

Seeking knife advice?

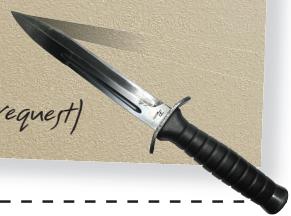
Popular Blitz columnist William Lye, barrister and writer of our 'Lye's Law' column, recently received this email from a reader:

Hi William,

I enjoy reading your articles in Blitz and was wondering about the following scenario:

If I carry a knife for self-defence then I'm breaking the law. If I carry an apple with me and a knife to cut it up, am I breaking the law? I only ask as I do this going to work every day and was wondering if I was doing something illegal. If someone attacked me going to work with a weapon I could use the knife to defend myself but it is not the reason I have it. Only hypothetical, as I have never had any trouble on my bus.

Thanks,
(name withheld by request)



William's response:

As for your query, I've written several columns on weapons, and would refer you to the December 2005 column of Lye's Law titled 'Know Knives'.

Carrying a knife per se in a public place requires a lawful excuse, which could be for work (i.e. as a butcher, tradesman, etc). However, carrying a knife for self-defence will not be considered as having a lawful excuse. Of course, if you use a balsong to cut your apple, you have immediately committed an offence if you do not have a licence to own one, as a balsong is a prohibited weapon. Carrying a knife to a school environment also attracts strict liability unless you are on the premises legitimately doing some authorised work.

If your knife is a standard pocket-knife, I think common sense would prevail when queried by the authorities. However, if you have a hunting knife or some kind of

tactical or combative blade then the response might be different. Remember, if you are carrying a \$400 blade just to cut an apple, how likely is that story? If you are carrying a small kitchen knife to do so, perhaps it is more likely. So, ultimately, the answer will be that it depends...

As for using your knife (whatever it looks like) to defend yourself, well, that's something I cannot really answer you. Too many variables, but the principles outlined in my article and my response here might just give you enough clues that perhaps you might like to consider a different way of defending yourself, and train to do so without the need to rely on bladed weapons. In the end, the hands and feet are also 'deadly weapons' (see my September 2004 Lye's Law column). Hope this helps.

Regards

William

* Lye's Law will return next issue

Jury's out on judo star

Blind Paralympic judo gold medallist Anthony Clarke has accused the Oceania Judo Union of costing him a spot on the Australian judo team for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, by banning him from their 2005 World Tournament. According to an article in *The Advertiser*, Clarke launched action against the organisation in the Federal Magistrates Court in December last year.

He claims that an email from the union excluded him from its 2005 World Tournament — an Olympic qualifying tournament — because of his disability. Clarke says the email breaches the *Disability Discrimination Act* (1975), the paper reports.

He is asking the court to reprimand the OJU and award him \$31,440 in compensation.



Will (in white pants) with Girdham and the seminar group

John Will takes street grappling to Sydney

Geelong-based Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and shootfighting instructor John B. Will presented his 'Grappling for Life' seminar for 25 people at Sydney's Alexandria Town Hall on 30 March.

The focus of the three-hour seminar was to bridge the gap between the attending martial artists' sport-fighting skills — especially in regards to grappling — and the skills needed for street survival. Will covered worst-case ground scenarios and dominant positions, as well as the 'shell' method of covering against an attack, escapes from under a mounted opponent, sweeps from guard and arm-bars from the mount.

"John's teaching style provides a structure where the moves were broken down into easily understood stages, with easily retained terminology," said Ray Floro, head of Floro Fighting Systems. "What I liked about John's approach is that he did not provide the be-all, end-all solution. Instead, he gave strategies that fill in the many pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of fighting. What John taught can be easily supplemented with other systems."

Floro's sentiments were echoed by seminar organiser Clive Girdham and several other attendees who posted on the *Blitz* forum at www.sportzblitz.net.

"[It was] a great session with John. He truly is a world-class instructor," wrote Girdham.