bread! Or maybe they are cakes, I don't know. But I eat plenty of them.

I hope all is well with the school. I am sorry that I will miss the opening, but Suzy will have to take some pictures.

Smiles to all of you!
Whitewhirlwhinedout



*Li Shixin, Secretary General of the Chinese Wushu Scientific Research Society,
and Zhang Yang Mai.*



Subj: Re: I love you
Date: 3/2/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

I love you.

Most of what I thought I knew about China is wrong. People own stuff. People do what they want (as much as in America but under different laws). The government does not own everything. People eat what they want—or, perhaps, people eat what they can afford. McDonald's is expensive here. I refuse to support them in America, and I certainly won't here!

I told Samantha about the no-smoking laws, and she said, "And you think we don't have freedoms?" Interesting when put like that, huh?

"What did you and Samantha do?"
See above and below.

Then we were walking to get a cab to go the next gallery, and she pointed out the Russian Market. Well, I'd never seen that, so we went. It was like a market, but with new stuff. It was cheap. I found a hair pin for Katie, but that was all.

Then we caught a cab and went to the next gallery, which turned out to be a museum. But since it was cold and I was a little tired and there was a Starbucks nearby, we went to get a coffee—her idea. Then we sat in the most comfortable chairs on the planet and talked and drank coffee. We could have been in Tampa or any other city at that moment. She talked about her job that is not a career move, and her want to see Vietnam and move to Shanghai.



I told her about us and our plans to teach as careers. I told her about the kids. We stayed too long, and there was only an hour before she had to work. We would never make it to the museum. So I taught her how to play chess, and she won our first and only game.

I went home.

“Interesting how names re-circulate in our lives?”
 Troubling, maybe. I hate to project negative thoughts on another because of her name.

“How’s the art?”

I have been sketching and doing the same watercolor drawing for five days. No inspiration. No drive for art. It is hard to think about making art. I am here in China to study wushu—the real name for kung fu. But it is a tradition that I will never be a part of. How can I? I can never sincerely be Chinese. I can read about animism and Daoism, but how can I ever live them in our Judeo-Christian society? Likewise, how can I ever know the tradition of Rembrandt or DaVinci? I never will. I never can. I must find my tradition. I must embrace that.

“What about Gus?”

He did a great watercolor drawing of a pagoda! He’s done nothing else since either.

“Is he coming along?”

Most of the time. He doesn’t need much rest, it seems.

“I hope the other kids aren’t picking on him.”

No, everyone is generally nice to foreigners here. Plus, he is learning kung fu! And as everyone knows, the kung-fu masters of ole used to use powders to blind a knock people out. Nobody here wants that to happen to them! But, as Gus reminds me, a true kung-fu



practitioner seeks to develop his chi. Give me some powder just in case, I say.

“Any Gus news? I’ll forward it to his parents.”
Gus discovered a thing called chocolate fish. It is not really fish, but I cannot bring myself to eat them. Everyone here loves them. Gus does too.

He said that he has been in the cold before, and that it does not bother him. But he said he has never danced with the wind from Siberia and the excitement gives him the chills!

“Alex came today. She told me to tell you that she’s staying out of trouble.”
Please tell her she better, or I’ll “no gift for her!”

“You should e-mail her.”
I don’t have her email. Tell her to email me!

“She’s been under the weather. (I didn’t know what she had. Simo told me. What a pity. She’s such a remarkable person.)”
A disease does not make someone less remarkable. Only wallowing in the pity of the disease does. She does not wallow.

“It’s odd, ‘cause I’m so calm about you being across 5 oceans (at least a few seas).”
I am glad you are not making waves and are staying calm while I’m overseas.

“I miss you but I know that this is absolutely necessary for you and your development.”
It really is. I’ll be better for it.

I will admit I am having much trouble with art lately, though. I have tried so hard to make it my life, and I



am still in the midst of the biggest push so far, but I find myself without the drive to make stuff. It seems to me that in order to remake myself, I have to tear me down. Why all of the violence, I wonder? A kung-fu master learns to put a man back together again. I wonder if that applies to oneself?

“I didn’t understand ‘why China’ before, but now I do.”
Hey, explain it to me!

“Simo told me that probably your hotel is on the dirty side.”

It is odd. Compared to America everything here is dirty. I tried to explain to Samantha the difference between an American cafeteria and the Chinese one I love. I cannot. The words aren’t there for me. The Chinese cafeteria is “dirty,” but only compared to the way I am used to it being. It is not, of course, dirty to the Chinese or my new way of thinking (still blossoming).

“Is it? It seems like they’re in your room cleaning all of the time.”

This morning the girl came in. She now makes my bed the way I do. So now I know she re-makes my bed every morning whether I’m there or not. I noticed that the pillows were different before, but I thought they were just fluffed. Not true. All redone my way.

My room is clean. Restaurants are generally clean. The streets are filthy like Jerusalem’s are and even much worse than Baltimore, the city of swirling trash.

“Did you figure out the laundry situation?”
I’m closer to solving the puzzle.

“Anyway, I’m off to the park and the Bamboo Flute with YOUR SON and the princess.”



Big smooches to the both of them.

I love you.
me



Corner store, Beijing, PRC.



Subj: Re: I love you
Date: 3/5/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy
CC: Sandy and Peggy

Gus and I wanted to write to wish Suzy and Peggy

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

greetings.

Gus, Danny and I were walking home from Chinese lessons on Monday. I asked Gus what we should do about your two birthdays. Just as I asked, we passed a stand that sold fruits, vegetables and some flowers. Gus said we should buy a potted plant for your birthdays.

I said, “Huh?”

He said it would bloom soon—there were buds all over one particular plant—just like you two did and do.

I said, “Gus, my brother (His chosen Chinese name is Long Mai, which means ‘walking dragon.’ My given Chinese name is Zhang Yang Mai, which means ‘walks like a soldier in the sun.’ Since we both have ‘Mai’ in our name, we are brothers; that is a Chinese rule.) you are wallowing in sentimentality!”

Gus said that he was not; he said he was bathing in the sentiment of the birth of two wonderful people.

I said, “Poets!”

So there now sits a lovely plant on our window sill. Gus is responsible for it since he apparently has had much more time in the garden than I have [Gus was



upset that I over watered My Mai (Since we were walking home and since Gus said she is “my responsibility,” we named her MY—Gus’s and Mai—‘walking.’ She is family now.) on her first night home.]. He picked all of the broken leaves off of her when we got home.

We think of all of you often.

Gus wanted to learn a form with the trident at kung-fu school. I told him, “Mai Long, no respectable bear would use such a weapon, as it is used by the Greek god of the seas who has shells for scales and sea weed for hair.”

Gus reminded me that polar bears can swim for hundreds of miles at a time and are worthy of “godships.” He went on to remind me that the trident is also called the “tiger fork.” And it was used to combat tiger in the mountains, villains in the fields, and oppressors of the poor in cities.

I said, “Poets!”

Anyways, the tiger fork is huge even for people, much less a bear just starting kung fu. We did not find a weapon or form to fit him or his personality yet, but we will. Kung fu in China, though, is as esoteric as it is in the US. Go figure.

We work out everyday. It is very hard. The teachers push very hard and expect much. We give it to them, too. The said that my teacher is very good and my basics are strong. He said we both have heart and try hard. What else could he expect fro a walking dragon and a soldier who walks in the sun?



The other day we were walking home from practice, and the wind blew very hard from the north. It was a cold wind. Gus said he has been in cold winds before, but he never sang with the wind from Siberia.

I said, "Poets!"

We love and miss all of you very much.

Happy Birthday!

Love,
us



Mai Long and My Mai.



Subj: Re: hi
 Date: 3/7/02
 From: Mark
 To: Suzy

“I still don’t feel so well.”

I hope you feel better by now. I am so confused about the date and time difference. Just when I think I get a handle on it, I read something happened last night, but that is actually this morning? Whatever!

“Is Gus’s name really ‘Walking Dragon’?”

Gus’s Chinese name is indeed Walking Dragon (Mai Long). We have not found him an outfit or weapon yet, but we are searching.

“I miss you. I want to kiss you.”

I miss you soooo much, babymylove. This week is almost over, and there will be only a few left—single digits. Then I’ll be home. Then you can (and better!) huggle and kiss me as much as you want (well, there must be some snuggle time with the kids).

“I am still working on my portfolio for school.”

Are Sandy and Peggy helping you with your portfolio? I am glad you got the letters from the people you like and respect. It will be better all the way around.

“Simo wants to know if you will email people at school.”

I left many cards at kung fu, and if people want to email me they can. I am not seeking out email partners.

“I hope you are doing okay.”

Last night Danny and I were coming home. We walked through the BLCU campus. There are basketball, that game where you hit the birdie, tennis and volleyball courts. There was a group of students playing



volleyball. I made Danny stop. He did not want to play, but I did. I stood at the court until they said stuff in Chinese. I don't know what they said, but they were all smiles and gestures; I knew exactly what they meant. So I joined. After a few minutes, Danny joined. It was a hoot. We laughed and played for two hours. Afterwards, we went our way, and they went theirs. It is easy to communicate with people even if they speak a different language.

I was dog tired after playing though. We were on our way to eat.

“Do you love me?”

Oh yeah, I love and miss you very much.

I love you.

me



Date: 3/8/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

I love you

“How is your body holding up?”

Man, I am tired. I am so glad it is Friday. Monday I am as strong as an ox. Tuesday I am as strong as a large dog. Wednesday I am as strong as a tough mouse. Thursday I am as strong as an earthworm on the sidewalk. Friday I am as strong as a bag of water.

Boy, I am glad class is over and the weekend is here. I am going to pour me into bed tonight and not get out until tomorrow night or so.

“What is doing with your kung fu?”

My stances are getting stronger. The rest of me must be too, but it is tough to gauge. My teachers are very good, and they want me to do well. I try very hard, but I feel like I disappoint them at times. Even so, by the end of my time here, I should do them proud. Still, it is hard to try to be Chinese here in China.

“Are you still eating at the same place?”

The café/diner I go to for lunch is run by a girl in her early twenties or so (hard to tell). I go there everyday. The first day that I went there she said nothing except the price in Chinese. As the days passed, she started saying things in Chinese, and smiled at my ignorance—not in a condescending manner though. Then she started saying things in broken English and Chinese. Now she always says some things in Broken English and Chinese. And she brings her book out (she studies English) and sits at my table (She always laughs because I move a particular table by the window away from its spot to where I can sit in the sunlight.). She practices



her English and I practice my Chinese. She is much farther than me in her studies, but we are patient with one another.

It is so much easier learning a language by using it in context then by sitting in a classroom environment. "Coffee" does not mean shit unless it is steaming in front of you (damn postmodern babble).

"How is your Chinese language class?"

I resolved myself to learn the conversational aspect of Chinese rather than the characters and their construction. That is too much for me. I will learn words and use them in context and grow that way. I will not read a Chinese novel in Chinese anytime soon anyway. I ain't Chinese.

"And how is your art?"

I am so frustrated with not doing or thinking about art that I have not written in my journal in days. I used to use art as a vehicle to get fucked up on drugs and alcohol. But I don't drink anymore. I love to do art for me. But I don't want to do art now. I don't know what that means. I know I have drawing skills. I even can make things look pretty. But I don't know what that means for my future as an artist. I am as artist because others have titled me that; I have never felt like an artist. I even make up other titles so I don't have to call myself one. I just don't know.

I know I love you and miss you very much! I will wait tomorrow morning by the telephone for your call.

"I love you."

I love you.
me



Subj: Re: I miss you
Date: 3/9/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

I love you.

“How did your haircut go?”

The haircut was fine! I walked in and she said something about not needing a haircut, but I insisted. Then she asked if I wanted a shampoo—she had a smile on her face when she asked. I said no. Then she grabbed a comb, but I don’t know what for. I said, “Bu, bu, bu, bu.” (No, no, no, no.) I said, “Bzzzzzz” That translated very well, and she grabbed her trimmers and timed away. She did all around my head except for the top. Then she stopped to make fun of my Mohawk. Everyone including me laughed. She finished and I gave her the 5 kwai I had to pay for it.

“Did you have any trouble shopping?”

Then we went to the bank, where I found out one cannot cash traveler’s checks on the weekend.

Then we went to a store that sells just about everything one would need for school (There are five or six major universities within waking distance.). I found a microchip recorder I will buy. It is about \$80, but it will be worth it. It will help me keep track of my thoughts.

I also bought a big sheet of drawing paper. We will see what happens.

“I do hope you are eating healthy foods.”

Then we went to the cafeteria, where I splurged and bought two vegetables! Mmmmm.



“Did you get to the ‘Publix’ that you found?”

Then we went to the supermarket. Damn, was it super!
It had everything imaginable—and some things one
should not imagine.

“Are you getting around the neighborhood okay?”

Then we went to the post office. Danny got his stamps.

Then I went home and watched the monkey king on
television. And then I took a nap.

“It was nice to talk to you.”

It was great to hear your voice. I love you very much. I
miss you very much.

“I leave for Miami tomorrow.”

Have fun in Miami.

“I’ll write when I get home. I love you.”

I love you.

me



Subj: Fwd: Gallery
Date: 3/14/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

How is this for a connection!

I love you.
me

Forwarded Message:
Subj: Gallery
Date: 3/13/02
From: Samantha Zhang
To: Mark

Hey Mark,

My friend who is teaching at fine arts school wants to meet you and then take you to a gallery. I am wondering whether you would like to go this weekend or some other time. Let me know by today, you can call my mobile today since I am taking this afternoon off.

Enjoy,
Samantha



Subj: Re: Hi honey
Date: 3/18/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

I love you.

I am on my way to start the mantis form. But I am beat. I worked hard this morning.

“The grand opening at your school is soon.”
Are you going to participate I the grand opening? Alex says simo is upset because there is no kung-fu family. I imagine that the reason for this is the stress of the tournament and grand opening. But still, I am not sure that sifu and simo have it right. They want to create a tight-knit extended family, but they only give when their “kids” pay, and handsomely. I don’t know where that fits into Chinese tradition. I know that one should take care of his teacher, but does one have to make his teacher’s life luxurious.

It is a sad day indeed, when we learn how to commodify ideas as well as objects.

I miss you.

I love you.
me



Date: 3/20/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

I love you lovebuckets!

“How is your training?”

I am going to do the mantis form this afternoon. It is tough. But it is also badass. I hope I can get it down. It and the nanchuan are the only forms I want to keep.

“How is the art coming?”

I went to my first Chinese painting class. The teacher spoke little English, and made us watch him—to get the flavor. I was frothing at the bit to paint.

Finally, he said go ahead. And I did. I’ll bring the unimpressive results home. There is a significant difference between Eastern and Western thought. If a Westerner is going to go to a pool and swim, he walks right up to the edge and jumps in. If an Easterner is going for a swim, he walks up to the pool, walks around it, sticks his hand in the water, walks around it again, and then he goes to the steps and walks into the pool. Go figure.

“Did you like the teacher?”

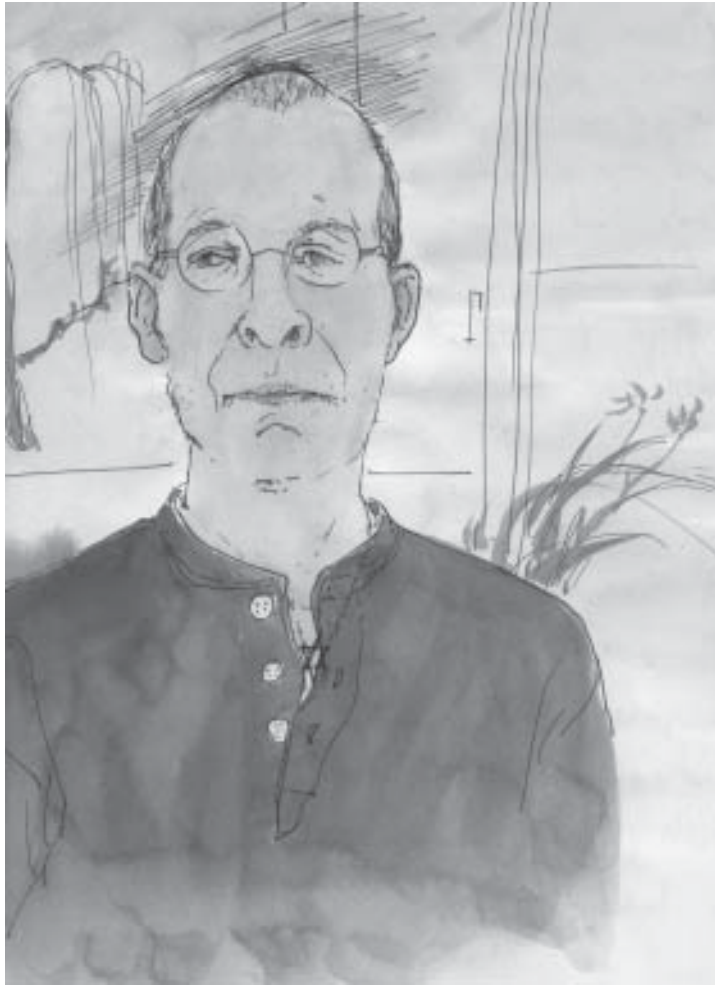
Then after my class, it came up that I was an artist and a teacher. I showed him my sketchbook, and he did a portrait of me on the spot. It would be very difficult for me to perform under such pressure. He did a pretty good job, too.

It turns out he went to the premier art school I just visited (His English is much better than my Chinese.).



So now we have a date to go to his house and see his paintings. I will gift him some pencils and a sketchbook, I think.

I love you very much.
me



Chen Shao Yu's watercolor drawing of Yang Mai.



Subj: Re: We miss both you brothers
Date: 3/24/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy
CC: Sandy and Peggy

Actually, they did not set the rooms aside. Something happened with the dormitory rooms where I was supposed to stay. I will not complain, though. The hotel was designed with westerners in mind. The dormitories have the squatty kind of commode in the shower.

Now I have crapped in some unsavory places—six months and a day in the desert during a war. And the excitement of pooping in my shower makes me giggle with delight. But I prefer the good ‘ole commode that is in my room now.

We do have to walk for about forty minutes each way to get to and from school, though. Or we could take a bus for 3 kwai (\$0.45). But we prefer to walk through the neighborhoods and mingle with the Chinese people.

Which almost got us sent to a Chinese prison!

We were walking home from school just as we do most nights. We walked down a street that we had never been on. We knew we were headed in the right direction because, just as some other clear evenings, we saw the mountains becoming enveloped in mist off in the distance directly in front of us.

We passed many small shops. The shops’ bright land flashing lights showered the darkening streets with their red, orange, yellow and blue. Every color of the rainbow was well represented! The smells from the many restaurants wafted through the air, olfactory sirens



calling us to them. The laughing, crying, singing and other family noises danced down from the apartment buildings that stood as monuments to the great number of people that live in Beijing.

As we passed the shops, we came to a park. We have seen many such parks. Each morning people gather to do Tai Chi or other activities. A throng of people was gathered around two men as they sat under a street light that was awakening to the dusk. We have seen, too, many such gatherings. The two sitting men were locked in battle—Chinese chess!

The men that gathered around the two players stood as close to their champion as possible. By this time of the day, the two players were usually the most experienced because the loser of each game always gave up his seat to the next challenger.

This evening there was extra excitement around the two players. We could not see what the commotion was, so Mai Long jumped from my pocket and barreled into the crowd to put his two cents in! I did not even know he knew how to play!

He used his new bagua skills to get himself close without hurting anybody. But his use of wushu was evident to the others gathered around, and they gave him room. The player who could see Gus became excited—and a bit afraid. He jumped up! A hushed “awwwwww” washed through the crowd as the board that was resting on his knees flew into the air. Each piece that was on the board was flung in a different direction.

I moved in to “save” Mai Long, and we rushed off.



The following day we heard through the neighborhood busybodies (they are busy, indeed) that a match that had continued for a record time had been interrupted by a wushu demonstration. The men were very impressed with the skill of the unknown “master,” and as it turns out, the men were glad to have the match ended.

Love to everyone.

Mai Long and Zhang Yang Mai



Beijing men gathered to play Chinese Chess.



Subj: Hello
Date: 3/30/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

“Did you forget me?”

I am sorry I have not written in a while. Sometimes it is hard to do so. I am not even the best communicator when I am 5 minutes away.

“How are things?”

Things are going very well here. I am training very hard, and I have to really knuckle down since I have only a few weeks left. I cannot put into words all of my experiences from here yet. I am truly glad I was given the opportunity to come. I feel like a better person for it (I hope I don't lose that on the way home!).

“How was the trip? Where did you go?”

I just got back from Qinghaundoa. My teacher made me do my form in front of his Tae Kwon Do class. It is very difficult to perform the Chinese national sport in front of Chinese people. How can I compete with them at what they do? I now understand the problem with Dances with Wolves, where Lt. Dunbar out Indianed the Indians. It can't happen.

“I didn't know you were so close with your teacher.”

I have decided my teacher is very athletic and wise. It is tough to communicate at times, but most of the time he just slaps me into the correct position and says stuff that does not need translating!

We went to his home. I got to go to where the Great Wall first enters the mountains. I hope the photos turn out half as well as the experience of climbing (literally in some places) the Wall.



I just got in and I need to prepare for the week. I love
and miss everypuppy very much.

love
me



Mai Long on the Great Wall.



Subj: Re: Zen Parable
Date: 3/31/02
From: Mark
To: Sandy and Peggy
CC: Suzy

I am writing to update you guys, but it will be a while before the entire trip can be put into context by me. Of course, Mai Long has no problem putting things into words.

We took many pictures while we visited the wall. If some of them turned out half as well as the moment was, then there should be some exciting photos.

We had to climb, literally, up the wall. Where we went was where the wall first enters the mountains. It was great indeed! I've seen many monuments before, and this surpasses all of them. I guess it really is not a monument, but it is certainly monumental!

We also went to the ocean in Qinghaundoa. Gus said he saw pirates, but I only saw the boat and footprints of some people. The footprints did indicate that the load the people carried was heavy, but we found no newly covered holes in the ground or caves nearby. Alas, we found no treasure.

At the wall (Gus said it should be The Wall, the Great Wall, or GW—not to be confused with that other blockhead in the US.) there was a horse that people could sit on and take pictures. I asked the guy in my broken Chinese how much it costs, and he said in very good Chinese that it costs three dollars to stand by him and five dollars to sit on him. So I stood by him, but Gus wanted to ride. He is very fond of horses; I didn't know this.



Is he fond of all animals?

We will look for the beads and the jade. There is “stuff” everywhere. We will find them.

As for the hardest part of painting, a blank canvas or paper is certainly on the top of my list. My mentor once taught me a great lesson to overcome this. We both started working on drawing a bunch of flowers. He stopped me and made me mess up my drawing. Then we started the “real” drawing. There was no way I could screw the paper up any more than it was, so I did my best to make it beautiful. He does the same with most of his paintings.

One should not do this with watercolor, though. That would be ugly (I may be wrong).

Big smiles, hugs and kisses to all.
Mai Long and Zhang Yang Mai



Subj: Re: night nite
 Date: 4/2/02
 From: Mark
 To: Suzy

I love you.

“I don’t know if I’ll be able to call this week.”
 If it is inconvenient for you to call, then don’t. I won’t
 thing you don’t love me anymore! Just write when you
 can.

“I will email more, though.”
 I am glad we talk (write) as much as we do. I did not
 think I would be able to read and write so much.

“Do you get to work out when you go on your trip?”
 On the weekend of the 12th, we go to the Shaolin
 Temple. We get to go to the Yellow River and then
 work out with the monks. I hope they are just wannabe
 monks because I couldn’t handle the real deal. We leave
 on Friday and return on Sunday. I don’t know if I will
 be able to email, but I’ll try.

“The guy you emailed about the commissioned work
 called for you.
 Thank you for talking to the guy about the work. It
 sounds like it is right up my alley.

There is an ever-raging debate in the art world—in
 academia anyway. The difference between the
 (a)Academy and the real world is so glaring. I cannot
 wait until I am making art for me instead of for my
 growth. The growth will come whether I want it to or
 not, so why force it. Anyway, when one wants to make
 art for a living, can he have a career making “art” and
 make art for himself? I used to believe that one could
 not. But I don’t think that is still true. I think it would



be better for me to make “mindless and meaningless”
(strong words that are not quite right but close) art for
money. Then when my passion is aroused—the key to
my art making, I think—I can make “Art.”

“I hope you get decent money for your work.”
Maybe I’ll work in a bookstore.

“Are you sure you can do it?”
I dunno. But I will definitely email the guy.

“He wants to make sure you listen to what he wants.”
Follow orders? Does he know I was in the army?

I love you, baby.

“I am tired. I had so much work to do today.”
You better save some energy for when I get home. We
have much “reading” to catch up on!

I love you.
me



Subj: Packages
Date: 4/6/02
From: Mark
To: Sandy and Peggy
CC: Suzy

Yesterday, we received the package you sent. It was very timely. We had to walk uphill to the post office; then we had to walk uphill to get home! And it was raining!

The weather before this weekend was not too bad (Well, that is, except for when the Gobi sand played with the Siberian wind in the streets of Beijing, and that was even a bit of fun.). It is chilly and windy today. Mai Long says that I think it is colder than it is because it was so warm out lately. Maybe.

Last night we went to our artist friend's house. He is very nice. He wants to learn English so badly.

He is closer to being a true martial artist than I can ever be, and he doesn't even practice wushu. He knows the language, though. Chinese, that is. He can read the multi-meaning poems, puns, and repartees in verse, and probably recite them upon request. He knows what his people mean when they say the "dragon flies over the water." I don't know what their concept of a dragon is, and I sure ain't never seen one as it flies over the water. I can study what they say, but I can never truly understand what they mean.

My money is dwindling, as all money does on vacation-vacations.

But we were walking home from class one day, and a woman came up to us. She spoke okay English, but we could tell she was trying really hard. It turns out that her company has employees that want to study English.



Well, I teach in amERica. And I speak English. Plus, I don't think I need to worry about such mistakes as split infinitives. (I told Mai Long that I thought people were the only ones with high divorce rate? He just rolled his eyes at me, and he didn't say why.) So I should be fine.

There are sixty people to start. I said that is too many for one class, so we will start with thirty per class. That is still quite a few, but I imagine some will drop out once I start smacking knuckles with my ruler.

But before I start beating them, we will sing my favorite ABC song.

They will pay me 100 kwai an hour. I teach for two hours tow nights a week. It will be perfect. The extra money will see us through our trip.

Thank you for the book. We read it twice. It was a good bed-time story. We did not yet find a home for Rubby our new friend, so Mai Long is keeping him company.

The picture was wonderful. It brought a smile to our hearts (and our faces).

We'll write more soon,
Mai Long and Zhang Yang Mai



Subj: Hello
Date: 4/10/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

I love you.

RB sent me an email. In it, she said I was privileged. I know she just wants me to think about what I have, where I am, and how I got there. Still, I took offense to what she said. I am not a great social thinker like she is.

Anyways, I am going to vent to you.

I love you.

What am I to the Chinese? she asked.

I am a rich American. I am an aspiring artist. I am a teacher. I am a foreign white devil. I am a hard worker. I am a funny looking foreigner. I am a sincere wushu student. I am a guy. I am a good friend.

That I can give them money. That I can buy their work. That I can improve their English. That I killed their grandfather in Korea. That I can help them move things. That I can smell things at a great distance. That his wushu is better than mine. That I have a penis. That I can be a friend.

Am I privileged because I cannot read the local newspaper? cannot watch the local television station? cannot talk to my neighbors? cannot order off of the menu at a local restaurant?

Or am I privileged because I could scrape, beg, and borrow enough money to travel? Or that two years



worth of planning a trip came to fruition? Or am I privileged because I am a Euro-American male?

I think I understand some of the theories that she applies to her thinking when asking such questions. And I know they are not personal attacks, but, rather, the questions are a sincere attempt to stimulate me to ask questions about who I am and what I do. But to my way of thinking, when I use or over use theory it becomes detrimental to my work.

Theories are merely formulae that are applied to our existence in an attempt to better our lives by understanding stuff. But just as when we remove an art object from where it lives and put it within the confines of as sterilized environment for all to see (oooohhh, the CAM), that object cannot be viewed as it existed. It no longer lives.

When an African mask is removed from its original context and placed in a museum, one cannot see the essence of the mask. He does not hear the masks' owners beating drums or playing other musical instruments. He cannot taste the dirt that is thrown in the air by the masks' owners dancing. He can only see an object that lives, or has died, in its displacement.

Is one's experience put into the context of another's theory not the same thing? How can one taste the dirt that another's dance stirs up from a mile, state, province, or continent away?

I think it time that I not use theory in an attempt to understand an experience. Theories are for words. Both theories and words are removed from a person's spirit. They can only displace the experience of man.



Privileged? Is it not those who would espouse such theories that are the privileged ones? Knowledge is power, right. Hegemony—thank you, Foucault.

I think the truth in art lies not in the words or theories of critics, theorist, or academicians, but the Truth of art lies in the pieces' power to create empathy. I think that some artists are driven by audience, and the essence of such art is to illicit a response through some understanding. I am not, though, driven by audience or their understanding of my work. I am driven by the ebb and flow of my life and love. I am driven by my spirit. I am selfish and self-centered; my art is me.

The more I learn, the more I want to unlearn. I struggle, constantly, as you well know, with my bumpkin and bourgeois sides. I have fought for years to kill my bumpkin side. But now, I feel a need to return to it. There is Truth in authenticity. I can taste the dirt stirred up by the dance of my past.

Thank you for listening, love.

I love you.
me



Subj: Re: my suggestions
 Date: 4/11/02
 From: Mark
 To: Suzy

I love you.

"I read your email."
 Thank you for reading it, baby.

"Do you believe in a capital 'T' truth?"
 I do believe in essence and Truth. The mask does not become a new object when removed from its place of origin; it dies. Its essence is removed. But if we are given enough context, then we can empathize with the object, or maybe its maker.

Empathy does transcend culture. I have experienced it. Without the use of language and holding no pretenses it can be "seen." I just have to make others feel what I "saw."

"Do you really have to privilege one of your selves over another?"
 Bumpkin has to be privileged because that is my foundation, my tradition. To be sincere, I must draw upon it. I cannot abandon the other facets of me, though. I realize that. I merely have to stop them from fighting each other.

With your help, I have made leaps and bounds towards a peaceful me. I love you, baby.

There is no separation between artwork and thinking.
 Uh, I think.

I am going to start a drawing. Or Gus is. Or we both are. Anyway, since we've been in China, we saw only



one star in the sky each night. The last two nights,
though, we have seen many.

We want to do something with the stars.

I love you, babycakes.

I miss you.
me



Yang Mai's watercolor drawing of a dragon's birth.



Subj: Re: my suggestions
Date: 4/11/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

I love you.

“What theory are you basing your thinking on?”
It is the theory that I want to stay away from.

“What are you trying to say?”
I want free thinking, magic, spirit, and God.

I do art for me most of the time. But I like to be challenged. I don't know exactly what that means, but it is what I feel and see through my spirit's eyes.

“I love you.”
I love you, lovechops. You keep me honest.

I love you.
me



Subj: shaolin temple
Date: 4/11/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy
CC: Sandy and Peggy

Hello all. We send lots of love to you.

We are gearing up for the Shaolin Temple. It is great timing because after two days of beautiful weather a sandstorm blew in. And the air the sand is riding on is cooollld.

Of course, I don't know if going into the mountains is the best idea, but we are doing it anyway.

We started teaching English. It is great. Gus is not actually teaching. He is there as my MSSS, or moral support structure system.

The Chinese are not afraid of pandas, but they are afraid of green bears. There are no such bears here.

Actually, I think those busy bodies we wrote about a couple of weeks ago got to my class before they actually met Gus.

As I said earlier, the weather the last two days has been great. Since we have been here, we saw only one star on the nights we could see the sky at all. But the last two nights we saw gobs 'o stars!

So we did some paintings about them. I think old Vincent was on to something with the painting at night by the night's light. Gus says he should have kept his ear.



We saw some sanda—full contact fighting—on the television today as we worked on my family portrait. It was brutal. Gus says he doesn't want to do that. I do.

We have only just a couple of weeks left. We are ready to come home. We miss everyone. Lots!

We cannot wait to show our pictures and paintings and tell the stories that accompany them—or will then.

We love and miss everyone.

Love.

Mai Long and Zhang Yang Mai



Subj: Hello
Date: 4/18/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy
CC: Sandy and Peggy

Hello and love to all!

We wanted to fill you in on our trip to the Shaolin Temple. First, we must say that the trip was all around fantastic! We ate too much, laughed a lot, got a bunch of sun and felt the lives of many past souls.

And we did a lot more.

When we first got on the train we met our group. There were six boys, five girls, and two bears. What a great group.

One of our new great friends was Oski. He is the cute brown guy in the photographs that we forwarded you. He was born in Berkeley, CA. He is UC Berkeley schooled, so he was witty and fun to be around.

We took a train from Beijing to Zhengzhou, the capital of the Henan Province, which is just south of Hebei Province, which surrounds Beijing. We stayed in Zhengzhou the first day and night. We arrived at 5 am, and we cleaned up and ate a big breakfast at our three-star hotel. Then we headed off to the Yellow River.

Militarily strategic and called China's "cradle of civilization," Henan is halved by the middle arm of the Huang He (Yellow River). We went to visit the river outside and north of Zhengzhou. The place we went to was an old pumping station turned tourist site. It was great.



We know it is militarily strategic because we saw pirates when we climbed to the top of a nearby mountain. We know they were planning something, because their boats were gathered together and their colorful flags were waving other pirates into their harbor. We went down to the river in an attempt to join them. But when they saw us approaching, they ran away from us by boat and horse. Damn pirates.

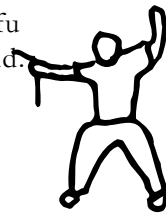
Since we could not join the pirates, we decided to visit an ancient city named Kaifeng (it is east of Zhengzhou). The city was the capital of a major country during the Song Dynasty. There is a new-old forbidden city there. We visited it for quite a while. There were hundreds of bonsai trees in a temple there. There was also a Buddhist temple that has been there for some time. There was a guanyin (a protective not god not human Buddhist angle-type thing) that was carved from a 1000 year old ginko tree, and it had 1000 arms and hands with eyes in the palms. Just wow!

Then we ate lunch at another three-star hotel.

Then we went to see a Jewish quarter. There are still a small number of Mandarin-speaking Chinese Jews who live there in Kaifeng. They trace their history back to arrivals from Persia in the 12th century, with construction of a synagogue recorded in 1163 CE. This place was really neat.

Then we were tired, so we went to eat our big dinner at yet another three-star hotel.

Then we went to our own hotel, three stars, of course. We could not sleep so we watched some cheesy kung-fu movie. WooHoo! Pows! Bams! and Hiyas! to go around. After watching the many fights, we were tired, and we went to sleep.



We headed off to the Shaolin Temple in the morning. From Zhengzhou, look to the southwest and find the city of Dengfeng. Once you find that, look to the northwest of that and find the city of Fudian. The Shaolin Temple is between these two cities. The temple might be called Shaolinsi on the map. It is cradled between a group of mountains.

The first part of our trip, though, was not the temple itself. We stopped at a Shaolin kung-fu school in Dengfeng for a demonstration. It was entertaining, that is sure. But as practicing martial artists, we know that most of what they did was tricks. We also saw the flaws in their wushu. But, we were not critical in a negative way. In fact, we used the experience as a learning tool, and we had fun watching because it was just plain fun.

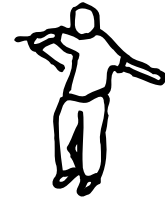
Then we headed off to the Temple. Never before have I been closer and farther from Walt Disney World.

The buildings all appeared to be old and presumably the originals. But we found out that they were in fact, new reproductions of the old buildings. The old ones were destroyed several times. There were people everywhere. We were shoulder to shoulder trying to peer at our newly discovered reproductions.

Enough of the profane.

We saw a 1400 year old ginkgo tree. There were holes in the tree from the monks that made their fingers stronger by rubbing and rubbing and rubbing them into the tree. I know I will never be a kung-fu master because I ain't poking no tree until I make a hole in it.

Then we saw a pagoda forest. It is the largest one in China. That, too, was impressive. And even though



many people and bears, including us, walked through the forest snapping pictures and sipping water, the place remains sacred.

Then we to a, that's right, three-star for lunch. We ate too much again.

Then we had a chance to work out with the monks—well at least we worked out with the students. They kicked our asses. It was big fun.

We then took the two hour drive back to Zhengzhou. It was late, and we had an hour before the train left, so we ate dinner at a restaurant in a FOUR-star hotel. We ate too much again.

We got back to Beijing at 5:10a.m. We were tired.

Big love to all.

Mai Long and Zhang Yang Mai



*Yang Mai in front of 1400 year old Ginko tree.
(Note the finger holes.)*



Subj: Love and Things
Date: 4/18/02
From: Mark
To: Suzy

I love you.

I am coming home on Tuesday, April 23. I fly out of Beijing at 11:15 a.m., and I arrive in Detroit at 12:15 p.m.—it takes only one hour to get back to America!

I cannot wait to be with you, baby. It has been a long time.

I love you, my lovechops.

Love.
me



Mai Long packs for the trip home.



Occupational Tools as Weapons



Cracker Boy in the Army.



Before Zhang Yang Mai learned to fight using traditional Chinese martial arts, he was trained by the United States government in the art of traditional warfare.



Again, war in the Middle East has broken out. Soldiers are off to the front to fight and die. But war is an honorable pursuit. We must take pride in our bravery and prowess in combat. There are those who would denigrate combat, and, perhaps, this is understandable. Combat means damage, both physically and emotionally for the victor and the vanquished. Combat is destruction. It is violence.

Violence in society is rejected by those who are ethically sensitive. Intellectuals and people of refinement recoil from violence. Yet, if those who oppose the use of violence, or force, were to shun it entirely, very quickly the more brutal members of society would dominate the decent people. Injustice and evil would prevail. Those who would recoil from violence do not recognize the existence of an absolute morality. Instead, they are only prepared to accept criteria which they have discovered on their own.

The Torah (thank G-d for giving it to us) teaches the sublime value of peace. This is evident in the Torah's prohibition to use iron, symbolic of weapons, in building the Altar. Also, The kohein mashuach milchamah (priest anointed for war) is not a permanent fixture in Torah society because war is not the constant state. Peace is the norm. At the same time, however, His Torah prepares us to recognize the importance of combat and its precise parameters.

The prophets say that in the end we will beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks. The sages teach us that all that is written in the Torah is written to promote peace and even though wars are written about in the Torah, they, too, were fought to promote peace. But there must be violence to create peace.

Through the control of the violence in his life, Cracker Boy has created a place within himself where his life's experiences can coexist peacefully. His soul has been reconstructed through his combat. Through his martial training and because he is in perpetual readiness for combat, Mark is working towards a state of peace.

Moshe ben Avram

Author's note: Moshe ben Avram received his education at the Baltimore Hebrew University in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Jerusalem Academy of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, Israel. He is a long-time student of Jewish Law.

The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops in WWII

Difficulties arising from the repeated trading of seasoned riflemen for men with little infantry training were exacerbated by the concurrent exchange of experienced officers for those with meager infantry background. Officer replacements frequently were “retreads” from antiaircraft and tank destroyer units, or instructors from replacement training centers who had grown rusty in broad infantry knowledge as a result of specialization for long periods in a few subjects designated by their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). These newcomers from replacement training centers were, for the most part, men inducted into the Army late in the mobilization period, when the stock of first-class manpower was running low. Consequently, the question whether, in a given unit, a man would engage in hand-to-hand combat counted very little relative to his original assignment. This disadvantage was offset to some extent by the fact that general-service men were assigned to units irrespective of finer physical gradations, and largely on the basis of occupational skill. The purpose of this offset was very important, speeding up mobilization and training by utilizing the full capacities of the available manpower for combat. The need of the Army for specialists was made clear to the public, especially in the period before the declaration of war, when the distastefulness of compulsory military training could be relieved by pointing out its vocational value. The publicizing of technical requirements produced an expectation among many inductees that they could best contribute to the war effort by continuing with their usual occupations, albeit somewhat modified, in the Army.

Historical Division
Department of the Army
Washington, D.C. 1948



TM 9-2320-282-10

TECHNICAL MANUAL

HEADQUARTERS

No. 36A12-1C-461-1

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON, DC, 4 March, 1983

ORGANIZATIONAL MAINTENANCE TECHNICAL MANUAL

Wheels, Tires and Drums

Tire Removal and Replacement

1. Front Tire Removal
2. Front Tire Replacement
3. Rear Tire Removal
4. Rear Tire Replacement



Front tire removal.

Initial Setup

Tools/Equipment

Personnel Required

Chock, wheel (two required)

One

Jack, hydraulic

Wrench, lug

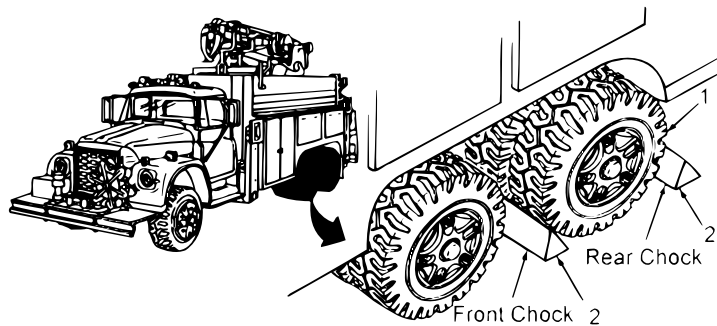
Screwdriver (#2, #3)

Bar, tanker's (three and six foot)

Removal

1 Left rear tire (1) Wheel Chocks (2)

Put one wheel chock in front of the left rear tire and one at the rear. Wheel that is diagonally opposite to the one to be removed is to be chocked.



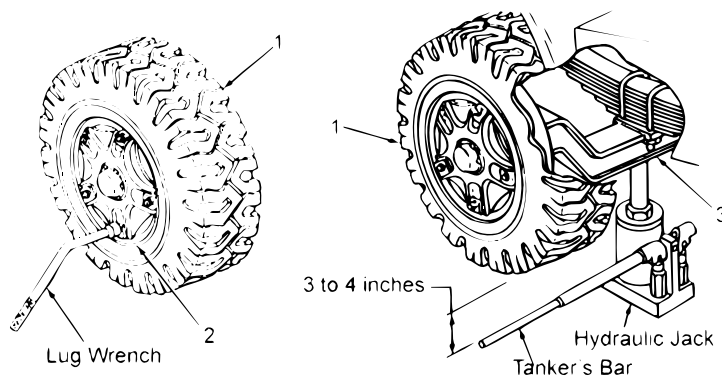
Removal Continued.

- 2 Right front tire (1) Lug nuts (2)

Using wrench, loosen lug nuts. Do not take off at this time.

- 3 Right front axle (3) Hydraulic jack

- a. Position jack under axle (3).
- b. Use #3 screw driver to tighten jack valve.
- c. Thrust the three-foot bar into the jack. Snapping the bar in short up and down strokes, raise the rear tire (1) until it is 3-4 inches off of the ground.



Removal Continued.

- 4 Right front tire (1) Lug nuts (2)
 retainers (4)

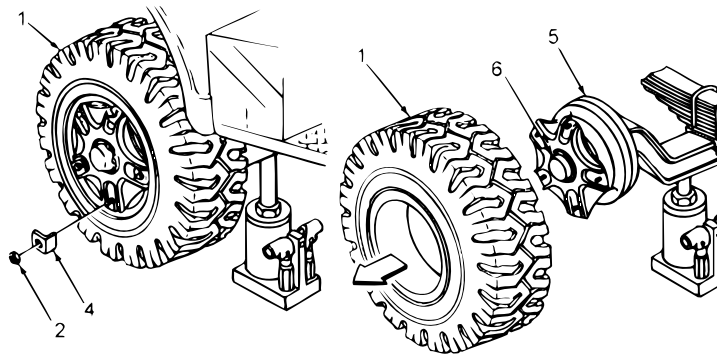
Unscrew and take off lug nuts and retainers.

5

Unscrew the retainers using the #2 screw driver.

6

Remove tire(1) by sliding it off wheel (5) and hub (6). Set tire (1) to one side, away from your work area.



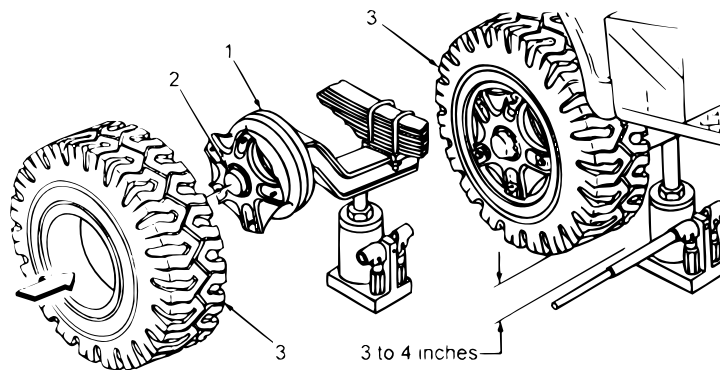
Front Tire Installation

WARNING

Be sure axle is supported with the hydraulic jack before installing truck tire. Serious injury to personnel would result if the jack should slip out from under axle during installation.

7 Wheel (1) hub (2) Right front tire (3)

Position on wheel (1) hub (2), making sure there is enough clearance (3-4 inches) between tire (3) and the ground surface.



Installation Continued.

8 Right front tire (3) Retainers (4)

Put in position over studs (5) on wheel spokes (6).

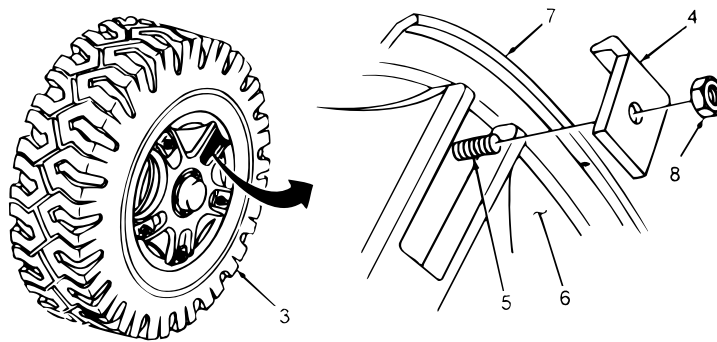
Retainer secures wheel to tire rim (7).

9

Use #2 screw driver to attach retainers (4).

10 Lug nuts (8)

Screw on by hand. Do not tighten at this time.

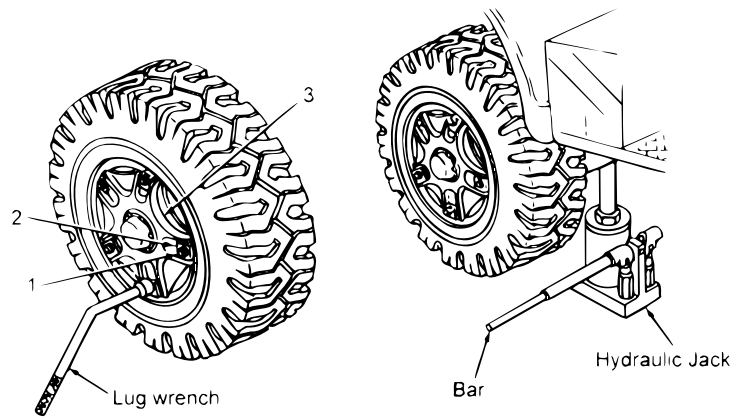


Installation Continued.

11 Lug nuts (1)

Tighten the lug nuts (1) over the retainers (2).

Use the spokes (3) as leverage to pull against.



Rear tire removal.

Initial Setup

Tools/Equipment

Personnel Required

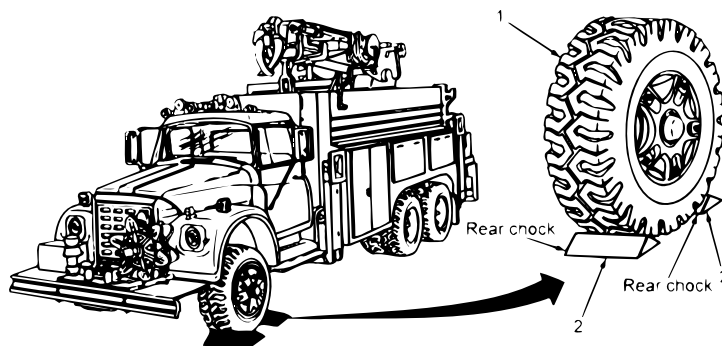
Chock, wheel (two required)
Jack, hydraulic
Wrench, lug
Screwdriver (#2, #3)
Bar, tanker's (three and six foot)

One

Removal

1 Left rear tire (1) Wheel Chocks (2)

Put one wheel chock in front of the left rear tire and one at the rear. Wheel that is diagonally opposite to the one to be removed is to be chocked.



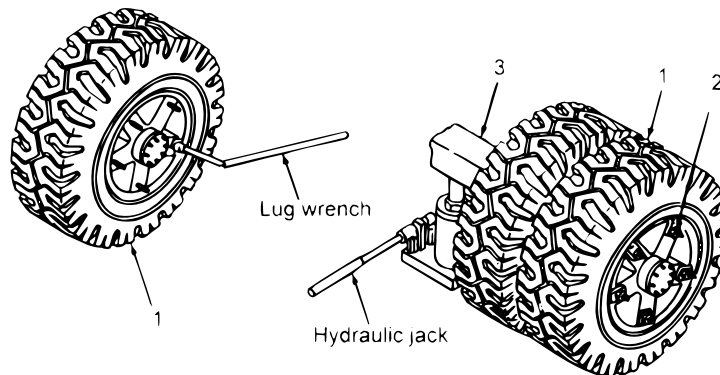
Removal Continued.

- 2 Right rear tire (1) Lug nuts (2)

Using wrench, loosen lug nuts. Do not take off at this time.

- 3 Right rear axle (3) Hydraulic jack

- a. Position jack under axle (3).
- b. Use #3 screw driver to tighten jack valve.
- c. Thrust the three-foot bar into the jack. Snapping the bar in short up and down strokes, raise the rear tire (1) until it is 3-4 inches off of the ground.



Removal Continued.

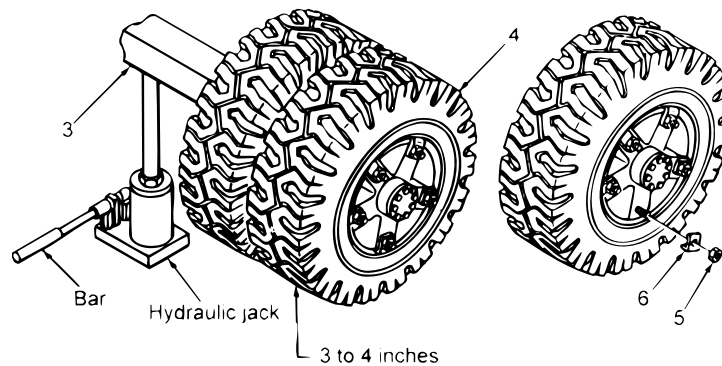
- 4 Right rear axle (3) Hydraulic jack

d. Thrust the three foot bar into the jack. Snapping the bar in short up and down strokes, raise the rear tire (4) until it is 3-4 inches off of the ground.

- 5 Right rear tire (4) Lug nuts (5)
retainers (6)

Unscrew the retainers using the #2 screw driver.

Unscrew the lug nuts, and put the lug nuts and retainers aside.



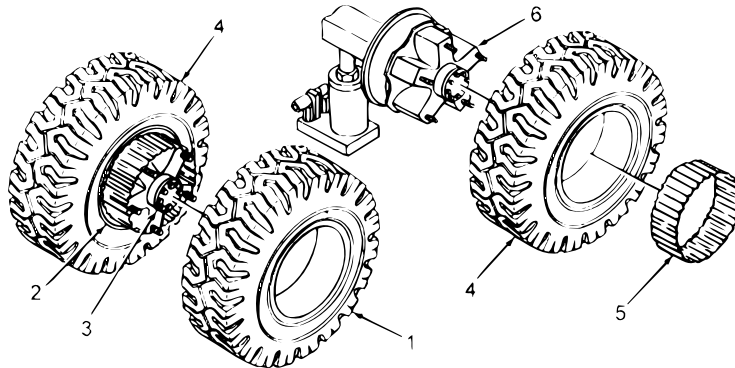
Removal Continued.

6

Remove tire (1) by sliding it off wheel (2) and hub (3) by pushing against tire (4) with six-foot bar. Set tire aside, out of work area.

7 Inner right rear tire (4) Spacer rim (5)
 wheel (6)

Remove tire (4) by sliding it off. It may be necessary to use six foot bar. Hold the bar in one hand and swing it in a circular motion. Use the whole body mass in motion to generate power. Set tire aside, out of work area.



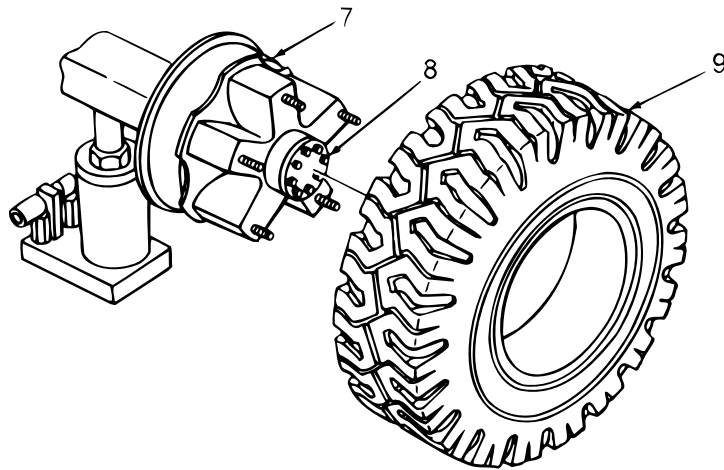
Rear tire installation.

WARNING

Be sure axle is supported with the hydraulic jack before installing truck tire. Serious injury to personnel would result if the jack should slip out from under axle during installation.

8 Wheel (7) hub (8) Inner right rear tire (9)

Position on wheel (7) and hub (8), making sure there is enough clearance (3-4 inches) between tire (8) and the ground surface.

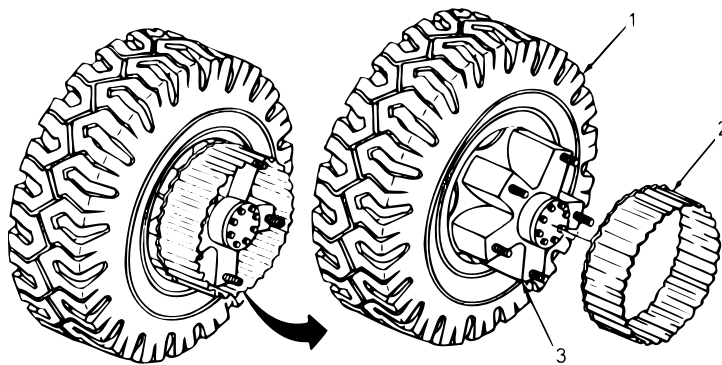


Installation Continued.

9 Inner right tire (1) Spacer rim (2)

Position inside rear tire (1) and wheel (3).

Using a thrusting motion on the six-foot bar, seat the spacer rim (2) inside the tire (1) and wheel (3).



Installation Continued.

10 Right rear tire (4)

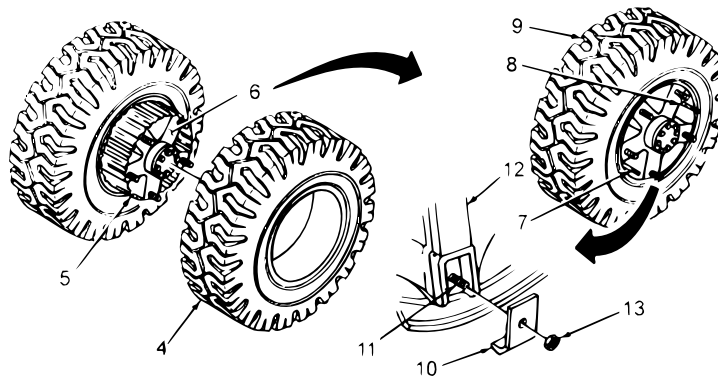
Slide onto spacer rim (5) and wheel (6), making sure that the valve (7) is directly opposite the valve (8) on the inner tire (9).

11 Retainers (10)

Using the #2 screw driver, position studs (11) on wheel spokes (12).

12 Lug nuts (13)

Screw on by hand. Do not tighten at this time.



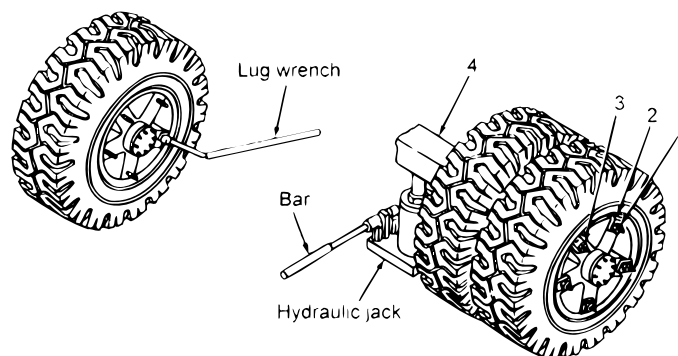
Installation Continued.

13 Lug nuts (1) and retainers (2)

Make sure they are properly seated on wheel spokes (3).
Using lug wrench, tighten all nuts securely.

14 Right rear axle (4) hydraulic jack

Using bar and #3 screw driver, lower hydraulic jack and
remove from under right rear axle (4).





Cracker Boy (aka Specialist Runge) is trained to use maintenance tools as weapons. Here he is pictured using a lug wrench in its more traditional application.



FM 3-25.150 (FM 21-150)

FIELD MANUAL

No. 3-25.150

ARMY

HEADQUARTERS

DEPARTMENT OF THE

WASHINGTON, DC,

18 January 2002

COMBATIVES

MAINTENANCE TOOLS AS WEAPONS

Section I. Offensive Techniques

1. Angles of Attack
2. Screwdriver
3. Screwdriver Against Knife
4. Three-Foot Tanker's Bar
5. Six-Foot Tanker's Bar



Hand-Held Tools

Maintenance tools may provide a significant advantage during a fight. For soldiers to be well trained in their use there must be connectivity between the techniques of the tools' use in the shop and as a weapon. As soldiers progress in their training, techniques with tools that are taught in the shop will merge with the other elements of hand-to-hand fighting to produce a soldier who is capable of operating across the full range of force.

Section I. OFFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

In most combat situations, small arms and grenades are the weapons of choice. However, at times soldiers must engage the enemy in confined areas, such as maintenance shop or where noncombatants are present. In these instances, or when your primary weapon fails, the maintenance tool may be the ideal weapon to dispatch the enemy. Soldiers must transition immediately and instinctively into the appropriate techniques based on the situation and the weapons at hand.



1. ANGLES OF ATTACK

Any attack, regardless of the type weapon, can be directed along one of nine angles of attack (Figure 1).

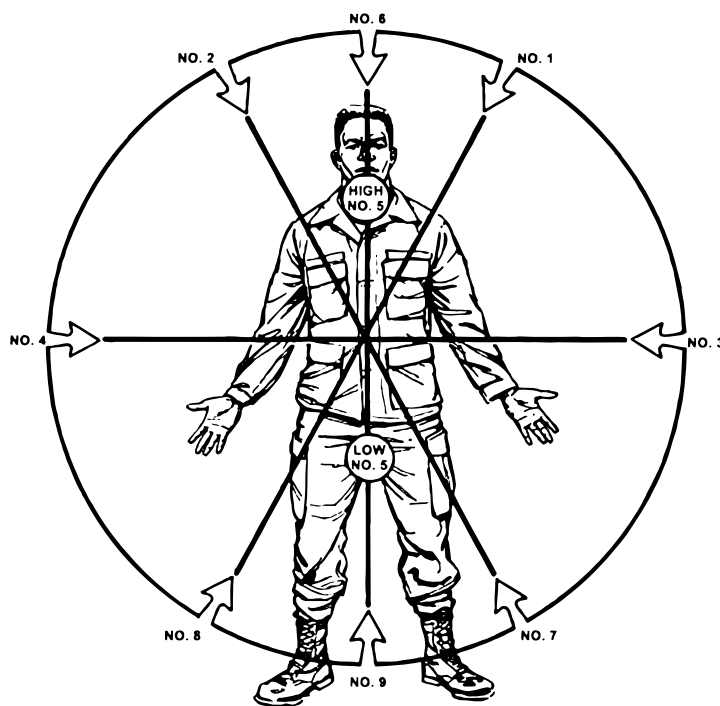


Figure 1



2. SCREWDRIVER

As the screwdriver is an integral part of the maintenance soldier's equipment, it is readily available for use as a multipurpose weapon. The screwdriver produces a terrifying mental effect on the enemy when in the hands of a well-trained and confident soldier. The soldier skilled in the use of the screwdriver also increases his ability to defend against larger opponents and multiple attackers. Both these skills increase his chances of surviving and accomplishing the mission.

a. Grips. The best way to hold the screwdriver is either with the straight grip or the reverse grip.

(1) Straight Grip. Grip the screwdriver in the strong hand by forming a "vee" and by allowing the screwdriver to fit naturally, as in gripping for a handshake. The handle should lay diagonally across the palm. Point the blade toward the enemy, usually with the screwing edge down. The screwing edge can also be held vertically or horizontally to the ground. Use the straight grip when thrusting and slashing.

(2) Reverse Grip. Grip the screwdriver with the edge held parallel with the forearm, screwing tip facing to the rear. This grip conceals the screwdriver from the enemy's view. The reverse grip also affords the most power for lethal insertion. Use this grip for slashing, stabbing, and tearing.

b. Stances. The primary stances are the screwdriver fighter's stance and the modified stance.



1. Screwdriver Fighter's Stance. In this stance, the fighter stands with his feet about shoulder-width apart, dominant foot toward the rear. About 70 percent of his weight is on the front foot and 30 percent on the rear foot. He stands on the balls of both feet and holds the screwdriver with the straight grip. The other hand is held close to his body where it is ready to use, but protected (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Stance for fighting with a screwdriver.



(2) Modified Stance. The difference in the modified stance is the screwdriver is held close to the body with the other hand held close over the screwdriver hand to help conceal it (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Modified stance.

c. Range. The two primary ranges in fighting with a screwdriver are long range and medium range. In long-range screwdriver fighting, attacks consist of figure-eight slashes along the No. 1, No. 2, No. 7, and No. 8 angles of attack;



horizontal slashes along the No. 3 and No. 4 angles of attack; and lunging thrusts to vital areas on the No. 5 angle of attack. Usually, the straight grip is used. In medium-range screwdriver fighting, the reverse grip provides greater power. It is used to thrust, slash, and tear along all angles of attack.

3. SCREWDRIVER-AGAINST-KNIFE SEQUENCE

The screwdriver fighter must learn to use all available weapons of his body and not limit himself to the screwdriver. The free hand can be used to trap the enemy's hands to create openings in his defense. The enemy's attention will be focused on the weapon; therefore, low kicks and knee strikes will seemingly come from nowhere. The screwdriver fighter's priority of targets are the eyes, throat, abdominal region, and extended limbs. The following screwdriver attack sequences can be used in training to help develop soldiers' knowledge of movements, principles, and techniques in screwdriver fighting.

a. Nos. 1 and 4 Angles. Two opponents assume the screwdriver fighter's stance (Figure 4, Step 1). The attacker starts with a diagonal slash along the No. 1 angle of attack to the throat (Figure 4, Step 2). He then follows through with a slash and continues with a horizontal slash back across the abdomen along the No. 4 angle of attack (Figure 4, Step 3). He finishes the attack by using his entire body mass behind a lunging stab into the opponent's solar plexus (Figure 4, Step 4).



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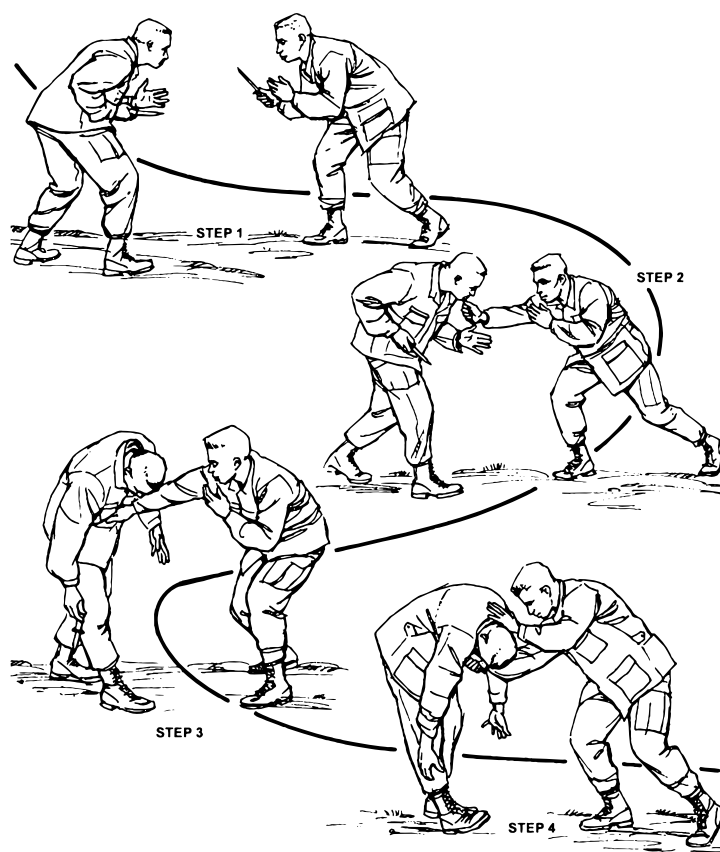


Figure 4. Nos. 1 and 4 angles.



b. Nos. 5, 3, and 2 Angles. In this sequence, one opponent (attacker) starts an attack with a lunge along the No. 5 angle of attack. At the same time, the other opponent (defender) on the left moves his body off the line of attack, parries the attacking arm, and slices the biceps of his opponent (Figure 5, Step 1). The defender slashes back across the groin along the No. 3 angle of attack (Figure 5, Step 2). He finishes the attacker by continuing with an upward stroke into the armpit or throat along the No. 2 angle of attack (Figure 5, Step 3). Throughout this sequence, the attacker's weapon hand is controlled with the defenders left hand as he attacks with his own knife hand.

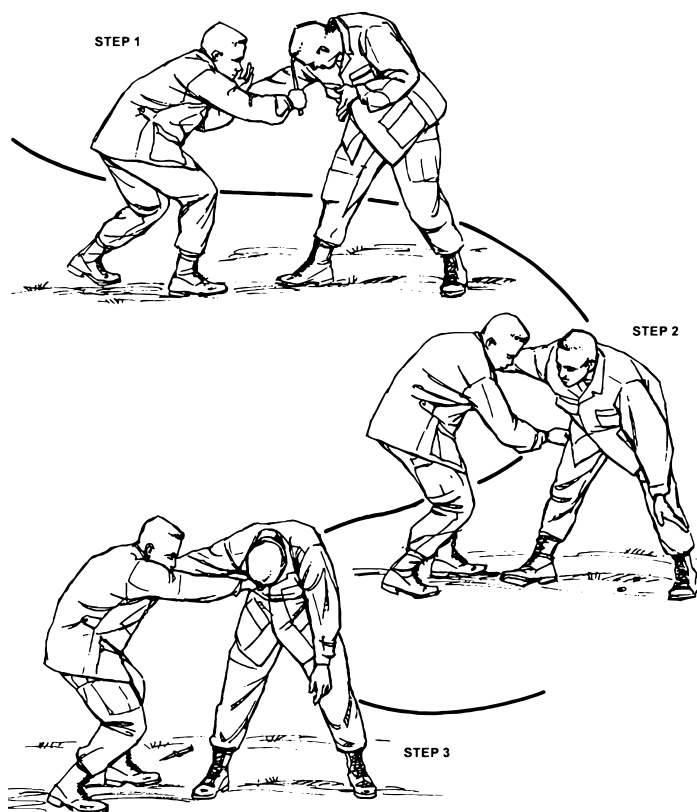


Figure 5. Nos. 5, 3, and 2 angles.

c. Low No. 5 Angle. In the next sequence, the attacker on the right lunges to the stomach along a low No. 5 angle of attack. The defender on the left moves his body off the line of attack while parrying and slashing the wrist of the attacking knife hand as he redirects the arm (Figure 6, Step 1). After he slashes the wrist of his attacker, the defender continues to move around the outside and stabs the attacker's armpit (Figure 6, Step 2). He retracts his screwdriver from the armpit, continues his movement around the attacker, and slices his hamstring (Figure 6, Step 3).

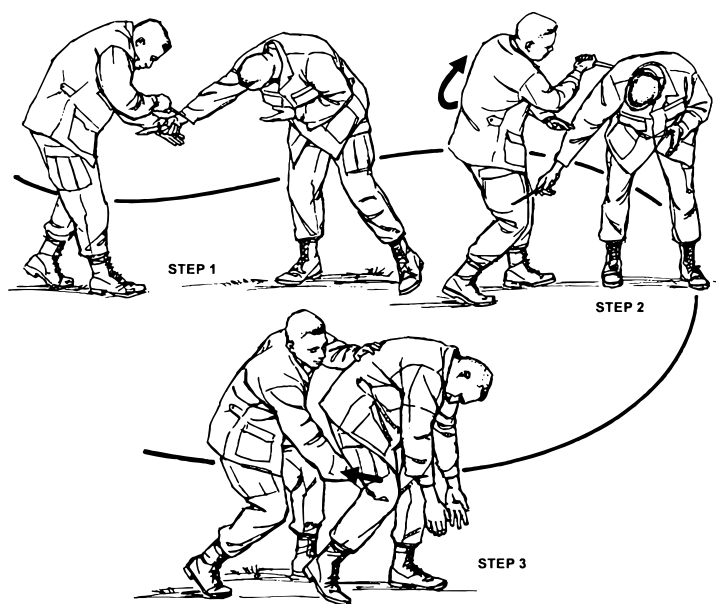


Figure 6. Low No. 5 angle.



d. Optional Low No. 5 Angle. The attacker on the right lunges to the stomach of his opponent (the defender) along the low No. 5 angle of attack. The defender moves his body off the line of attack of the knife. Then he turns and, at the same time, delivers a slash to the attacker's throat along the No. 1 angle of attack (Figure 7, Step 1). The defender immediately follows with another slash to the opposite side of the attacker's throat along the No. 2 angle of attack (Figure 7, Step 2). The attacker is finished as the opponent on the left (defender) continues to slice across the abdomen with a stroke along the No. 3 angle (Figure 7, Step 3).

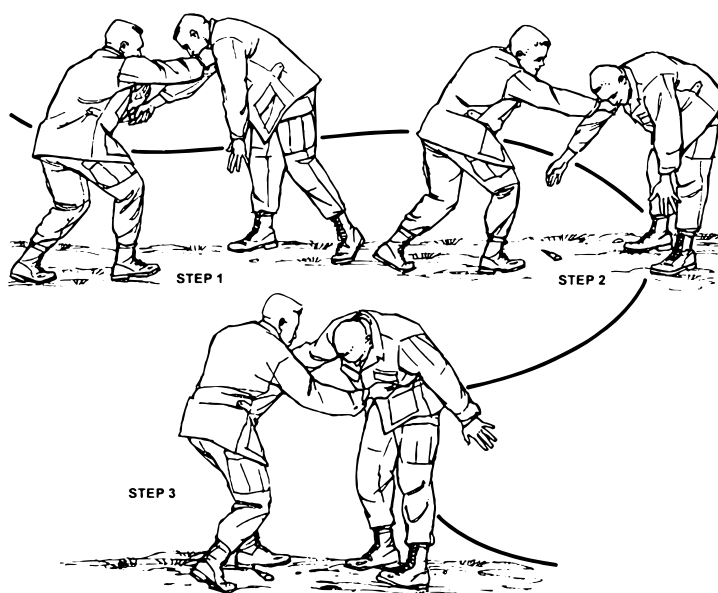


Figure 7. Optional low No. 5 angle.



4. THREE-FOOT TANKER'S BAR

Since a tanker's bar can be found in almost any shop, a soldier should know its uses as a field-expedient weapon. The bar is a versatile weapon; its capability ranges from simple prisoner control to lethal combat.

a. Use a tanker's bar and grip it by placing it in the "vee" formed between the thumb and index finger, as in a handshake. It may also be grasped by two hands and used in an unlimited number of techniques. The bar is not held at the end, but at a comfortable distance from the butt end.

b. When striking with the bar, achieve maximum power by using the entire body weight behind each blow. The desired point of contact of the weapon is the last 2 inches at the tip of the bar. The primary targets for striking with the bar are the vital body points in Chapter 4. Effective striking points are usually the wrist, hand, knees, and other bony protuberances. Soft targets include the side of the neck, jugular notch, solar plexus, and various nerve motor points. Attack soft targets by striking or thrusting the tip of the bar into the area. Three basic methods of striking are:

(1) Thrusting. Grip the bar with both hands and thrust straight into a target with the full body mass behind it.

(2) Whipping. Hold the bar in one hand and whip it in a circular motion; use the whole body mass in motion to generate power.

(3) Snapping. Snap the bar in short, shocking blows, again with the body mass behind each strike.

a. When using a three-foot stick against a rifle with fixed bayonet, the defender grasps the stick with two hands, one at each end, as the attacker thrusts forward to the chest (Figure 8, Step 1).



(1) He steps off the line of attack to the outside and redirects the weapon with the stick (Figure 8, Step 2).

(2) He then strikes forward with the forearm into the attacker's throat (Figure 8, Step 3). The force of the two body weights coming together is devastating. The attacker's neck is trapped in the notch formed by the stick and the defender's forearm.

(3) Using the free end of the stick as a lever, the defender steps back and uses his body weight to drive the attacker to the ground. The leverage provided by the stick against the neck creates a tremendous choke with the forearm, and the attacker loses control completely (Figure 8, Step 4).

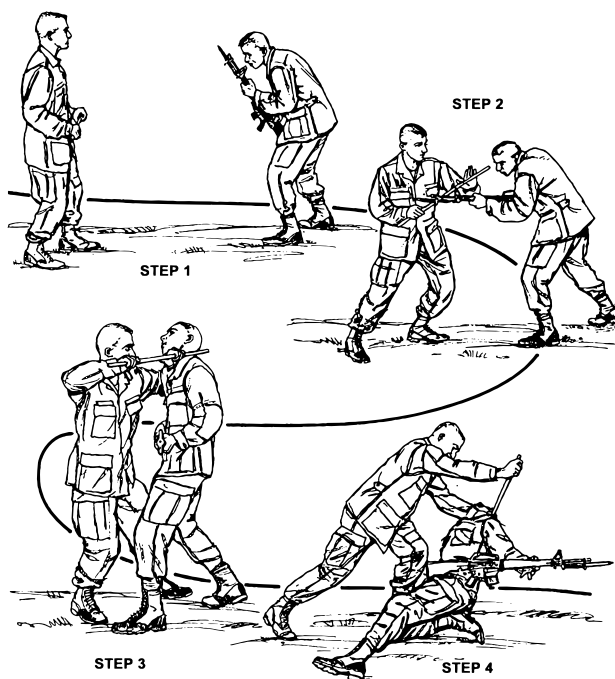


Figure 8. Three-foot tanker's bar against rifle with fixed bayonet.



5. SIX-FOOT TANKER'S BAR

Another field-expedient weapon that can mean the difference between life and death for a soldier in an unarmed conflict is a 6 feet long tanker's bar. Other examples of poles suitable for use are mop handles, pry bars, other track tools, tent poles, and small trees or limbs cut to form a pole. A soldier skilled in the use of a bar as a weapon is a formidable opponent. The size and weight of the pole requires him to move his whole body to use it effectively. Its length gives the soldier an advantage of distance in most unarmed situations. There are two methods usually used in striking with a bar:

a. Swinging. Becoming effective in swinging the pole requires skilled body movement and practice. The greatest power is developed by striking with the last 2 inches of the bar.

b. Thrusting. The bar is thrust straight along its axis with the user's body mass firmly behind it.

(1) An attacker tries to thrust forward with a fixed bayonet (Figure 9, Step 1). The defender moves his body off the line of attack; he holds the tip of the bar so that the attacker runs into it from his own momentum. He then aims for the jugular notch and anchors his body firmly in place so that the full force of the attack is felt at the attacker's throat (Figure 9, Step 2).

(2) The defender then shifts his entire body weight forward over his lead foot and drives the attacker off his feet (Figure 9, Step 3).



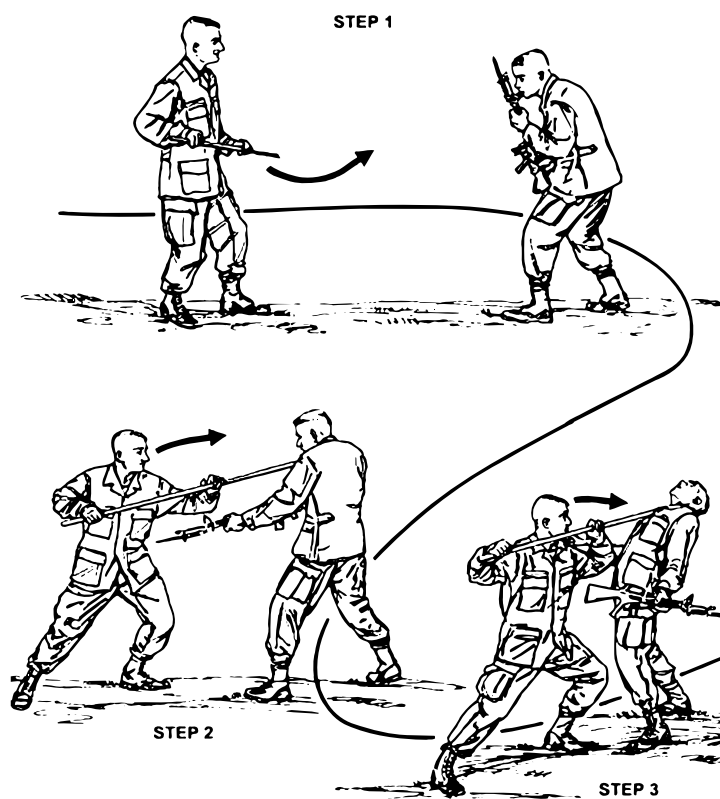
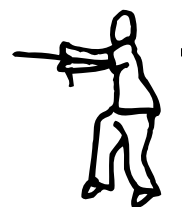


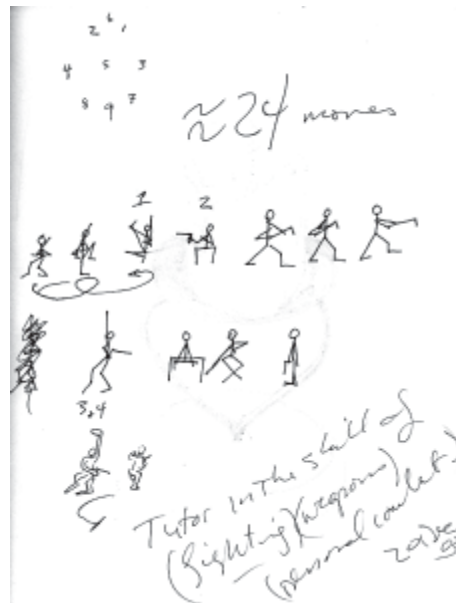
Figure 9. Thrusting with 6-foot tanker's bar.

Note: During high stress, small targets, such as the throat, may be difficult to hit. Good, large targets include the solar plexus and hip/thigh joint.



Cracker Kung Fu: Application—the Tire Iron Form

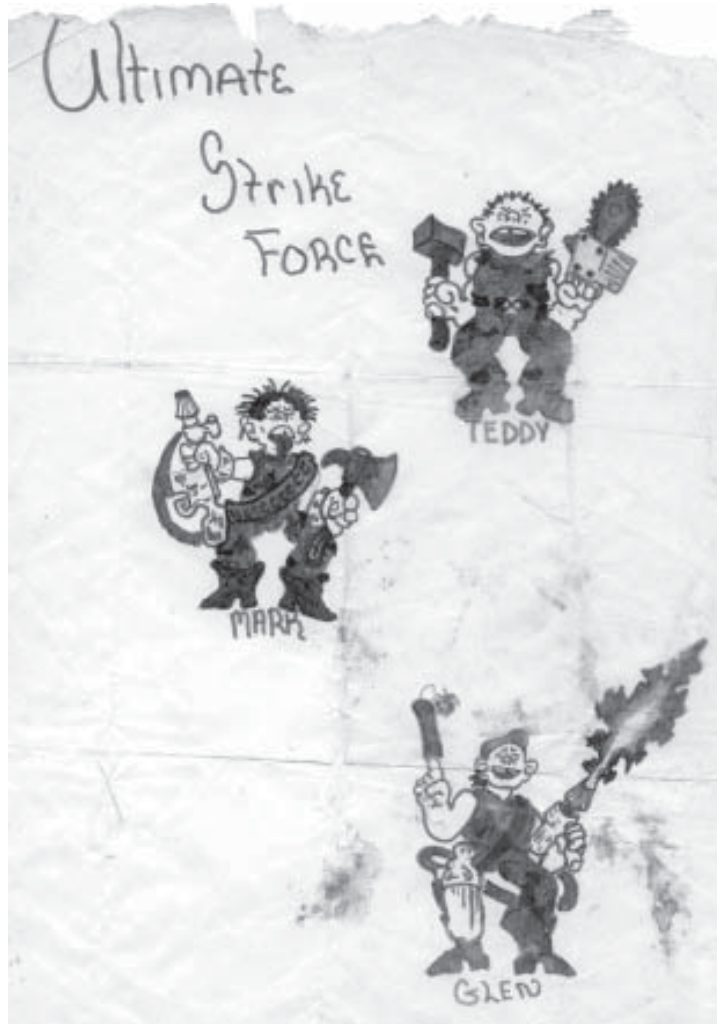




Two sketchbook pages tracing the development of the Tire Iron form.



Cracker Kung Fu's Tire Iron Form is derived from Specialist Runge's Army training and actual combat experience in the Persian Gulf Region, in addition to Zhang Yang Mai's kung-fu training both in his home state of Florida and in the People's Republic of China. This specific weapon/tool is of special significance to Cracker Boy since he has had a fond familiarity with this object since his boyhood.



Sketch by Cracker Boy, age 9, displays his keen interest the development of alternate forms of personal combat.



How to use this chapter.

This chapter presents the personal combat applications of the Lug Wrench Form (tire iron form). The form, shown in the flipbook along the edges of this book, is broken down into individual theories of application for each move. First, use the flipbook (which starts from the back of the book) to familiarize yourself with the movements and flow of the form. Then, return to this chapter for an explanation of the moves. Remember, here is but one combat application for each move; many more applications can be found.

Remember, no art form can be completely mastered through book instruction. Once you have studied the Lug Wrench Form, personal practice is the key to tangible benefits. Perseverance and hard work are the key to true art making.



*A*

(A & B) Your opponent steps forward and executes a straight punch with his left hand. Step forward with your right foot into a strong stance and simultaneously execute a block and grab with your left hand. (C) Swing the lug wrench under your opponent's arm and strike his face.

*B**C*



A

(A) As your opponent steps in with a left punch, block the punch to the outside by swinging the tire iron.

(B) As your opponenent steps in with a right punch, block the punch to the outside by swinging the tire iron to the left and



B

(C) simultaneously grab his left arm and strike the throat.



C

A

(A & B) Your opponent steps forward and executes a grab with his left hand. Step behind with your left foot into a strong stance simultaneously execute a block and grab with your left hand, and simultaneously swing the lug wrench under your opponent's groin.

B

*A*

(A & B) Your opponent steps forward and executes a sweep with his right leg. Leap into the air to avoid the sweep.

*B**C*

(C) As you land, thrust the edge of the tire tool into your opponent's foot.





A

(A & B) Your opponent steps forward and executes a straight punch with his left hand. Step forward with your right foot into a strong stance and simultaneously execute a block to the inside using the tire iron.



B

C

(C) Using your opponent's momentum, push his punching arm out of the way and thrust the lug wrench into his groin, and then using your weight, pull back towards yourself.



*A*

- (A) Your opponent stands in front of you poised to strike.
(B) Step forward with your right foot into a strong stance and simultaneously execute a strike to his face.

*B*



A

(A & B) Your opponent steps forward and executes a straight punch with his left hand. Step forward with your right foot into a strong stance, simultaneously execute a block with the tire iron and simultaneously step forward with your left leg. (



B

C

C) Strike your opponent with a left palm strike to the solar plexus.



(A & B) Your opponent steps forward and executes a straight punch with his left hand. Step forward with your left foot into a strong stance and simultaneously execute a block with the tire iron.

*A**B*

(C) Using your body weight, continue to push the lug wrench into your opponent's throat.

*C*

(A) Your opponent stands in front of you poised to strike. Dive into a summersault towards your opponent.

A



B



C



(B & C) Continue to roll into your opponent. Keep the lug wrench in front of you to block and thrust the tire iron into your opponent's ribs with the force of your roll.

(A) As your opponent steps in with a left punch, block the punch to the outside by swinging the tire iron.

A*B*

(B) Continue the swing and bring the lug wrench over your head while

(C) simultaneously grabbing his left arm and swing the tire iron into your opponent's face.

C



(A) Your opponent kicks at you with his left leg. Twist to your left and block the kick with the sharp edge of the lug wrench. (B) Twist back to your right and use your momentum to strike your opponent's face.



Addendum: The Tire Iron Form

