

# THE SICILIAN BLADE



The  
Art of  
Sicilian  
Stiletto  
Fighting

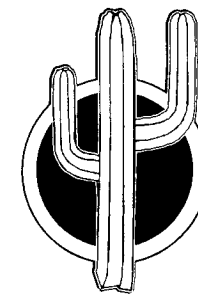
Vito Quattrocchi

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# The Sicilian Blade

## The Art of Sicilian Stiletto Fighting

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## PREFACE

It was with much uncertainty that I took pen in hand to write this book. It must be clearly understood that the principles of Sicilian stiletto fighting are deadly techniques that teach one to kill. Because of that reason, the words between these covers are vulnerable to condemnation. Nevertheless, an honorable purpose stands on its own merit. As long as people do violence against each other in lust, greed and ambition, violence will persist and the violent principles in this book will have a purpose.

When a violent, ambitious man takes the life of another to fulfill his greed the suffering of the dead man's family is incomprehensible to the outsider. The realness of this violence must be faced with the same direct approach it attacks with. This way the honorable man may stand his ground in defense of himself and his loved ones.

This book is dedicated to all honorable men who stand against evil that they may save their own lives and the lives of those close to them by confidently engaging their enemy with the principles taught in this book. Keep in mind that *The Sicilian Blade* is a recipe for death. Use it wisely and with caution.

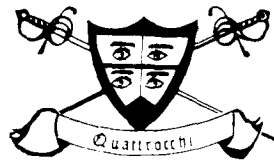
Don Vito Quattrocchi

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*Violence is the strong color of  
life when it is nobly aroused.*  
A Sicilian Proverb

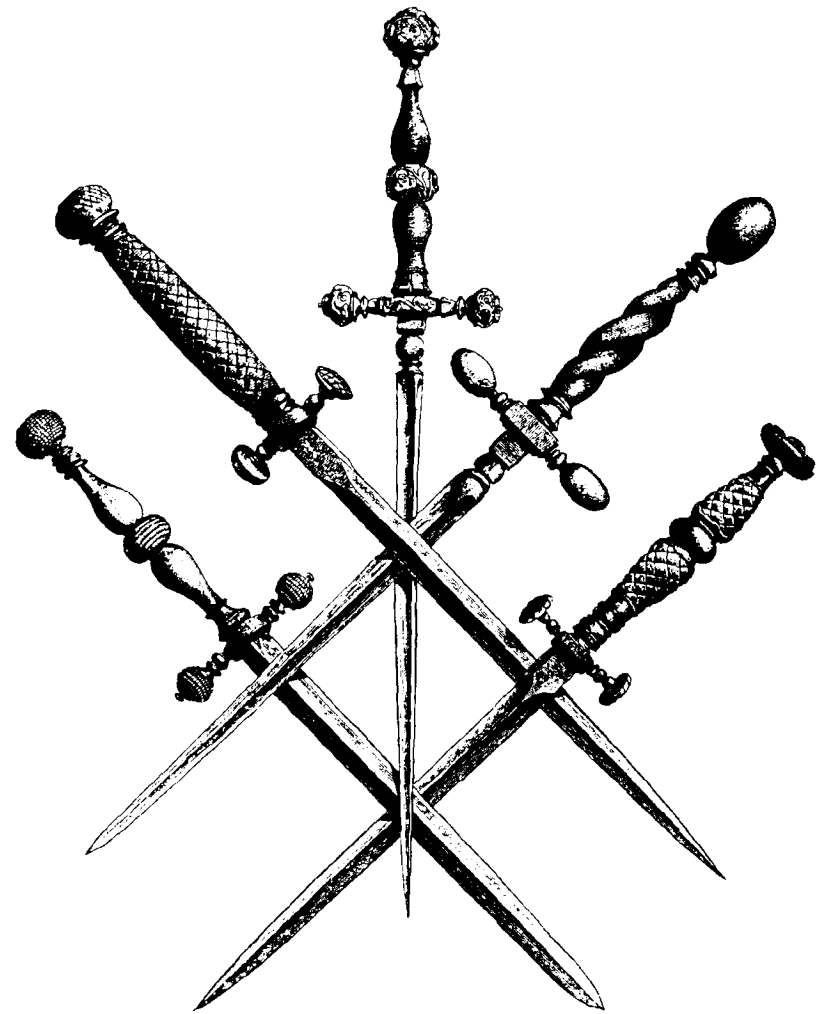


The name Quattrocchi is of Sicilian origin, literally meaning eyeball to eyeball:

“Parla en quattrocchi”—  
to speak in private.

This name eventually evolved into a term embodying manly honor and tradition itself. If a man was cowardly and afraid to look you in the eyes he was said to have no quattrocchi.

Conversely, if a man proudly held eye contact and did not back down in the face of adversity, he was said to be a man of quattrocchi.



# HISTORY

Stiletto fighting is the embodiment of Sicilian masculinity. It takes eyeball to eyeball contact (*en Quattrocchi*) total commitment to the task at hand to cut your enemy open and make his life's blood spit onto the street until his life slips away. That takes courage, skill and an understanding of your enemy's weaknesses. Using a knife on a man with the intention of closing in and killing him takes far more courage than shooting him from a distance: for death is the probable outcome when two strong men face each other with razor sharp blades.

I had the privilege of learning from a very young age the art of the *muletto*; that is Sicilian Knife Fighting. A *muletto* is the dialect term for the long infamous stiletto that the Sicilian man carries as a matter of course. The art is passed down from father to son as is the case with many martial arts, be they Eastern or Western.

Being Sicilian by birth I was brought up in the strictest of my Old World Tradition. Boys of my tradition were taught from earliest youth The Code of Honor and Manhood; never to accept any

insult to one's self or one's family. For to do so would bring dishonor on your manhood and shame to your family. As the Old Sicilian Proverb goes, "The strength of the family is its sons and the strength of the son is his family." So, a Sicilian man's entire self value and worth is tied up in his family. How respected his family is reflects on him and how respected he is reflects on his family.

Now, in rural Sicily this brand of *maschio* or manhood (*machismo*; in Spanish) is defended with the aforementioned stiletto; a long razor sharp blade with a cross-guard for finger protection. The stiletto is an offspring to the infamous rapier sword that was used in Italy and most of Europe in the 1600s. The Sicilians were devils with the rapier and gained such an infamous reputation throughout Europe that the phrase was coined, "Only saints and Sicilians dare fence with the devil."

As time progressed, the blades grew shorter. The 1700s and 1800s saw a short dagger remarkably resembling the rapier, only called *muletto*, for it was carried on the saddle of a mule for protection. When Northern Italians saw the intimidating blade they named it the stiletto or knitting needle. By the end of the First World War the stiletto (*muletto*) had shrunk to a pocket-size lock blade measuring nine and a half inches fully locked and ready.



The Sicilians were just as adept with the shorter blade as their ancestors were with the longer one. Nightly duels were an event not missed by many men in the piazzas of Palermo and outlying *piase* (small suburbs). One American naval officer after having witnessed one of these moonlit duels said, "They fight with the savageness of dogs but with the grace of fencers. Their quickness and agility is amazing."

The island never lost its medieval way of thinking which holds that a man must protect himself and his possessions by his own personal influence and courage regardless of the law's authority. Ruthless courage and self-assertive exhibitionism become admirable qualities in the light of such beliefs. Add to this the romantic Sicilian respect for rugged individualism and even duels to the death become glamorous.

Many Sicilians still look to the stiletto as the embodiment of Sicilian courage. Where the police cannot guarantee immunity against burglary or recover stolen goods the sons of the family with sharpened stiletto could. Where the slow, expensive process of the legal system cannot ensure justice, the family administers its own—rough, perhaps but quick and effective.

The Sicilian man must be respected and revered. He dresses with care and is generous to his friends and close relations. He is fiercely

attached to his family and children and scowls at the mention of divorce. As a public figure he must stand for order. He is deeply religious—or at least pretends to be—and extremely conservative.

When faced with real insult or strong opposition outside the family, the Sicilian man's final deterrent is the stiletto duel. Like all masculine action in Sicily, it must be done with style as well as panache. The duel done with the right blend of expertise and calculated indifference will be discussed with admiration by many other Sicilians. The stiletto duel has always had a function of prestige and to engage in one elevates the authority and power of the persons engaging in it.

Yet a stiletto duel must be publicized as well as untraceable by the police. Everyone must know why it was done and on who's behalf. For this reason, grim signs on the corpse must explain the reason for the punishment. This is a necessity. For while a legal trial can be followed by the press and the verdict understood, a duel or fight to the death between families has to be kept secret.

Therefore, if a dead man was guilty of spreading slander against another family, his tongue would be severed. A severed hand placed on the chest meant the man was a thief who stole from the offended family. Testicles cut off and forced in the mouth meant that the dead man raped or tried

to make love to the wife, sister, daughter or female relation of a local family man.

The dialect term *quattrocchi*, literally meaning: "four eyes" or "eyeball-to-eyeball" is an extreme form of loyalty and solidarity in the face of danger. Being able to hold eye contact and not falter when death is eminent. One of its tenets is that it is deeply demeaning and shameful to betray even one's deadliest enemy to the police. But one must take care of the matter himself or else keep it in his stomach. A traditional proverb runs: "*l'omu ch'e omu non rivela mai mancu si avi corpa di cortellu' cosi sempre en quattrocchi*" (The man who is really a man reveals nothing, not even with a knife through him but always is in quattrocchi.)

Sicilians, unlike Italians, are in any case people of few words and their words ring true only to their own families. In any case, the truth from a Sicilian point of view has no intrinsic merit and is employed only when it has to serve some definite end. Outsiders seldom get the truth from a Sicilian in casual conversation.

In the long run it is the power and social position of the Sicilian which preserve him. Yet his own code and mystique are more than just an elaborate screen. His entire life is ceremonial. The head of the family is a man of respect and is always addressed as "Don" which derives from the Latin word *Dominus* or "Lord." The Don has

a special status: people kiss his hands or say as a form of respect: "*Bacciammu le mani*" ("We kiss your hands.")

Among themselves Sicilians often use their own local dialect made up of half words with diverse meanings. One word may have four or five meanings depending on the circumstance or how it is said. This is very difficult for outsiders to understand. But the main way of communication is by using the eyes. Tiny movements and a few limited gestures are understood at once.

In the eyes of many Sicilians all of this ritual and ceremony is no less than the embodiment of the aforementioned *quattrocchi* (eyeball to eyeball). The man with quattrocchi has courage and a stoic attitude toward life which he takes away with ease. But his own life, too, is continually threatened and he often has to kill in order to avoid being killed himself.

The life of the body does not count for him; or counts very little in comparison with what is considered as the real life, the real essence of one's own existence expressed in the overruling of all obstacles in infinite liberty and self-freedom.

Freedom is the Sicilian man's main objective. Not to be under anyone's yoke. And he achieves this freedom through the only authority he recognizes—the family group known to Sicilians as the *cosca* (plural: *coschi*). The word *cosca* refers to any

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

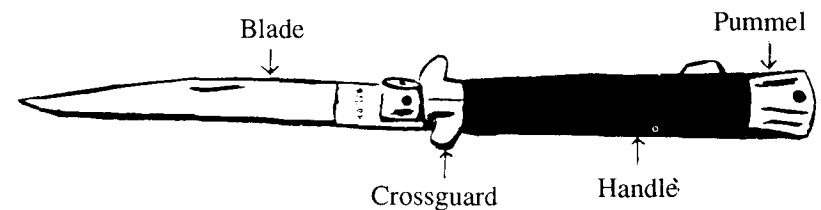
plant such as the “artichoke” or the “Thistle” whose spiny closely-folded leaves symbolize the tightly-knit resistant nature of the family group. Within that Sicilian *cosca* the stiletto is their sword.

Greetings, my name is Don Vito Quattrocchi. The Don at the beginning of my name is a title literally translated as “Sir.” It is a traditional title given to teachers of The Sicilian Blade much as the title *Sensei* is given to Oriental martial art instructors. It is a term of respect. All of my students address me as such and all of your students should address you in like manner if you ever decide to teach the art that I am about to teach you.

I will teach you exactly as I was taught and explain how you should act in combative situations. The first thing you must understand is that I am not physically there to show you so I have to talk you through the moves. I have to create a picture in your mind so that your subconscious will pick it up and use it when necessary. So it is very important that you read this book over a couple of times. That way, the ideas will be firmly implanted in your mind.

## The Sicilian Stiletto

This is The Sicilian Stiletto: which is nine and a half inches total in length and has a five inch blade. It also has brass or steel bolsters and a horn handle plus a cross guard for finger protection. When properly used it is one of the most deadly pocket knives you’ll encounter. It’s light, quick, razor sharp and it slices to the bone. Stay away from cheap imitations. It should be an imported Italian stiletto with a stainless steel lock blade and horn handle. The blade must be strong



and not falter or shake when moved from side to side. Your knife should be the highest quality you can get. Your life depends on it.

### **WHY THE STILETTO?**

No doubt there are fighting knives on the market of more power and length like the Bowie or The Arkansas Toothpick knives, the latter of which is very close to the Old Sicilian Muletto. And agreeably when two men with equal knowledge face each other, the one with the superior weapon will inevitably triumph. A large Clip Point Bowie knife is certainly a superior weapon to a pocket stiletto. However, if you live in an urban environment like New York City, Brooklyn, Chicago or Northern New Jersey, etc. you cannot walk around with a foot-long Bowie knife strapped to your hip. Aside from the laws, Eastern clothing does not lend itself to large knives strapped to the hip. So the nine and half inch pocket stiletto is the best blade for the job in an urban environment. Also, its lightness makes it faster than larger blades.

### **A SHARP BLADE**

To say that your blade must be sharp is an understatement. A razor's edge on your stiletto gives you superiority in a combat situation and that knowledge of superiority along with con-

fidence is what is needed when you face another man with a blade.

You want every slice to your opponent's body to cut deep and draw blood. Every time you strike with your blade it must sever and make blood spit forth. This makes the body go into a state of shock. When this happens you can just step back a few feet and wait. Within ten seconds the loss of blood will weaken your enemy and you can watch him bleed to death. If he charges you in a blind rage, a thrust to the heart will stop him cold. Unless you are very fast with your recovery, his chest cavity will close around the blade making extracting it very difficult. If this becomes the case, a push kick to the stomach area will have to be executed in order to extract your blade from his chest. Cuts to the limbs are very important. Just look at all the arteries that are laced throughout your arms and hands. Your razor-sharp stiletto will slice them open effortlessly. Hard, deep cuts to the hands will sever the fingers so suffice it to say, your blade must be sharp.

How sharp is sharp? Well, a good test is if your blade can shave a patch of hair off of your arm. If it can do that then you've got it.

Now I feel that the first thing that you should do when you get your stiletto is to have a professional knife sharpener put an edge on it with a water wheel hone. Or if you know how to put an

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

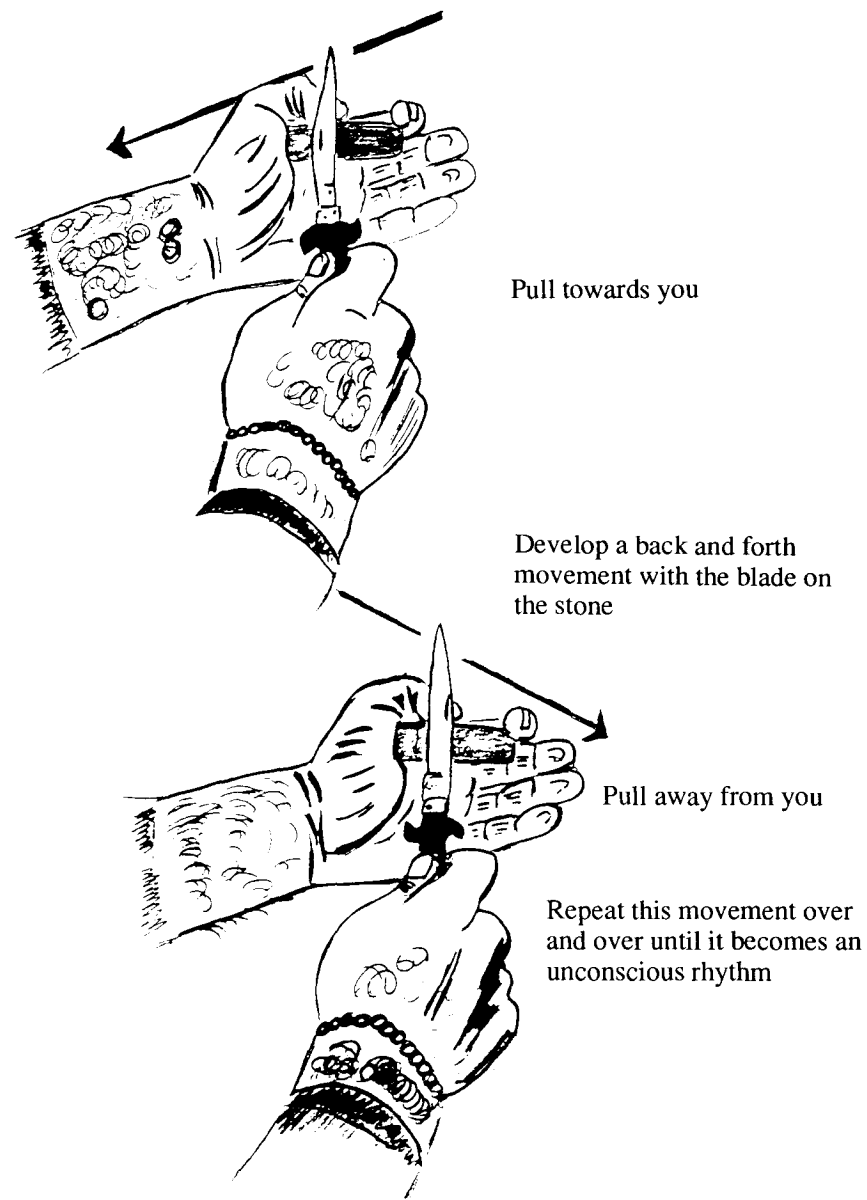
edge on your blade all the better. I, myself, have a small electric water stone sharpening machine. What I do is put an edge on my blade with the wheel. This is very important but only a preliminary. Next, we get a small pocket hone. I have a Carborundum dry pocket hone. It was given to me by my grandfather. I have tried all sorts of oil stones, soap stones, sharpening tools, etc. but the original way I was taught is still the best.

### HOW TO SHARPEN A STILETTO

Take the stone and scratch the shine completely off of the blade—really go to it with the stone—get all of that mirror polish off of the blade. Then take the knife in your fighting hand (right or left) holding the stone in the opposite hand. Lay the blade completely flat against the stone. Now, slide the blade against the stone in a downward motion pulling away from you. Remember to pull down and away so you get the entire length of the blade.

Now, turn the blade over and do the exact same movement on the opposite side. Now the edge is away from you and you're drawing the blade towards you. Keep doing this movement over and over until it becomes a rhythm, a pastime. When you're sitting down relaxing take out your stiletto and start sharpening it—back and forth, back and forth—slice, slice, slice. Do this when you're watching television or whatever. Soon you will

## The Sicilian Stiletto



## THE SICILIAN BLADE

have a razor blade on your stiletto. It will slice through layers of clothes and puncture through the heaviest winter coat. Even a bulletproof vest is not invulnerable to the thrust of a stiletto blade.

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# STILETTO FIGHTING

## **THE DUEL/SPONTANEOUS FIGHTING**

There are two types of stiletto fighting that will be discussed. The first type is the duel. That is when two men of honor decide to face each other with blades to settle an incident that has soiled the honor or offended one of the parties.

All young Sicilian men of honor are taught the use of the stiletto and the ceremonies of the duel. Because of the social environment they could become involved in a duel whether they wanted to or not and would have to defend themselves.

The stiletto duel has always been part of the way of life in Sicily even though it is, illegal and frowned upon by the Italian government. Nevertheless, at about eleven or twelve p.m. when the moon lights the piazzas, duels to resolve affairs of honor are held. You cannot anticipate what will provoke many of the duels. They could be political or religious arguments where one of the parties had become verbally abusive to the other. The duel could have been caused by a comment made

at a party. But, in any case, it is possible to become involved against your will. If a challenge is made, the males of either side of the family always meet and fix the time and place where the duel is to be held. These duels are taken very seriously and the challenged one has to fight or else lose his honor and the respect of his peers. *The best way to avoid being challenged is to have a reputation as an expert stiletto fighter.*

Usually one does not get killed in the typical duel. The wrists and neck are protected by thick leather straps. But the face, chest, and upper arms can be cut. The legs can also be slashed. If someone feels that the insult was extremely serious, he could insist that the protective straps be omitted. In extremely serious affairs, the thrust is permitted and in these duels deaths are possible.

Even if one has no love for dueling; knowing how to fight well with a stiletto is important in order to be able to move comfortably in Central Sicily's social structure.

Acceptance of the duel has another effect—it makes people think twice before they speak ill of another person. In this way, rumors and gossips are quickly put in their place.

The second type of stiletto combat is self-defense against an attacker. This is an entirely different type of fighting. The techniques are the

same—the same stance, balance, etc. only this type of fighting is more improvised, more frantic. There is kicking, throwing objects at your enemy's face, pinning him to the wall with a chair or bench, rushing him with a garbage can lid or a brief case. All are legitimate techniques.

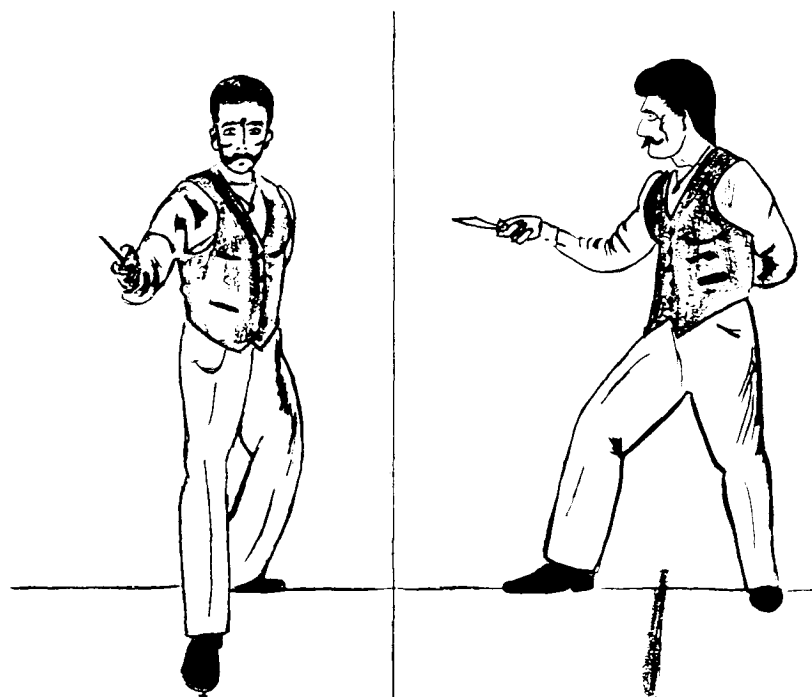
The Indraga Mano—or hidden hand movements are also part of The Spontaneous Fight and will be discussed in length later on in the book. Remember, either in The Duel or The Spontaneous Fight total concentration and a fierce determination is imperative if you are to survive either confrontation.

### **GUARDIAN STANCE**

The stance is the foundation of your entire line of defense. If you are off balance it is impossible to move, parry, attack, or recover with any speed and precision. When you are balanced all other things come into place. That's why psychopaths are labeled unbalanced. We instinctively know the importance of balance. Without it mentally we falter and without it in a knife duel—we perish.

To ensure that we develop our stance correctly we should tape a large cross in our training area. Place your front foot (the same foot as the hand holding the stiletto be it right or left) on the straight line; then place your rear foot on the cross line. Your feet should be shoulder width

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Front view

Side view

apart and now, sink low—make yourself as small a target as possible. But don't scrunch up. Stand erect—but sink your knees to lower your center of gravity.

If you hunch over you leave your head and face open to slashing attacks from your opponent's blade. Now hold that correct posture for a minute. Sink low, then come up a little and relax. Do that

## Stiletto Fighting

three times for a minute each time. When you can hold your low stance for three minutes you have developed a good strong stance. You should hold your stance for three minutes as a strengthening exercise before each training session.



Correct posture

Incorrect posture

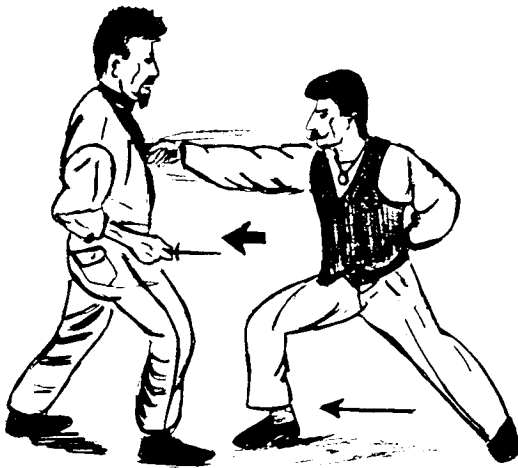
Most of the time when you pull your blade and snap into a strong Guardian stance a lot of your attacker's courage will leave him. So practice



## THE SICILIAN BLADE

snapping in and out of your Guardian stance. Do it twenty times as a prelude to holding it for three minutes.

Remember, that the stance is the foundation for everything. And a fortress with a weak foundation crumbles. So, practice, practice, practice.



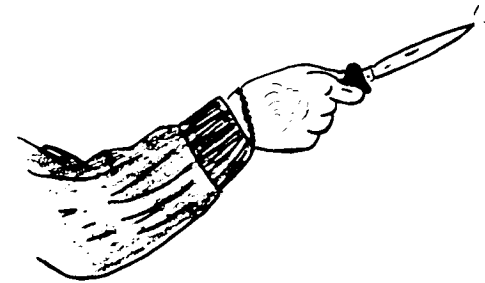
When facing an adversary proper stance adds life-saving distance

### THE GRIP

The traditional saber grip is used by laying the thumb against the crossguard. This grip along with correct posture and stance allows you greater mobility and distance, hence, a greater advantage in a life and death encounter.

The saber grip is, also, essential in order to execute a proper thrust. The thrust offers in-

## Stiletto Fighting



Traditional saber grip

credible distance and a proper recovery makes the thrust an unstoppable move.

After the thrust recover to your front Guardian Stance—fast, strong, snappy, eyes forward, ever ready for a second, third or fourth thrust.

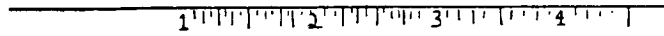
The thrust offers incredible distance—four and one-half one's body length. The proper method of thrusting is by lifting the forward foot and stepping forward and deep, simultaneously extending the knife hand. The blade will automatically penetrate your target because your entire body weight will follow the tip of your blade. This is one of the most important moves that you can master, so practice it diligently.

### THE CUT

The cut is a circular motion executed from The Saber Grip Position. The cut is usually given to the hand, wrist or arm. By keeping your arm

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

steady and moving the wrist in a circular motion, you can master this cut. It should be delivered fast and hard with a razor sharp blade and a strong circular cut to the hand, wrist or arms.

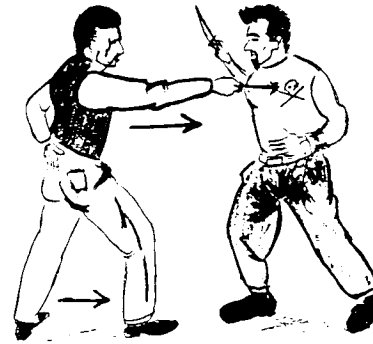


The thrust in action



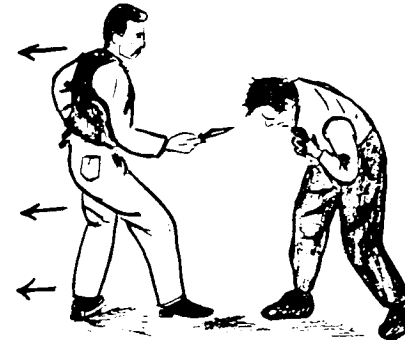
Circular cut to your adversary's knife hand.

## Stiletto Fighting



Thrust

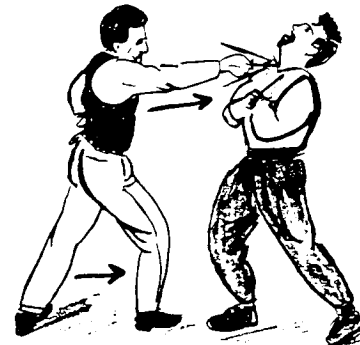
Notice how the moves flow—  
Thrust - Recover -  
Thrust  
1 - 2 - 3  
Fast flowing  
continuous  
action.



Recover

Your enemy has  
no chance to  
recover from  
the onslaught  
of your attack.

Keep attacking  
with cobra-like  
strikes until  
your enemy is  
vanquished.



Thrust

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

You can be certain of rapid fight termination using this motion.

Practice circling the blade imagining your opponent's wrist or arm in front of you. Remember, strong, circular wrist motion makes for deeper cuts to your enemy's vital areas.

### ATTACK AND RETREAT

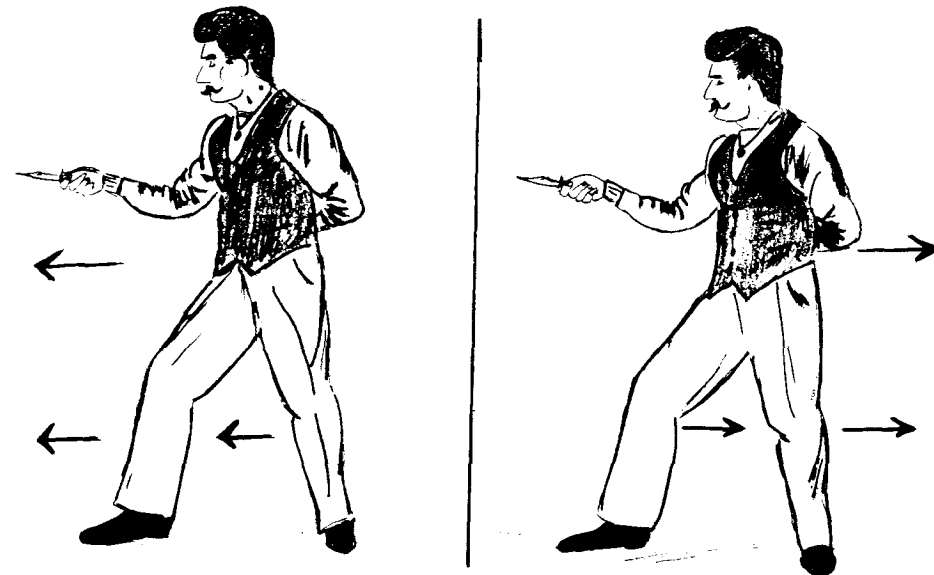
If you are pressing the attack as you should, your step will be made by advancing your forward foot and dragging up your rear foot, always staying in line.

When you retreat for tactical reasons your rear foot stays in its same position and steps backwards now dragging the forward foot backwards—always remaining in your Guardian Stance and on an imaginary line.

Always stay about one full thrust distance away from your opponent's blade. From this distance you can advance on your enemy or retreat without putting yourself in any grave danger. Plus you are in a position to continually strike at him with lightening fast circular cuts to his arms and hands. Your enemy will be amazed to find that he cannot come within four or five feet of you without getting cut. We call this zone "The Masada" or "Kill Zone".

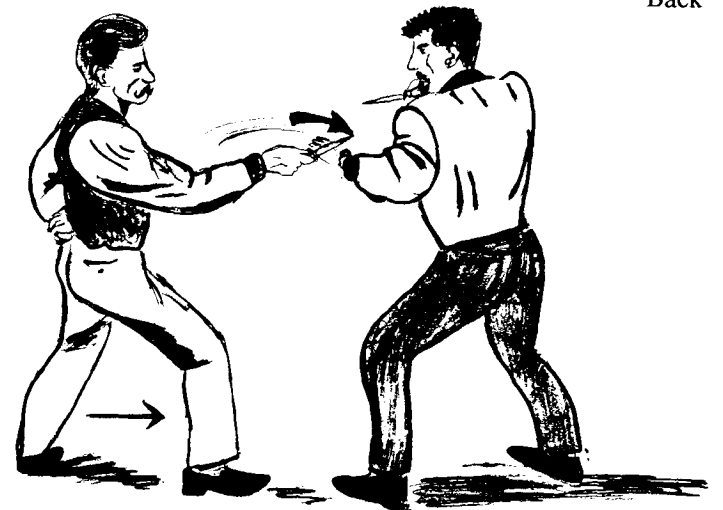
By using this technique your enemy is fooled into thinking that the end of your blade is the full

### Stiletto Fighting



Forward

Back



Snipe at him with hard, fast circular cuts to arms and hands

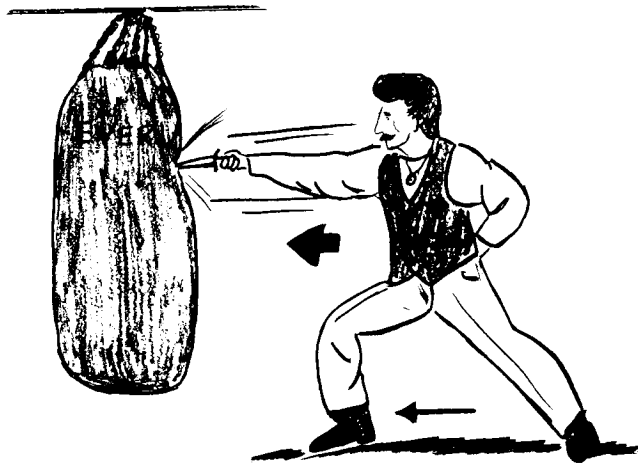
## THE SICILIAN BLADE

extent of your reach. When he tries to move in on you he will realize that he is too close and has fatally exposed himself.

### TRAINING BAG

To really develop your thrusting technique you must use a training bag. This is a regular heavy bag used by boxers and karate men alike.

When you thrust your blade into the bag and recover to your Guardian Position, you experience the force necessary to puncture through layers of heavy clothing and human flesh.



The first thing you should do is to wrap up the entire training bag with heavy duck tape. This prevents the stuffing from falling out of the bag. When the bag gets too cut up just repair the destroyed spots with more tape.

## Stiletto Fighting

When the bag is ready and hung up start attacking the bag with thrusts: thrust and recover, thrust and recover, thrust and recover, over and over again. Say that you do fifty thrust and recoveries, then do fifty slashes, then do fifty cuts. Imagine that the bag is an attacker and you're the defender: attack, thrust, cut, stab, recover, move forward, attack, thrust, recover, thrust, and so on...

Also, you should mark an "X" on the bag and thrust into the center of it. This develops your focus and when your focus is developed you can hit your target at will. To be able to eyeball a target spot on your enemy's body then to reach out and puncture it gives you the victor's touch.

### THE SLASH

The slash usually is directed to the head and face area. It is a horizontal cutting movement that cuts across one side of the face and back across the other. It can be directed to the neck area and chest area also (only if your opponent is bare chested or has light clothing).

Quick right and then left slashes of fast, sharp, staccato movement is quite effective. This will cause a series of deep slashes on your enemy's face that will demoralize him and put him in a state of panic, then shock. When that happens—the thrust is applied to end the fight.

## THE SICILIAN BLADE



Turning the blade sideways, slash the head or face area.



The throat slash for rapid fight termination.

## Stiletto Fighting

A quick, powerful slash is an important weapon to develop in your arsenal of stiletto movements.

### **THE KILL: HOW AND WHERE TO STRIKE**

When fighting with the stiletto, your opponent's entire body becomes your target. Remember that your blade is so sharp that wherever you cut you will draw blood.

When the fight is over you will be cleaning the blood off of your blade unless your enemy is wiping blood off of his blade and if he is, it's probably your blood he's wiping away.

So you must look for the right places to cut him. Let *him* feel the slice of *your* blade. In a stiletto duel any part of the body is fair game for attack. If your cut is hard and deep enough—blood will flow. The mind and body will go into a state of shock, your opponent will temporarily freeze and then he will be open for THE KILL. The kill is the bottom line.

### **YOUR TARGETS ARE:**

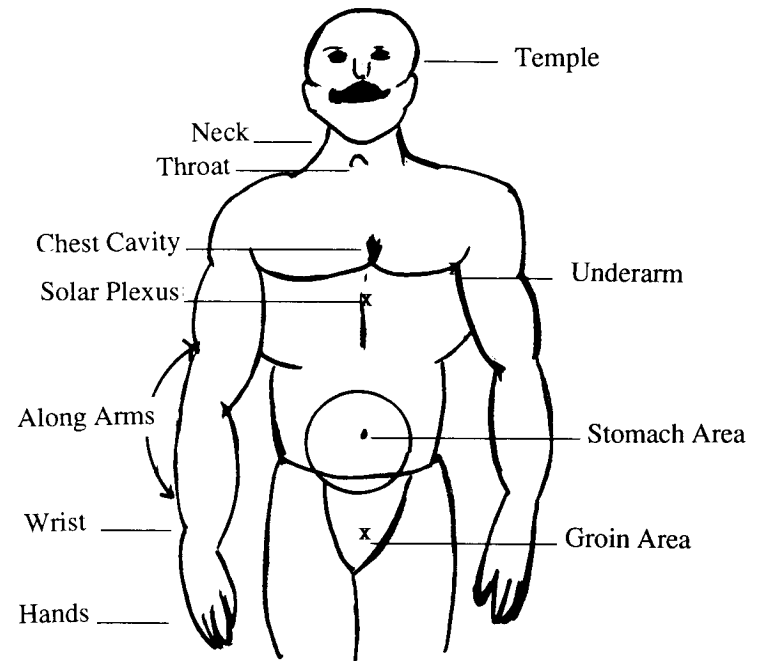
- 1) **His Hands** - They hold his knife. They are also laced with many veins and arteries which are vulnerable to your blade.
- 2) **His Chest Cavity** - It holds his heart which pumps his life's blood.
- 3) **His Neck** - Holds his jugular vein, his windpipe and it also carries his blood supply to his head.

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

- 4) **His Lower Stomach** - It holds his vital organs. And is also softer than his upper stomach and very vulnerable to attack.
- 5) **Under His Arms** - Where his lungs are is extremely vulnerable. Thrust your stiletto blade up and under his arm cavity and work your stiletto handle up and down and back and forth. This will tear up his insides and do far more damage than one straight thrust can. In any area of the chest, back, sides, stomach or kidneys pump the handle of your stiletto for maximum kill power.
- 6) **Face** - Any cut to the face is painful and demoralizing. The realization that one's face is sliced completely open sends the brain into shock and a second of paralyzation sets in. Your next move should be the kill.

## Stiletto Fighting

### ATTACK POINTS



# STRATEGY

## FACING YOUR ENEMY

When facing your enemy be sure to stare straight into his eyes. Not only does this intimidate him but it allows you to see every part of the body in motion. Try it—look someone straight in the eyes (*en quattrocchi*) and have them move their hands or feet. You will see that through your peripheral vision you are able to catch all of their movements.

Remember, *quattrocchi* means four eyes—only your eyes and your enemy's eyes exist. Blank out all other distracting influences.

Look at your enemy; size him up. Look at his facial features. Is he weak? A drug addict? A bully? All of these things are weaknesses. Notice if he's off-balance; how he holds his knife. If he's holding his knife in his right hand but his left foot is forward he will give his attack away by moving forward before his thrust.

If he attacks with his knife hand over his head or with an underhand attack he will limit his distance and leave himself open to your attack.

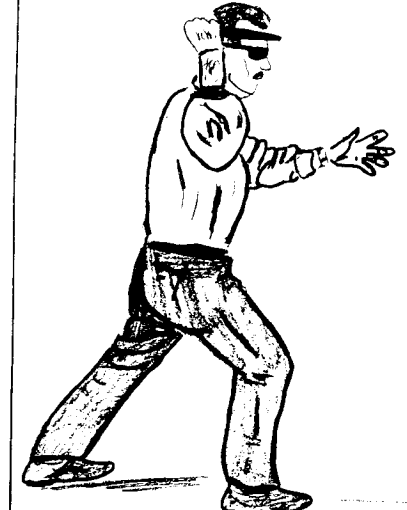
If he charges you side-step him and thrust your

## Strategy

Underhand Attack



Overhand Attack



Both underhand and overhand attackers will give away their intentions and leave a fatal opening.

blade into his side. This way one second you're in his range and the next second you're gone and he's left stabbing at the air.

When an adversary moves in on you with either of these two moves, his free hand will be out in front of him. He will try to move in on you, grabbing your knife hand with his free hand and pulling you into his blade. Make his extended hand be your first target. He will have to step forward to try and cut or grab you. This gives away his intentions. Cut any exposed area that

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

is within your reach—side-step a charging attacker and stick him—cut, side-step, stick. He will think he is fighting a ghost. The side-step is a fantastic move for all cut and thrust variations.



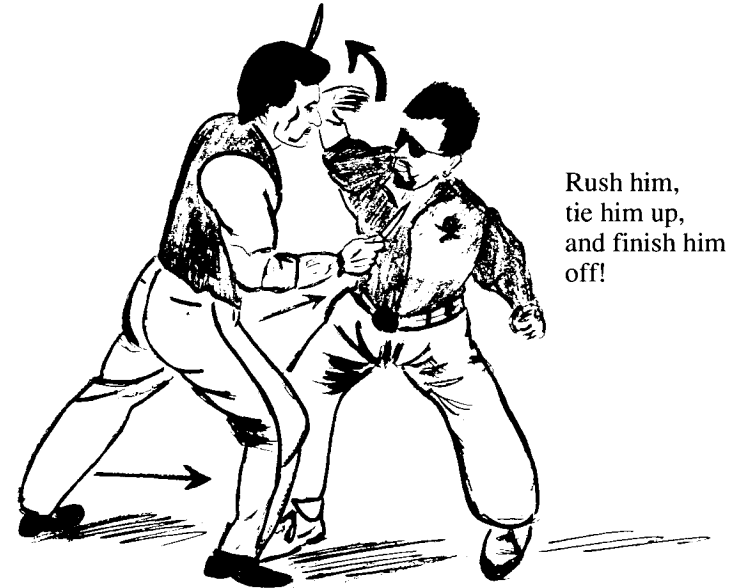
Side-step and cut wrist. Immediately slash neck.

You can side-step his oncoming blade, cut his wrist then bounce your blade right up to slash his neck all in one movement. This defense is priceless in close quarter fighting. No step back or forward is required on your part; a simple shift of the hips moves your body out of the range of his oncoming blade. From that point on, his entire body is open to your attack to do with as you wish.

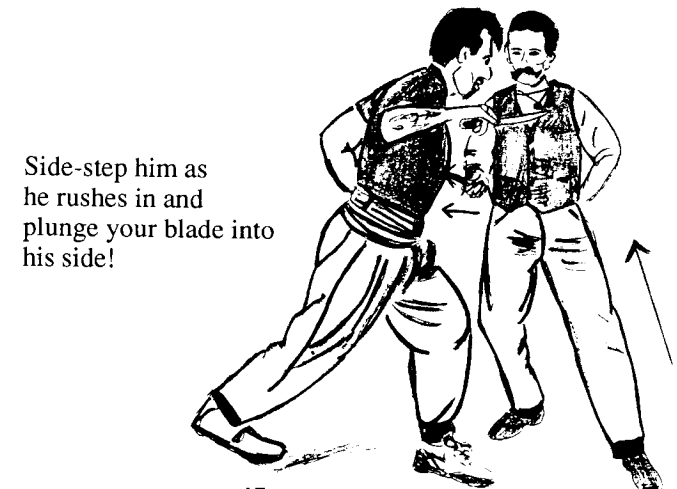
### SPARRING

Sparring is essential to the development of an aggressive stiletto fighter. It develops speed and

### Strategy



Rush him,  
tie him up,  
and finish him  
off!



Side-step him as  
he rushes in and  
plunge your blade into  
his side!

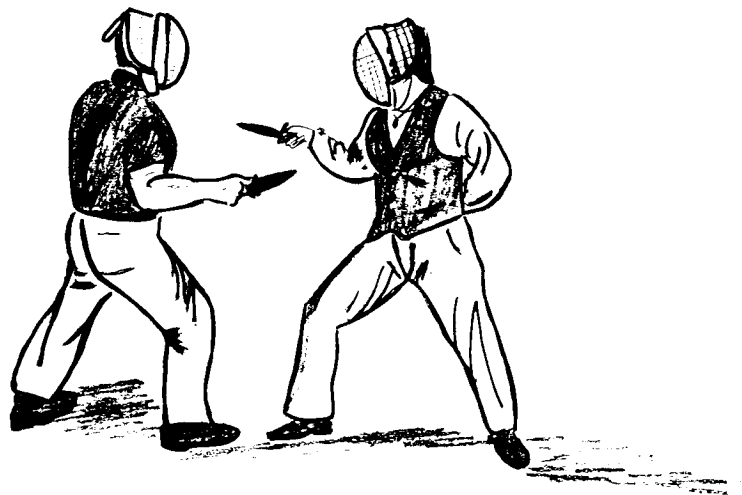


an understanding of movement that you can get no other way.

The best way to spar is by buying a pair of rubber knives made just for the purpose of sparring.

If you are not able to get a pair of rubber knives you can take two combs and tape them up with electrical tape and use them as training knives.

Also, fencing masks or safety goggles are a must to avoid eye injury while sparring.



Sparring with fencing masks.

Now after having donned your face protection, proceed to attach each other with your rubber blades. Try to slice and stab one another. Do what is necessary to score on your opponent.

Use what the Sicilians call “Prima Sangua” or “First Blood.” That is, whoever scores first by cutting or stabbing anywhere on the body automatically wins and the match is over. One point is scored by the winner. Immediately start attacking again. When the blade touches the body again the match stops and another point is scored and so on. Fight to ten or twenty points. You’ll find that this turns out to be good sport, as well as excellent training. Try to spar with as many different opponents as you can. This will diversify your ability tremendously. You will be surprised at the outcome of many of your matches.

Also, if you plant it in your head that these matches are the real thing and not matches at all but a life and death struggle, you will find your weaknesses very quickly and learn what works and what doesn’t work in a real life and death situation.

If you want to really train in an aggressive manner, try fighting with small fingernail files. The reason for using the nail file is to inflict pain without causing serious injury. Take this tool and wearing no protection but eye goggles and bare-chested to the waist start trying to cut and stab one another. You’ll find that the pain is similar to that of a knife cut. But the injury that it leaves is nothing more than a cat scratch. Sometimes the cuts are deep enough to draw blood but the scars

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

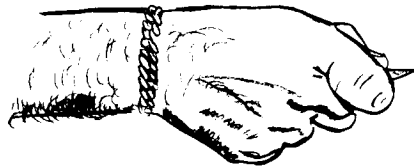
are worn as badges of honor to the more aggressive student.

You will find that the knowledge that pain will occur if your opponent scores will make you more cautious and less likely to take chances.

As young boys, this is the way we were taught by our fathers and uncles. The old men would draw a circle on the pavement with chalk. They would then set up matches between the young teenage boys. Then they'd place bets on the outcome. It was always "Prima Sangua" (First Blood Combat). Sharp nail files were used in place of



**FINGERNAIL FILE.** Fighting with the fingernail file allows realism without the danger of serious injury. Training in this manner insures the development of an aggressive stiletto fighter.



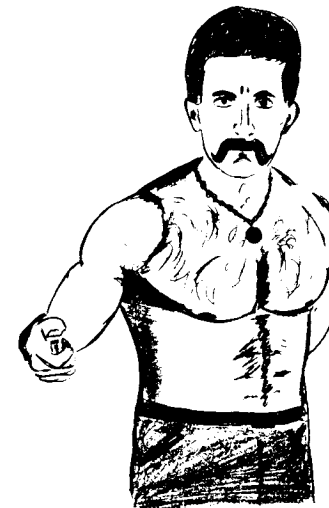
The proper fighting grip for fingernail file.

## Strategy

the stiletto. (The nail file will slice or punch a hole in your skin just like the stiletto will but without serious injury). Also, when you got used to fighting with something as small as a fingernail file, when you really had to use your stiletto with a five inch blade, it would be like reaching out and slicing butter.

So there we were bare-chested and pumping adrenaline ready to slice each other up. With all the old Mustache Petes (old Sicilian men) watching. Let me tell you, if that didn't teach you to fight with a blade nothing would.

We had some pretty good matches. And out of all the matches and real blade fights I have seen



Fighting bare-chested to the waist

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

and been in, I would say that the most aggressive fighter usually won as long as he had some skill and finesse behind him.

So, remember to push the fight. Always move forward and use any unconventional method that enters your mind at the time. Keep in mind that this is life and death and "The essence of life and death combat is to use the means at hand to inflict the maximum amount of damage to your enemy in the shortest amount of time." These are words to live by in a life and death struggle.

Try fighting with the stiletto in one hand and a rolled up magazine in the other. This gives you an incredible advantage. If you do not have anything in your free hand for heavens sake don't hang your free hand out trying to grab your opponent's knife hand. Against a skilled opponent that extended hand becomes a target and you can lose a few fingers that way. Keep your free hand behind your back out of harm's way.

Also, with your hand behind your back you can have a back-up blade that you can come out with in a tight clinch. This can have a surprising and deadly effect. When you're in close come out with your back-up knife which you have concealed behind your back and finish your adversary off.

### **CLOAK AND DAGGER**

Another technique that you can use if you want

## Strategy



Back-up blade can come out with surprising effect.

to keep your free hand extended to ward off oncoming assaults is The Cloak and Dagger Technique. It is a very effective method used by the original rapier fighters. Drape your coat around your free arm. This hides your stiletto from your enemy's view plus it acts as a body shield for yourself, also. Make sure it's heavy enough to absorb the cut.

# THE SICILIAN BLADE

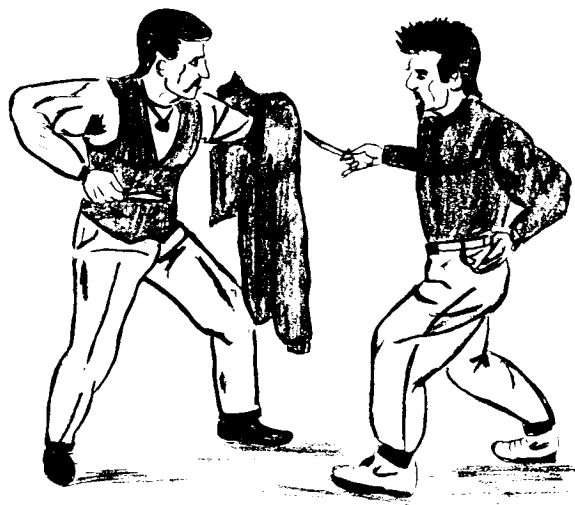
Side view



Front view

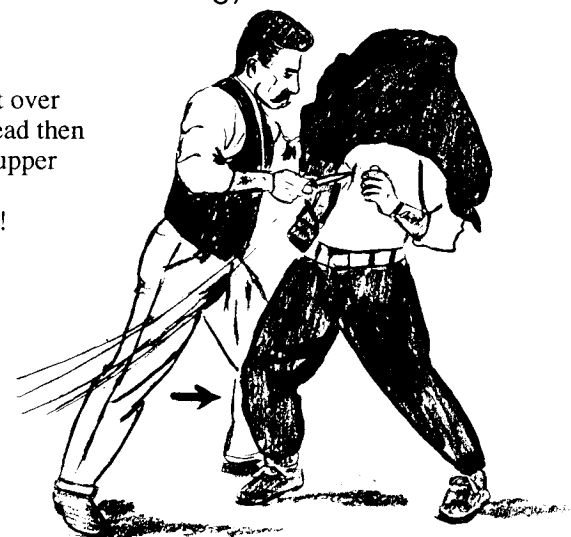


Cloak over arm. Stiletto hidden. Enemy cannot see your blade

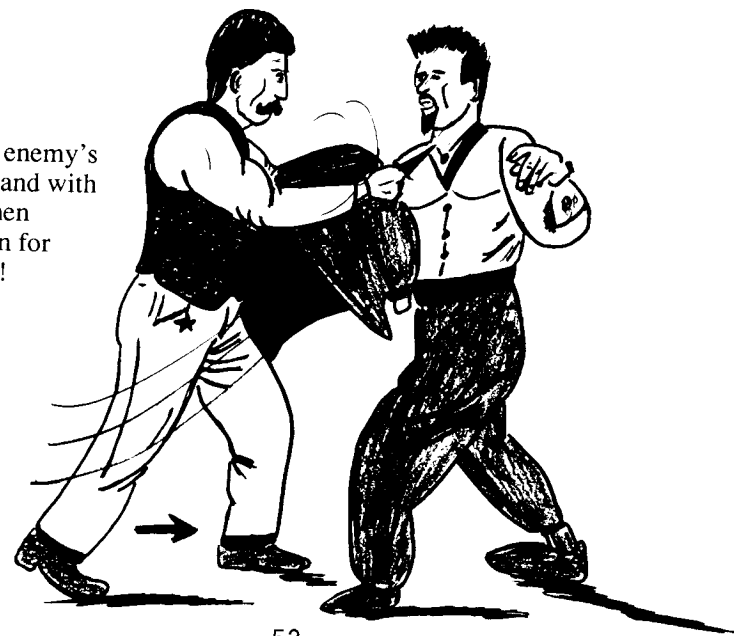


Strategy

Throw coat over enemy's head then deliver an upper stab to his midsection!



Entrap enemy's knife hand with coat, then move in for the kill!



## THE SICILIAN BLADE

Once the adversary's blade is caught in the thick material circle your hand in an outward circle opening him up for a thrust to the chest. Your coat can also be thrown into your opponent's face, literally covering his head. Then an upper stab to his mid-section is possible.

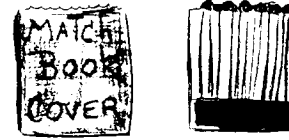
This is one of the most sly maneuvers that you can employ on an adversary. Your blade is entirely hidden. He does not know if you have a blade or not. Nor can he see where it is. With proper strategy and movement the victory is in your hands. Remember to rush in flinging your coat at his face, blinding him to the movement of your steel. Keep attacking relentlessly; ever stabbing. Remember, this is life or death. No-holds-barred knife fighting. Stabbing someone to death is a frightening thing and many men have frozen at the moment of truth. They now lie buried on The Plains of Hesitation. For in having hesitated, they lost their lives.

### REMOVING THE STILETTO FROM THE POCKET

I have found that it is always better to remove the stiletto from your pocket already opened, locked, and ready for action. Not only is it intimidating to your adversary, but it saves precious seconds in a do or die encounter.

Okay, now here's how you make your stiletto

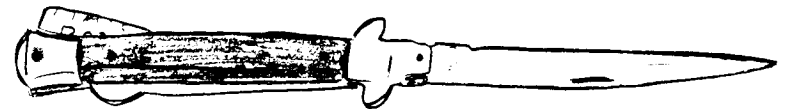
## Strategy



Rip top cover off book of matches.



Fold up top cover.



Place matchbook cover in handle as shown above.

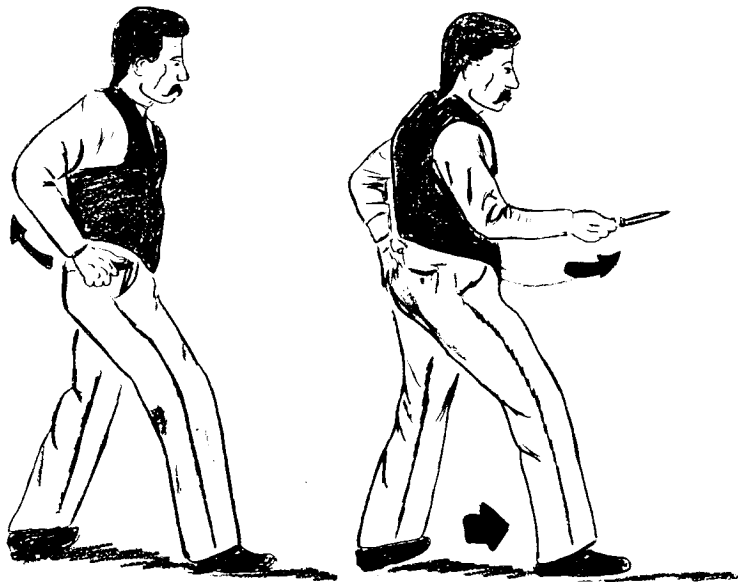


The point of the stiletto is now protruding from the handle.

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

snap out like lightning from your pocket.

- 1) First, take a book of matches and rip off the top cover.
- 2) Secondly, fold up the top cover as shown in the illustration.
- 3) Now push the cover into the end of the stiletto handle. When the blade is closed shut, the tip protrudes out of the end of the handle. This tip is protruding so it can catch onto the top of your pants pocket when you withdraw the stiletto from your pocket. Now with the stiletto set up



Withdraw

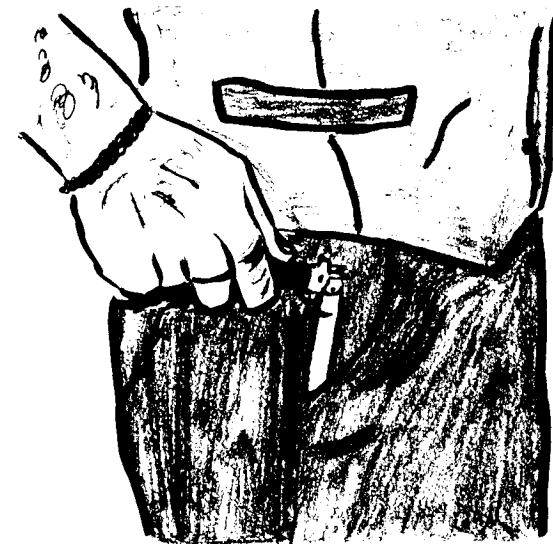
Locked and ready

## Strategy

like this, when you pull your stiletto from your pocket, the tip catches onto your top pant pocket and out she comes locked open and ready for action with a smooth onehanded operation.

### **STILETTO WITHDRAWING FROM PANTS POCKET**

Practice this move over and over until the withdrawal movement is second nature and you will be constantly ready for action.



Stiletto withdrawing from pants pocket.

## DEFENSE TACTICS

Using your wit in a defensive way gives you the edge in a combat situation. Use any weapon at hand along with your stiletto. In this way you are doubly armed and fortified. Here are some examples:

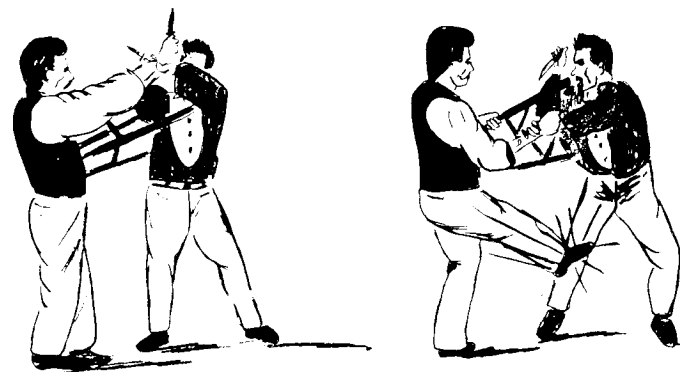
### PICK UP A BAR STOOL AS A DEFENSIVE SHIELD

Pick up a bar stool and hold it in your free hand while keeping your knife hand pointing directly at your attacker. In this position your guard is invulnerable as you advance on your adversary in short steps jabbing the bar stool at his face. When the opportunity presents itself, rush him: pinning him against a wall with the legs of the bar stool. Then stab any area that's open on him.

If your enemy grabs your knife hand while you have him pinned against the wall, kick him in the shins and ankles. Smash his toes with the heels of your shoes. Totally destroy his legs which are his foundation. When he starts crumbling down,



Pick up a bar stool as a defensive shield.

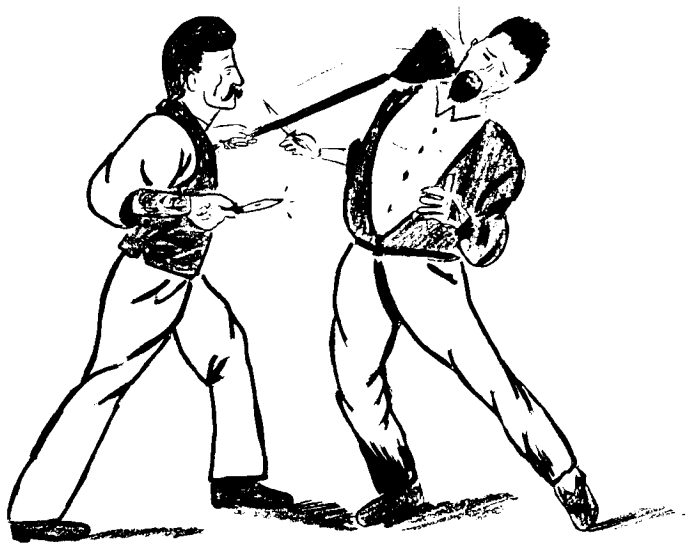


Kick in his legs, taking out his foundation

unleash your arm from his grip and start stabbing any part on him that's open. After he is down, bludgeon him with the bar stool to finish him off. This may seem brutal but remember that we are talking about a life and death confrontation where there is only one winner and that winner **must** be YOU!

### THE BROOM

A broom is a very versatile companion held in the free hand with the blade hand held forward. Again, an invulnerable guard position. Stab the



Stab broom bristles into attacker's eyes.

broom bristles into the attacker's eyes. The bristles dig into the eyes and cause great pain and momentary blindness. At that moment the thrust should be executed to a vulnerable area of your enemy's body.

### GARBAGE CAN LID

A garbage can lid is an excellent shield when confronting an armed assailant. Holding the lid in your forward hand, rush your enemy catching his blade with the cover. Then uppercut into his stomach with your blade.

Remember to close in on your attacker—be aggressive—attack him. When you have something in your free hand, that is the only time you should extend it. Otherwise, keep it behind your back. Many a fool has lost his fingers keeping his free hand extended during a knife fight.

### THE MAGAZINE

One of the best defensive pieces of equipment is a rolled magazine in your free hand; you can block oncoming thrusts with it and follow up with thrusts and slashes of your own. Block his oncoming thrust with a circular block using the magazine. This will leave his chest wide open for you to deliver a powerful lunge-thrust into his exposed chest cavity.

Remember, a knife fight is deadly business.

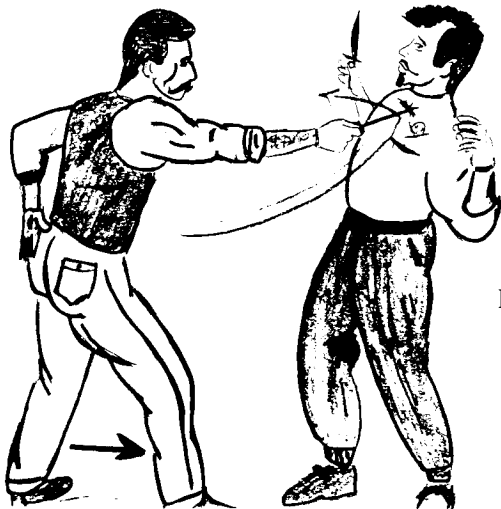


THE SICILIAN BLADE

Smash him with a  
garbage can lid!

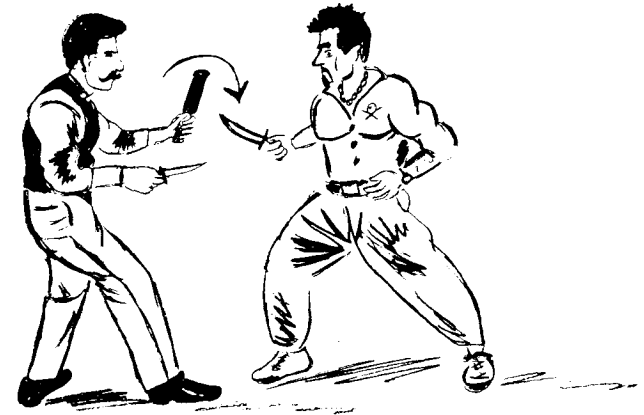


Move in on your enemy *fast!*



Keep attacking!

Defense Tactics



Circle in with magazine!

Hook the arm and  
go for the throat!



Speed, power, and ruthlessness must be total if you intend to walk away alive. Keep in mind that improvisation is the first rule of combat. To use the means at hand to inflict the maximum amount of damage to the enemy in the shortest time possible. Also known as Rapid Fight Termination.

### KICKING TECHNIQUES

Kicking techniques are a very powerful weapon in a knife fight if used properly. As your blade-wielding attacker moves in on you a good, fast, straight kick delivered with the point of the shoe up and under his chin will put a prompt end to the assault. If this kick lands properly and with enough force, a broken neck may be the result of his evil intention.

A sharp, cutting side kick delivered low and to the knees will break his leg and allow you to move in and finish the job the attacker originally started. Low kicks have another advantage. Your attacker cannot see where they are coming from. He just suddenly feels the bone crushing results. When he falls, you should move in with more powerful kicks to his body using the point of your shoe.

Kick him in the chest and under his arms breaking and shattering his ribs. Smash his hands with the heels of your shoes so he cannot



Kick up under chin for rapid fight termination!

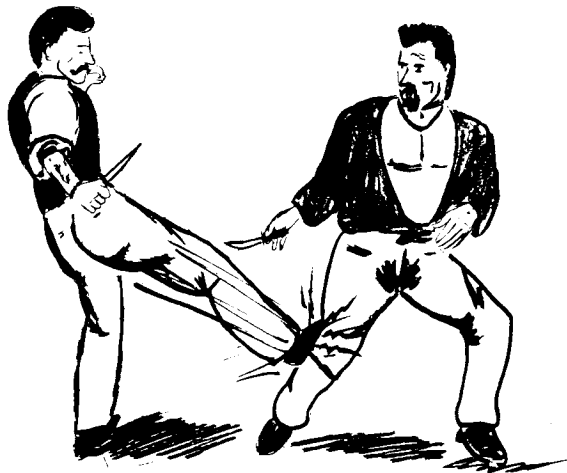
pick up his blade and kill you. In the gravest extremes, use the points of your shoes on his head with powerful kicks. This will not only end the fight but will also end his life.

A fast, spinning back kick delivered high will come up under his blade hand and catch him on the jaw.

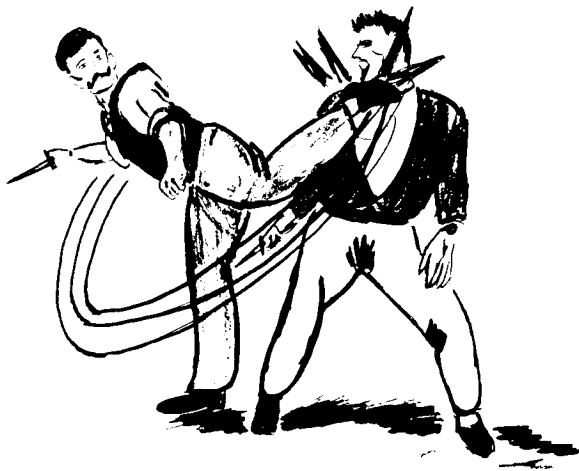
A low, spinning back kick will hit your enemy in the solar plexus or groin area. From that point you should follow up with more deadly techniques.

Notice that all these kicking techniques are delivered with a sturdy dress shoe. Good, strong,

## THE SICILIAN BLADE



Low, sharp kicks to the knees are devastating



Spinning back kick

## Defense Tactics

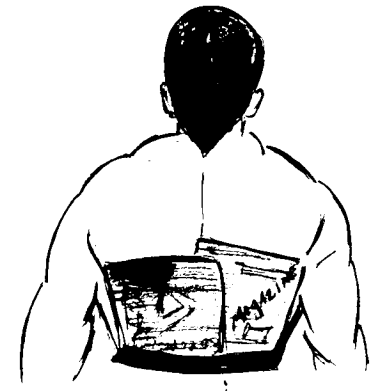
pointy shoes are as much a weapon on the street as anything you can carry. Fast, hard kicks delivered with this type of shoe is equivalent to hitting your enemy with a ball-peen hammer. The destruction is devastating. So, keep this in mind if you intend to use kicking techniques as a part of your defense arsenal.

### **BODY ARMOR**

When you know that you are going to be in a knife duel beforehand and have time to prepare yourself; then it would be a wise move to protect the areas of your body most vulnerable to the slash, thrust or cut of a knife.

Stomach

Kidneys



Stuff magazines into waistband of pants for stomach and kidney protection

**THE AREAS MOST VULNERABLE**

1. Throat
2. Wrist
3. Stomach and Kidneys
4. Groin
5. Heart and Lungs
6. Hands

Okay, let's take it from the top:

1. **The Throat**--Wrap your belt around your neck and secure it by buckling it, then tucking the end in. This prevents your throat from being cut open. Then wrap a scarf around the belt. The scarf adds more protection plus hides the fact that you have a belt wrapped around your neck.
2. **The Wrist**--Strap leather wrist bands to the wrists. This will prevent your wrist from being slashed open. If you can't get leather wrist bands, then wrap black electrical tape thickly around your wrist. This isn't as good as a leather wrist band but will do in a pinch.
3. **The Stomach and Kidneys**--Stuff paperback books into the waistband of your pants. A thick magazine will also do. This will stop the most powerful thrust to your stomach or kidneys.
4. **The Groin**--An athletic cup is your best bet here. If one is not available, stuff gloves or even newspaper between your legs.

5. **The Heart and Lungs**—A big, metal serving platter will do an excellent job in protecting your chest and lung area.
6. **Hands**--Leather driving gloves are the best bet for hand protection. They also allow for an excellent grip on the stiletto's handle.

Now after you're all set up with your body armor, you should put a heavy leather jacket over the whole thing and you're ready for action.

In the summer when heavy clothing is not suitable, you should at least use leather wristbands and a bandanna around your neck. A leather vest is also advisable and traditional in a stiletto duel.

In Sicily, leather caps are often worn on the head. When a stiletto fight erupts, the hat is thrown in the adversary's face blinding him for a moment. Then the deadly thrust is delivered. The leather cap can also be held in the free hand waiting to encircle and trap your enemy's blade. The thick leather of the cap also serves as a protection for the free parrying hand.

In any case, you should use as much body protection as you can procure if there is time for preparation.

## INDRAGA MANO (Hidden Hand)

Indraga Mano or hidden hand techniques are the most deadly because the surprise is so total—the attack so sudden—that there is no time for defense on the attacker's part. The blade is totally hidden from view. The attacker moves in on you and before he realizes what has happened, he is cut to the bone. A second move punctures a vital organ. Within two seconds he is mortally wounded and you just move on your way.

### THE BASIC INDRAGA

The Basic Indraga movement is to hold the blade up the side of your wrist. Now, cut upward—now, stab downward.

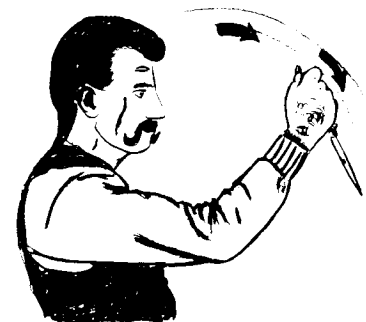
### INDRAGA MANO (HIDDEN HAND)

When the stiletto is hidden up the back of your arm, your attacker cannot see your blade while you're facing him.

Indraga Mano (Hidden Hand)



FRONT VIEW



REAR VIEW



Front view showing knife in right hand. Rear view showing hidden

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

With your hand in your pocket, your blade open you are ready for any variation of attack and defense movements. Your enemy cannot see your blade as you walk nonchalantly by. When he puts out his hand to stop you, you immediately side-step and slice his arm with an upward slash as your stiletto leaves your pocket. Now, turn your body around and thrust backwards and upwards into his chest cavity. (See illustrations.) This movement must be done with blinding speed and NO hesitation. As with all Indraga Movements the surprise is total and effective.

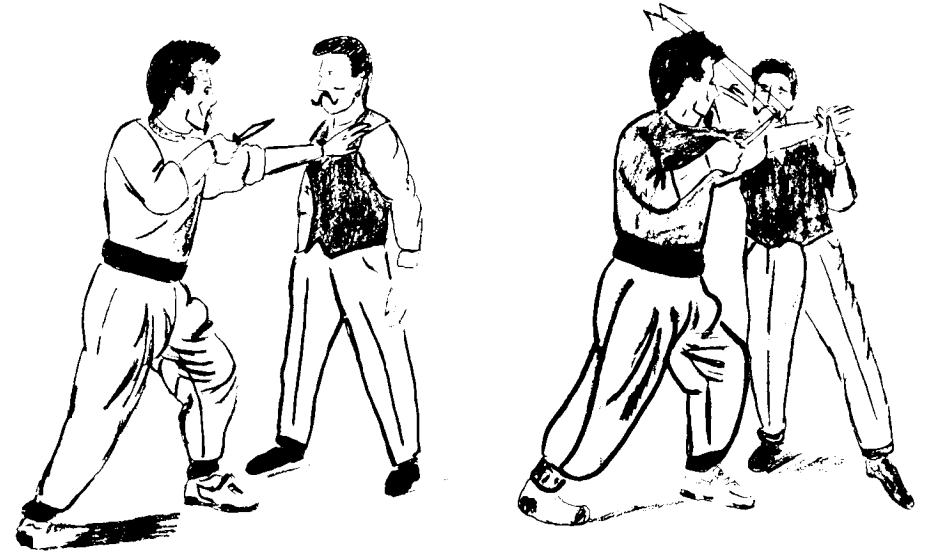


Hand placed in pocket with blade open and ready

### **KNIFE IN MAGAZINE TECHNIQUE**

One particularly deadly and innocuous technique is to use a rolled up magazine with your stiletto hidden inside. Your attacker thinks that you're defending yourself with a rolled up

## Indraga Mano (Hidden Hand)



Your blade open and ready in your pocket.

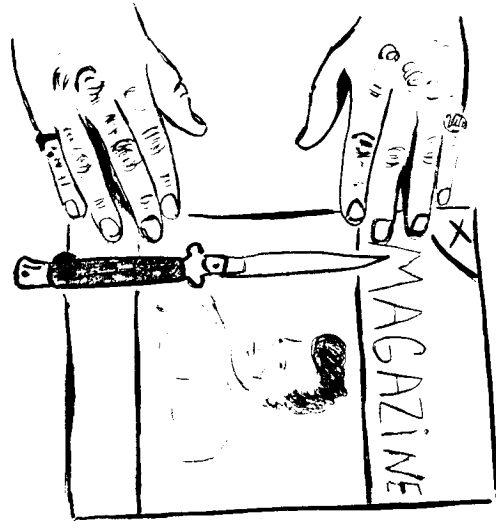
Side-step and slash upward.



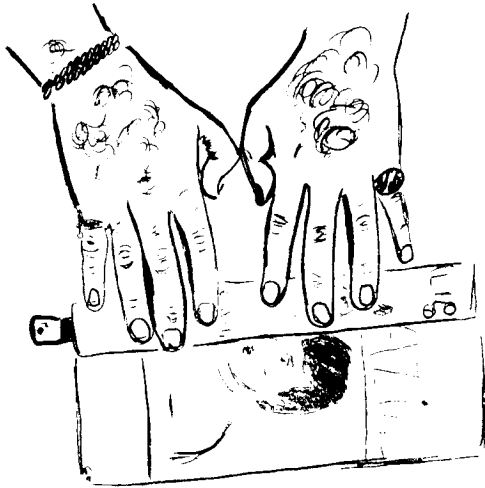
Turn body around and thrust back and upwards into his chest

## THE SICILIAN BLADE

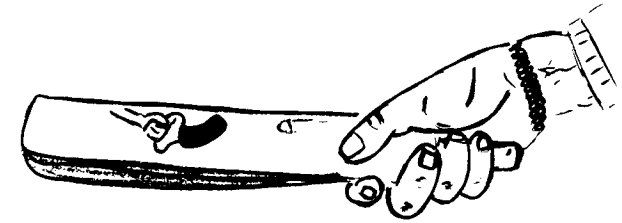
magazine. Then when he pulls it away from you, he's facing deadly steel.



Rolling up knife in magazine



## Indraga Mano (Hidden Hand)



The end of the stiletto is protruding from inside of the magazine. Your last two fingers are gripping the pommel of your stiletto. As he pulls the magazine away, it reveals deadly steel.



## MENTAL STRATEGY

When two strong men face each other with razor sharp blades, the outcome is not for the weak of heart. It means blade against blade, then blade against flesh, then Death!

You're walking alone or with your loved ones on a dark city street. While getting into your car, you hear footsteps. You look up from the car door. Two muggers come walking at you with knives in their hands. "Hey, man, you got money?" They ask moving closer in on you.

Moving into action you snap your stiletto out of your pocket and spring into a Guardian Position. The two hoods slow their advance as they realize that before them is no frightened mama's boy but a determined fighting man armed with a deadly stiletto, its point aimed at their throats.

Belief in yourself and your skill with your stiletto is your primary mental attack. A lot of your attacker's zeal will drain from him when he sees you place yourself in a strong fighting stance and defy him. He will halt in his steps. This was

something he hadn't expected. He wanted an easy mark. Now he's facing a buzz saw. You have won the first part of your mental duel.

Now, not moving from your stance, a good tactic is to start goading him (them), taunting, insulting. Speaking to him (them), "Come on, let's go. Now's as good a time as any to die. Come on, let's fight." Be determined—rallying your spirit to cut your enemy. Always holding your ground, your steady position, your honor.

Nine times out of ten, your attacker or attackers will back off and that will be the end of it. A good, strong stance has deterred many a would be attacker—being they are cowards at heart. An old Sicilian proverb says, "Call a coward to honor and he's left with nothing."

Now, if he does decide to become aggressive and does not back off, you should advance to your nearest attacker, your blade ever at his throat. He has both of his hands out in front of him and in his right hand he's holding a knife. His extended hands are your first targets. You spring at him with a hard fast cut to his hands. You snap back to your Guardian Stance. You see his knife fall to the street along with a couple of his fingers. Your stunned attacker stares in shock at his severed bleeding hand.

Immediately, you deliver a thrust to your attacker's neck. He chokes and throws his hands



over his pierced throat. You snap back to your Guardian Stance. Your second enemy is moving in on you from your right. He is now within do or die range and he is going to kill you. He charges straight at you with an off-balanced thrust. You step aside and slash open his entire left side with one slash of your stiletto blade. The blade went in so deep it is almost wrenched from your hand. His body moves past you holding his slashed side. You turn facing both mortally-wounded adversaries. They flee from you or fall where they stand; lying where they intended to leave you.

You see, practicing with your stiletto is one thing. But when you're eyeball to eyeball (en *quattrocchi*) with an attacker armed with deadly steel it's a whole other story. Everything you do will be for the purpose of cutting your enemy. Because an honorable man avoids confrontation unless there is direct danger to himself or those it is within his realm to defend, he does not initiate violent confrontations. However, if someone else initiates a violent confrontation and there is no way around it, the best way to defend yourself is to reverse the attack by attacking the attacker. Remember, you did not choose the attacker—he chose you. He wants something you have and he intends to take it from you by force!

As soon as you realize that there is no other way to get away from the attack, the most effective

way to eliminate the threat is to seize the moment, reverse the situation, and immediately attack *him*. Then keep going after him until he is unable to continue attacking any longer. This is the most important lesson that I can teach you, to take the initiative, reverse the attack.

When you have done everything you possibly can to avoid a confrontation, when you see that this IS going to come to violence, reverse the situation and attack immediately. This is very important. This way you direct the flow of the fight.

The other way you are your attacker's victim and he directs the course the action will take. If you hesitate for even a second, you have given your assailant the chance to control the attack. Also, your hesitation shows your enemy that you're afraid. (Being afraid is okay; everyone feels fear) but don't let your attacker know it. All confrontations are mental ones so it's important for you to establish dominance from the very beginning.

So, after you have taken your stance and shown the steel of your stiletto, if your attacker is still game, try and use your surroundings. Maneuver him into a vulnerable position. Back him into some garbage cans or circle him off a curb so he can lose his balance. Talk to him while aiming your blade at him. Laugh at him, call him insult-

ing names to egg him on. Try to get him to lose his temper, goad him to fight. All the while point your blade at him, advancing, circling. What you want to do is to create fear in *him*. He made the wrong move attacking you. Now, take the moment and attack him—slashing, thrusting, cutting every opening you see on him. This is not what he expected. He wanted an easy score; an exciting time at your expense. But instead he sees the honorable man standing his ground and attacking him savagely. He will quit his evil intention and flee like the coward he is.

Remember, *quattroocchi*—four eyes, eyeball to eyeball. This is even more important in the street than when sparring with the stilettos. You must look directly into your opponent's eyes (en *quattroocchi*) and say with your own eyes, "You pig, at this moment you will die." That, my student, may be all it will take.

If you do attack—attack with vigor, calling upon your inner strength. Think of your honor, have no fear. Follow up your attacks one after another, advance, advance, cutting, slashing, thrusting. Keep looking into his eyes with fire burning in your own. All the while your stiletto should be moving in at him. Spit in his face, kick gravel at him. Let your eyes tell him, "You have dealt with the wrong man. Now, you are going to die."

Now, let's think for a moment, once you have

started your attack, when do you stop? When is your defense complete? The answer is: When your enemy can no longer physically continue his attack on you. If he runs away he is ending the attack by choice. You should let him escape. He can no longer hurt you. However, if he remains, as long as he can stand and move, he is capable of killing you or your loved ones. So, make sure that he is incapable of standing or moving enough to continue to fight. Remember, *he* not you made this encounter necessary. You did everything you could to avoid the situation before you drew your stiletto. There is only one rule in a life and death encounter and that rule is, WIN.

Now, listen to a little acquired wisdom. The best defense against an armed assailant is to stay away from places where you might come into contact with armed aggression. If you know that a certain neighborhood is bad; stay out of it (if you can help it). If you know that a certain establishment is riotous; stay away from it. If you see an assault coming on; leave. If someone insults you; walk away.

Because if you pull your stiletto and injure another person for frivolous macho pride you cannot win. If the other person defeats you—you lose, you're dead. If you kill or injure another person for any reason other than defense of yourself and or loved ones, you can be sure that

you will be arrested and sentenced for having taken another's life. If you pull your stiletto out under frivolous circumstances no matter how the fight turns out, you lose. Only when you are faced with an attacker holding a weapon and there is no possible means of escape; then is the time to attack with your own lethal weapon.

I was taught from my earliest youth: "When a person comes upon you with a deadly weapon which he intends to use on you; KILL HIM!"

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## PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES

The average American man does not engage in knife duels as a matter of course, but in Sicily (the land that time forgot) and the families that come from that ancient land, the stiletto is still used.

The premise given in most modern knife fighting books is that if you strike swift and sure your enemy is going to fall to the ground dead. That is just not so. I have personally seen many a knife duel and I have never seen a strong man go down from a single blade thrust. It just does not happen that way.

The only way you are going to drop your enemy on the first strike is to cut his throat, step back and watch him choke to death on his own blood. Even then, he doesn't stay still and tends to thrash around in a panic. He might do any number of unexpected things such as charging you in desperation.

So don't take these modern knife fighting techniques too seriously. The system I'm teaching you is as old as the Sicilian countryside itself, taken

from a land where the main civilian weapon is still the blade.

Let me give you some examples of what really happens. In a small neighborhood piazza in Palermo, a fight erupted over the honor of a young man's sister. The man in question was pinned against a wall with an outdoor cafe chair and stabbed in the chest three times. All three times the blade sunk into his chest up to the hilt. None of these strikes stopped him. Nor did he turn and flee. He managed under his own power to take out his own stiletto and cut his enemy's face and neck open until they were both spitting blood like fountains. He also ran four blocks to a street clinic while the man with the neck wound bled to death on the street.

In another instance, a sixteen-year-old boy jumped a local mafioso in the middle of a religious feast. The youth must have hit hard and deep because the mafioso was slipping around in a pool of his own blood while holding a cafe chair out in front of him for protection. The police finally broke the fight up.

At that same feast, a young man was set upon by four others with stilettos. He received over twenty stab and slash wounds to his body.

In another instance, a man was jumped by three brothers seeking vengeance for their sister's dishonor. He was able to get out his own stiletto

and do some slicing of his own. Still, he was cut up pretty badly himself and was so full of blood he looked like someone threw a can of red paint on him.

Now, in all of the situations that I have described, all of the men that were knifed lived with the exception of the man in the first instance who had his face and throat slashed open. He was also run completely through his chest and left lung. Still, he managed to run—not walk—run, mind you, over three city blocks; that's about one hundred and fifty yards before he collapsed and died.

Remember, if your adversary is pumping adrenalin, the stabs and slashes may not even be felt and if he is armed with his own blade—watch out!

Here are a few tips to keep in mind if you are facing someone blade to blade. Keep stabbing, slashing and thrusting. Let your adversary know that as long as he stays around he is going to be cut up. Reverse the attack and take the initiative.

Go for the neck, arms and stomach or any of the other vital points mentioned earlier.

Always leave a way of escape for your adversary. If you trap him or corner him leaving him no way out except death, you'll have a crazed lunatic on your hands. When a person gets cut open and sees a good amount of his life's blood

spitting out of his body, his first reaction is to run. His second reaction is to go crazy and charge you, so leave him a way of escape.

The ability to use killer instinct appropriately is an essential stepping stone on the path to being at peace with yourself. Only after fear has been conquered may man honestly contemplate pacifism without running the risk of patronizing himself through endless rationalization.

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