

ROOM CLEARING 101: CQB TACTICS

SUREFIRE

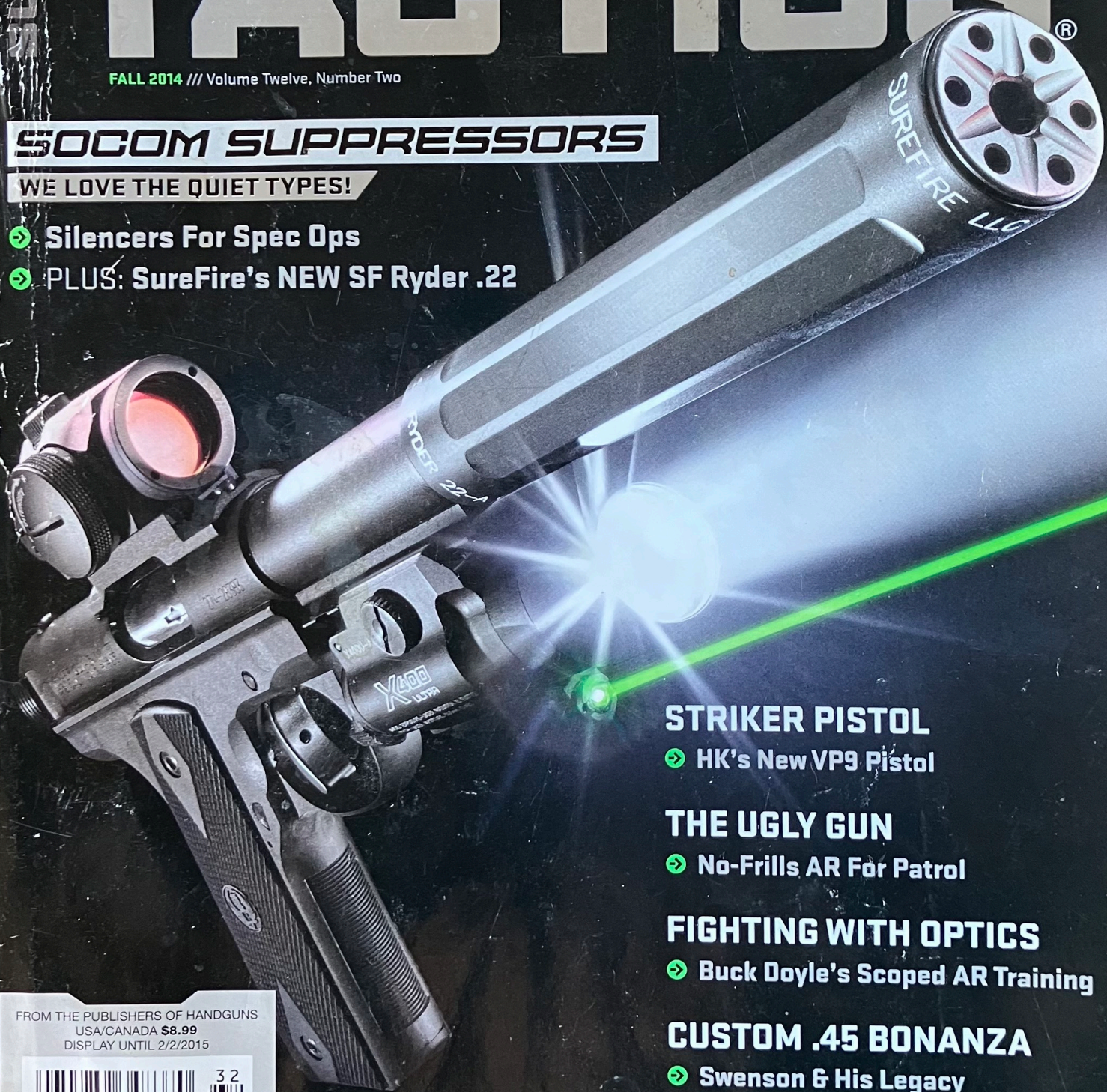
# COMBAT TACTICS

FALL 2014 /// Volume Twelve, Number Two

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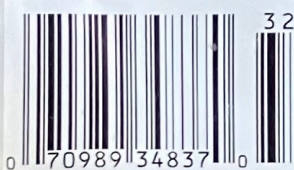
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# ROOM CLEARING 101

**T**he guiding principle in CQB is always to increase the odds of winning the gunfight. You do this in two ways: with tactics and with equipment. Here we focus on tactics in the most fundamental of CQB procedures—how to clear a room.

Another guiding principle of CQB is that you always want to increase your ability to read the threat and to apply the proper level of force.

Using common sense, you want to minimize your exposure when you come around corners. If you think of a multi-room building, you could be dealing with hundreds of corners. The ultimate goal is to take every corner leading with just an eyeball and a gun barrel. This first photo depicts the best position to be in when going around a corner and coming into contact with a possible threat.

This sequence of diagrams is a basic concept of how to clear a room from an open door in low-light conditions.



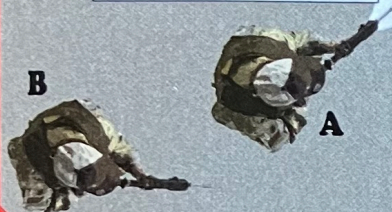
**HOW TO PIE A DOOR, WORK A CORNER, CLEAR THE DARK HOLES. AS TOLD BY THE FORMER NAVY SEAL WHO DEVELOPED LOW-LIGHT COMBATIVE TACTICS.**





# 1

**Right-handed corner  
Right-handed shoulder  
'A' lights up far corner  
'B' no light**



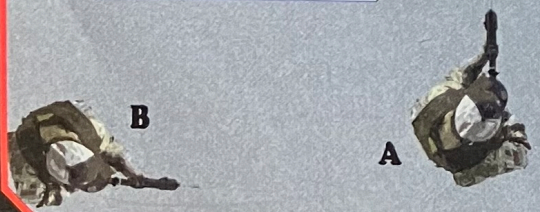
🔴 You can start clearing the room before you get to the doorway. You begin to clear from as far a way as you can. When you get to the doorway, Operator A can clear 40 to 50 percent of the room by flashing his light into the room, using his light in a tactical momentary-on mode. How long you keep it on depends on what you're looking at.

If a bad guy pops up and shoots at you, you have several choices—freak out, drop your gun and scream like a girl, or shoot back. If there's an innocent bystander, talk them out of the room or whatever your SOPs call for. The key is that you are dealing with this sector of the room only.

When you are ready to move, turn your light off. Now Operator A slips across the doorway.

# 2

**Lights off  
'A' slides to the opposite side of the door**



🔴 As you slip across the doorway, stay in your shooting platform, always expecting to be engaged. You must also be as quiet as possible moving across the door way.

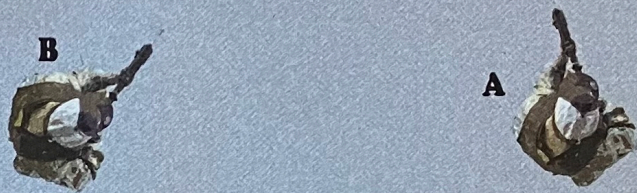
Operator B is now in position to observe the room, but if he turns his light on too soon, he can backlight his buddy while he's sliding across the doorway. Bad guys actually like this to happen, so Operator B must wait for Operator A to get into position.



When facing a doorway, you are actually facing two corners, so Operator A switches his weapon from his right shoulder to his left, and Operator B slides up to the doorway and takes the right-hand side of the room. This enables the team to have two guns in the doorway.

3

Lights off  
'A' transitions weapon to left hand shoulder  
'B' sets up on the left-hand side of the door



Once Operator A gets his weapon set in his left shoulder, he slides up to the corner and turns on his light to check out the other side of the room.

In just two flashes of the light, he has cleared 80 to 90 percent of the room. The principle applied here is "Light and Move."

With lots of practice, you can get very good at remembering what you see in just a quick flash of light.

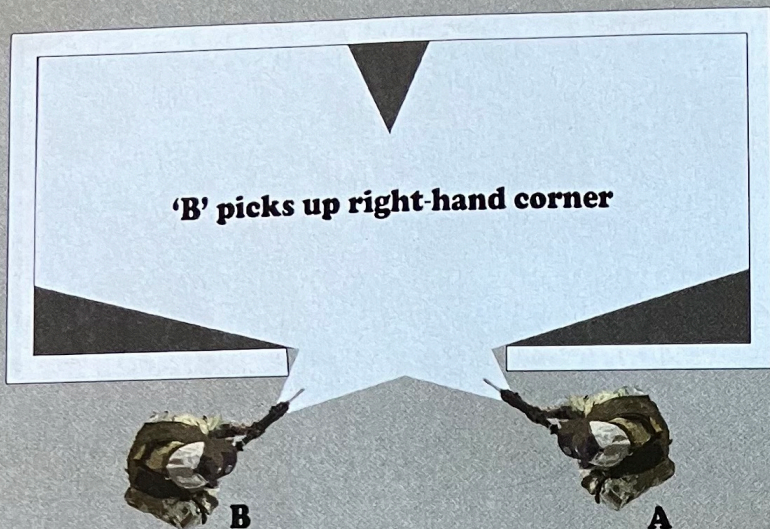
Operator B also reads off A's light because he has shown him where the doorway is and that 90 percent of the room is clear. He also knows exactly where Operator A is positioned.

4

'A' weapon in left shoulder  
Clears far left corner  
'B' sets up to clear right-hand corner  
Weapon in right shoulder

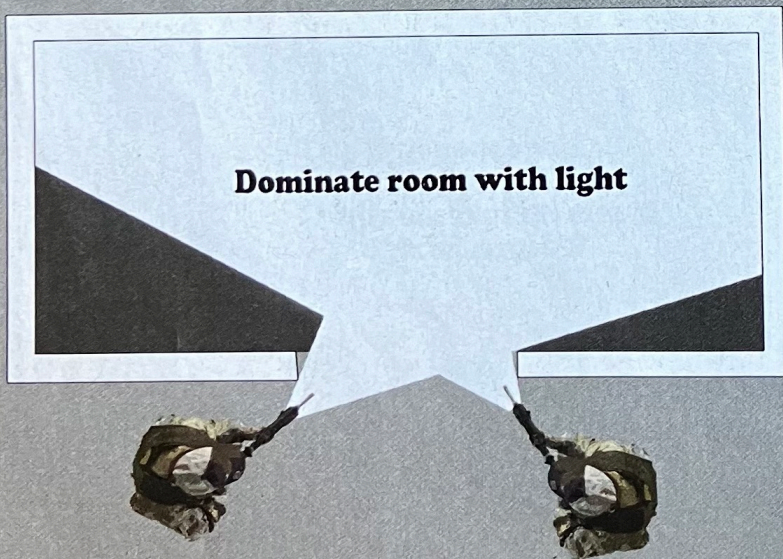




**5****'B' picks up right-hand corner**

At this point, both operators can turn on their lights and get a good look at the room layout. How long they keep their lights on depends on how complicated things are in the room. If a bad guy shoots at them, one operator can freak out, throw his weapon in the air, and run while the other calls 911— or they can both shoot back.

The key here is that they must remain very small targets for the bad guy to shoot at. The more of your body you hang out, the bigger the target for the threat.

**6****Dominate room with light**

I like to clear a room according to the way the room is set up, or as I put it to my students, "fight the room the way it lays."

As both operators look at their sectors, they are figuring out their next move. This is a classic moment from the OODA Loop in which the operators are Observing and Orienting and now must Decide how to Act. But this needs to be done quickly and, at its best, without talking.

Which brings us to another principle that applies here—the more you say, the less you do.

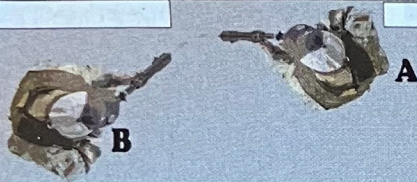
You can stand in the doorway and yak all day, which, over the years, I have found to be basically worthless. Also, bad guys can track your movements throughout the house by listening to you yak. We have found that the flip-side of that principle works, too—the less you say, the more you do.

Remember, it is not just about this room; it's also about what's in the next room.



**7**

Lights off  
 'A' sets up to clear left deep corner

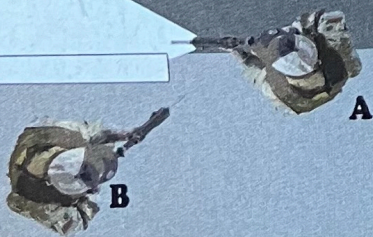


After the two operators have cleared the center of the room, the only parts left unseen are the two "deep corners" on the right and left sides of the door. This is a very common place for bad guys to hide. Over the years, I've found that, if you run into a room, you have a 50 percent chance of guessing right (as to which of the deep corners holds a threat), and even if you do guess right, you and the bad guy engage each other at the same time. For me, with my luck, it's more like an 80-20 chance that I will guess wrong and get shot in the back.

So the key to this diagram is that Operator A must set up to execute a "quick peek" into the left-hand corner, with his weapon on his right shoulder.

**8**

'A' quick peeks left deep corner  
 Weapon in right shoulder



Here is a great example of a basic tactical truth—action is faster than reaction. Operator A will pop in and take a "quick peek" into the left-hand corner and instantly pop his head back to keep from getting shot in the back of the head, if the threat is in the other deep corner.

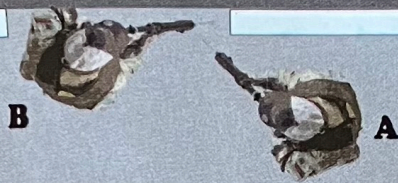
If the corner is clear, great. But if there is a threat, you have to identify the threat level in a quarter of a second and decide what you're going to do about it.

When you pop back out of the doorway, do it quickly. Then Operator B is in position to stop a bad guy coming out to the right-hand corner to try and get a shot at you.



# 9

**'B' sets up to clear deep right corner  
Weapon in left shoulder  
'A' needs to point weapon at floor**

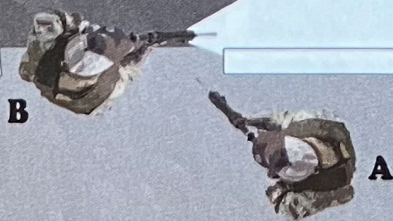


🔴 Now it's Operator B's turn to do something. Up until now, he's been watching Operator A do all of the work. Now Operator B sets up with his weapon to his left shoulder, in the doorway to clear the deep right side of the room.

Operator A steps out of his way and covers him in the doorway. The key here is speed. Also, you must present a very small target for the bad guy to engage. Remember, the only parts that should protrude around a corner are your muzzle and your eye. Anything else is just a freebie for the bad guy.

# 10

**'B' quick peeks right deep corner**



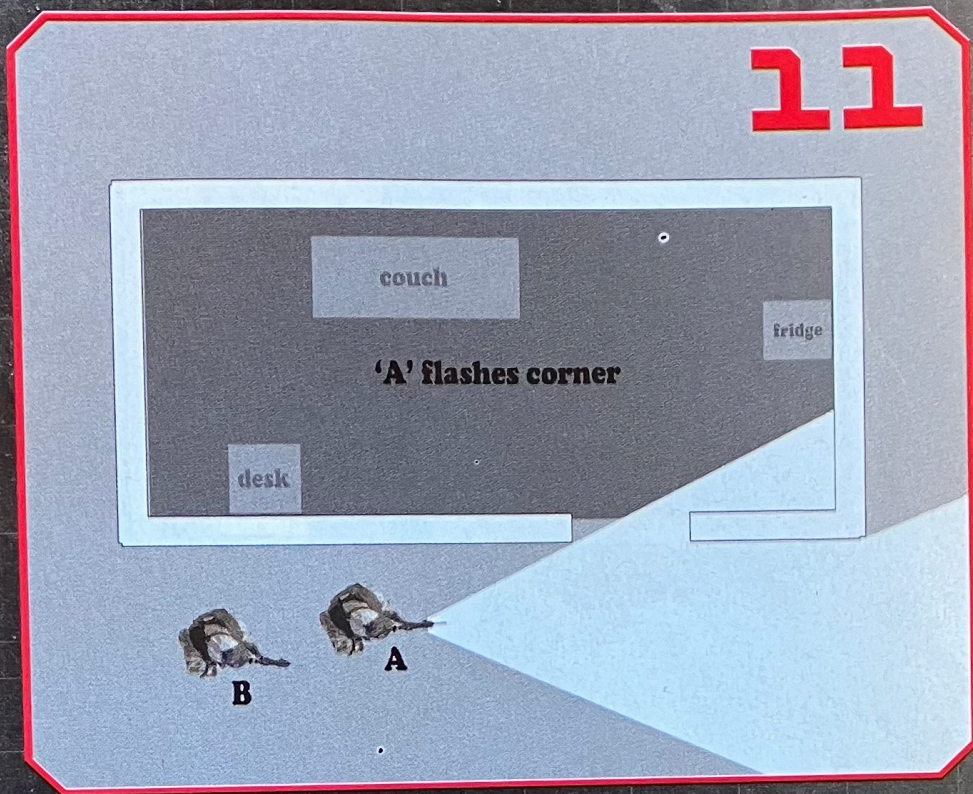
🔴 At this point, Operator B pops in quickly and clears the right-hand side of the room and quickly analyzes the situation in that corner. Once that corner is clear, the team can enter the room.

The whole room-clearing sequence can be done in 10 to 15 seconds with practice. The fact remains that, in COB, you can do everything right and still get shot.

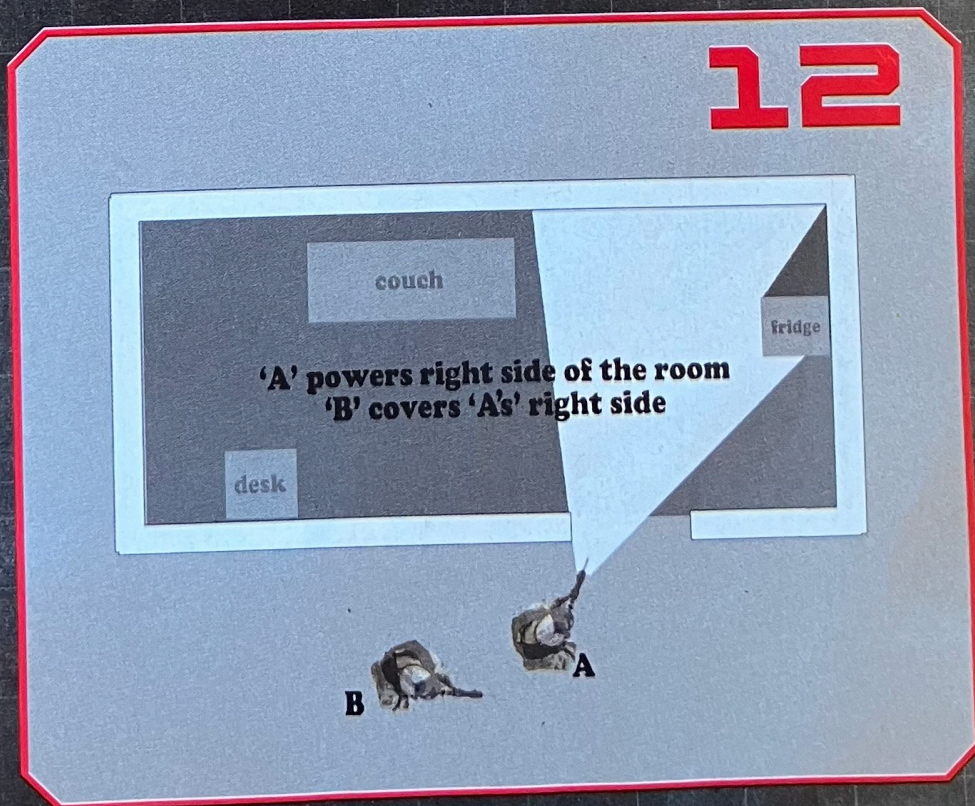


• The operators are moving toward the room in a position from which both shooters can cover down the hallway. This is much more effective than stacking Operator B behind Operator A.

Operator A starts clearing the room from a distance and, right now, is clearing a small part of the room.

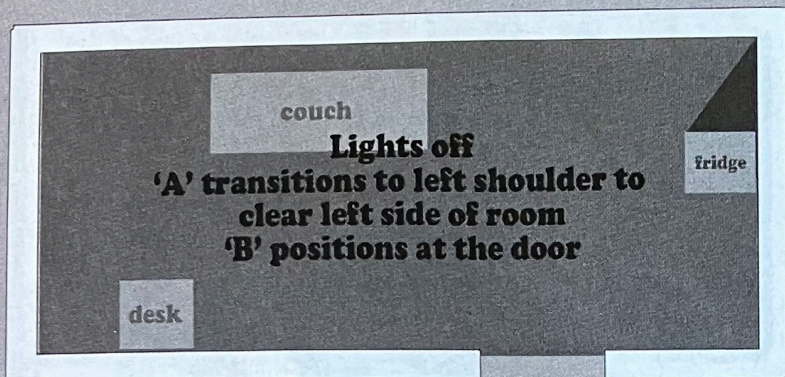


• Operator A clears about 40 percent of the room with a flash of light and sees a refrigerator up against the wall.



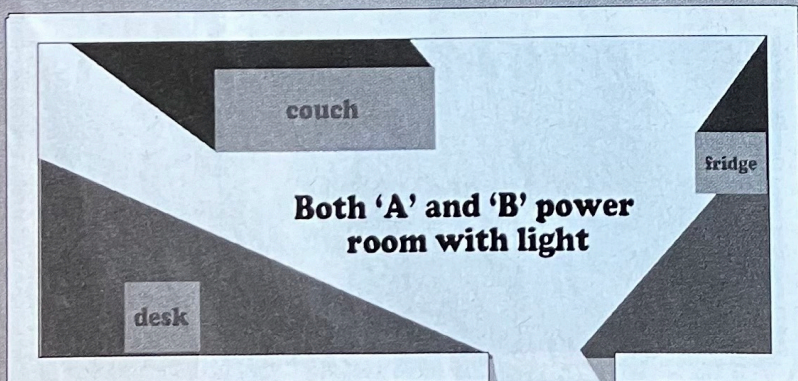


# 13



➤ Operator A turns his light off and slides across the doorway, transitioning his weapon to his left shoulder.

# 14



➤ Both operators light up the room and power their sectors with light.

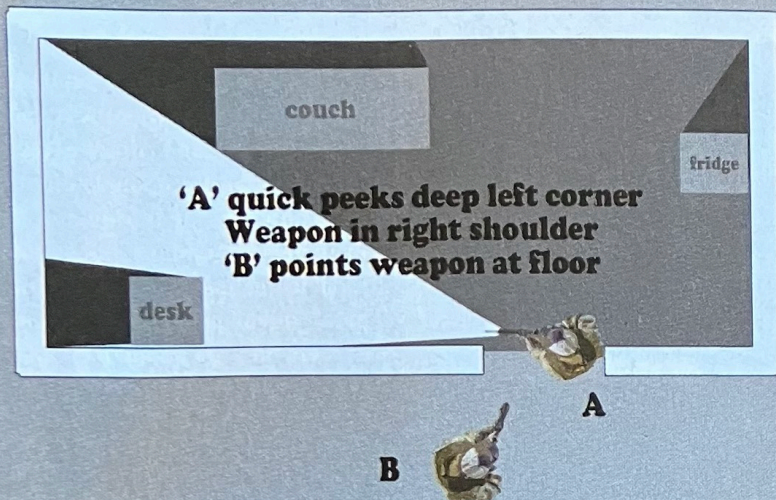
Operator A sees a couch now and knows which areas are not clear.

Operator B sees the refrigerator on the right side and knows the back side is not clear. Operator B should also pie the room to see the couch.

They now must clear the deep corners on the left and right.

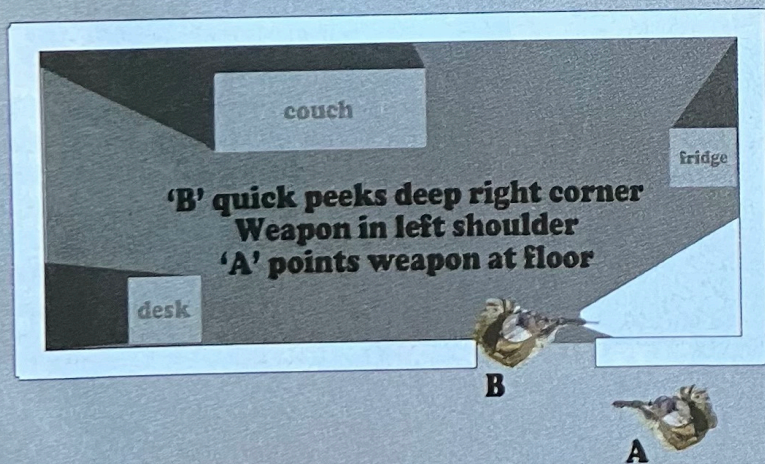


# 15



Operator A clears the left-hand deep corner quickly and sees a desk in the corner while Operator B covers his movement. At this point, Operator A has to pop out of the doorway quickly and remember where the obstacles are in the room.

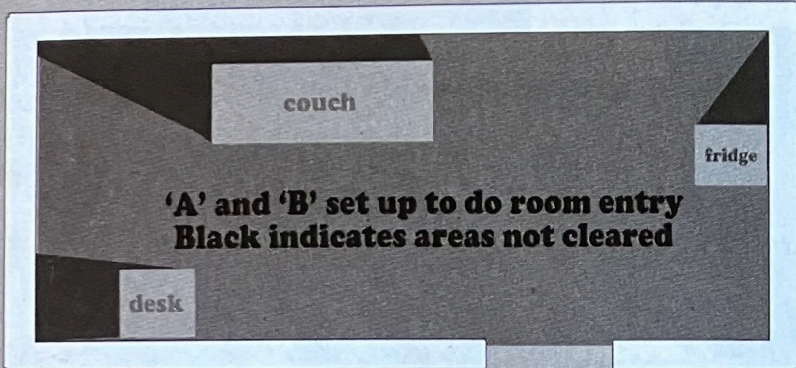
# 16



Because the door is closed to the right side of the room, Operator B can make a very easy and quick peek into the deep right corner.

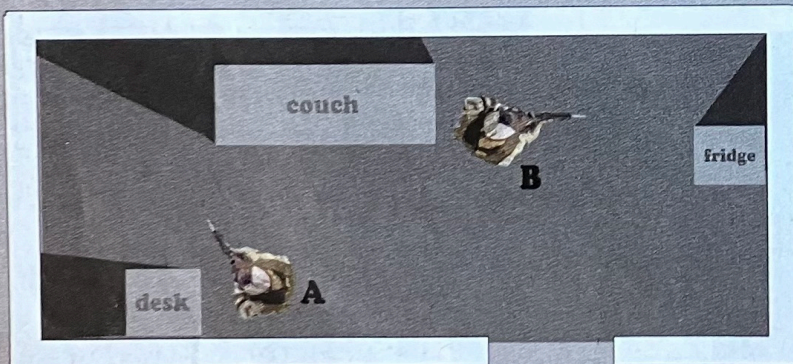


# 17



Both Operators now set up to make the next move. Operator A is going to clear the left-hand corner of the couch, and Operator B is going to clear the left-hand corner of the refrigerator. They can execute another flash of light into the room to get another look to “paint their path” and to gauge the distance to the corners they are going to clear.

# 18



'A' moves to target the couch  
'B' moves to target fridge and  
waits for 'A' to light first

In the dark, they quietly move into the room, with Operator A going first. They must remember the path and distance they must go and set up to clear their respective corners. In this case, both shooters would be in the kneeling position. Operator A is using the desk as cover, and Operator B is using the couch for cover.



# THE CORNER MAN

A cardinal principle that's central to cornering is, "Reduce the size of the target you present around a corner."

A second concurrent principle also is paramount when cornering: "Gunfighters don't have a weak side." You must develop your left-side shooting skills to be as proficient as your right.

The key is to transition your weapon smoothly and seamlessly from your left to right shoulder or hand. This principle applies to rocks, trees, or anything you use as cover. In my training, I will drill the weak side out of you by the first day. There is nothing more revealing than having a class of 20 guys standing with a puzzled look on their faces as we count the number of hits on the left side and compare it to the right side.

In the video debrief, we relive those wonderful moments to really bring the point home. It can be hilarious to watch guys dance around to do anything possible but transition their rifle.

You know what I say to that? Let the bad guy have a weak side. That will increase the odds right there because you know nearly 90 percent of people are right-handed.

Knowing what someone is going to do is a great information tool in any kind of fighting. You break things down into small bites that happen in milliseconds of time. You then master those skills while under duress. You may be a great world-class competition shooter, but if you go around a corner incorrectly, your odds of losing go up.

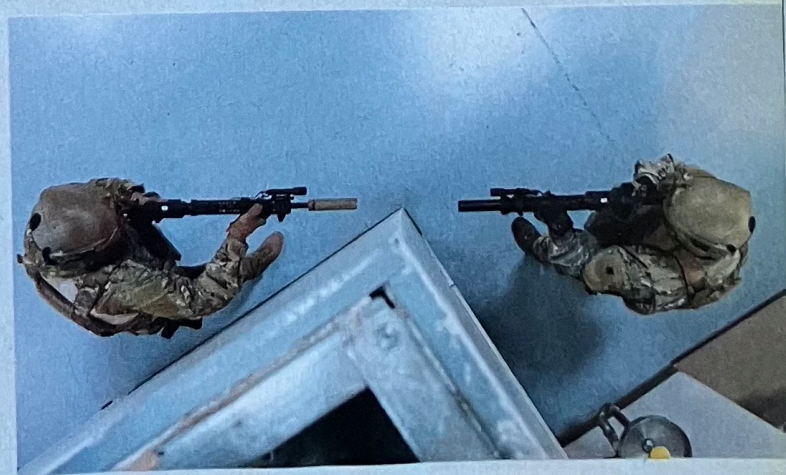
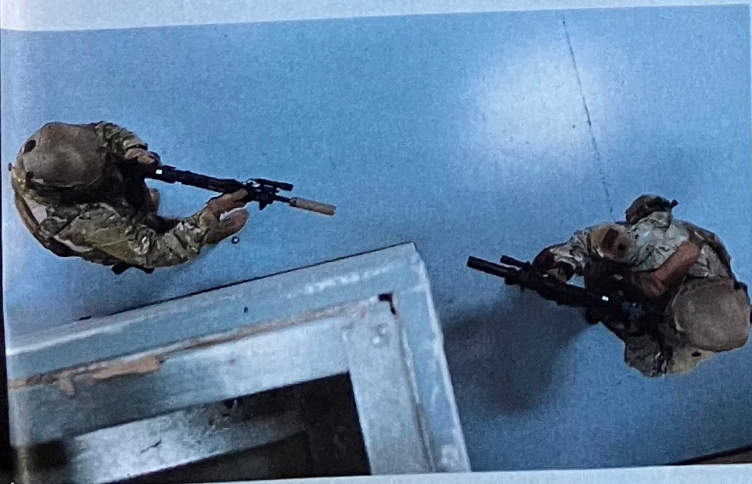
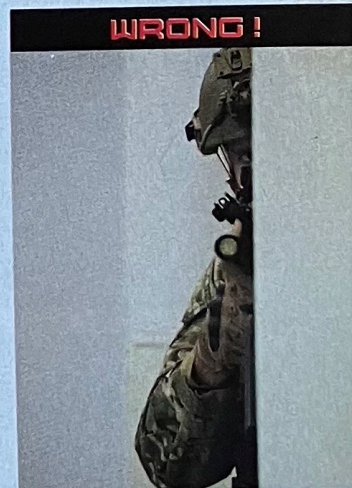
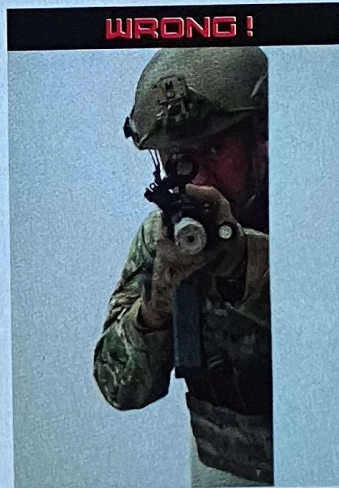
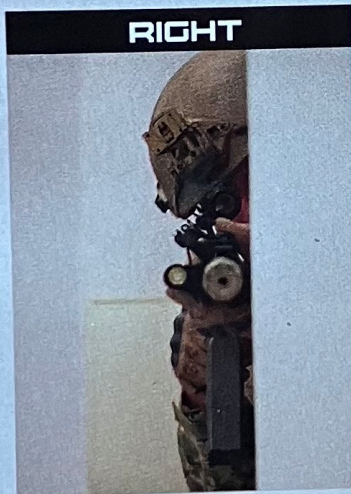
I always tell students in CQB training that they are idiots to be in the CQB business because only idiots are dumb enough to get that close to someone just around the corner with a gun who wants to blow their heads off. Smart people are people that work in the com-

puter industry or the medical professions. The real smart ones are the people that call on you to go get the bad guy because there ain't no way they're going to do it!

Because our wonderful "criminal development" system has enhanced deviant behavior in bad guys, we need you idiots to come along and save us. Humility is a very important characteristic. Beginning as an idiot is a good starting point, and this training thrives on it. It isn't necessarily the guy that wins the most drill sets; it is the guy who learns the most. So be humble in training. You're one corner away from getting shot. ///

**GUNFIGHTERS DON'T HAVE A WEAK SIDE.**

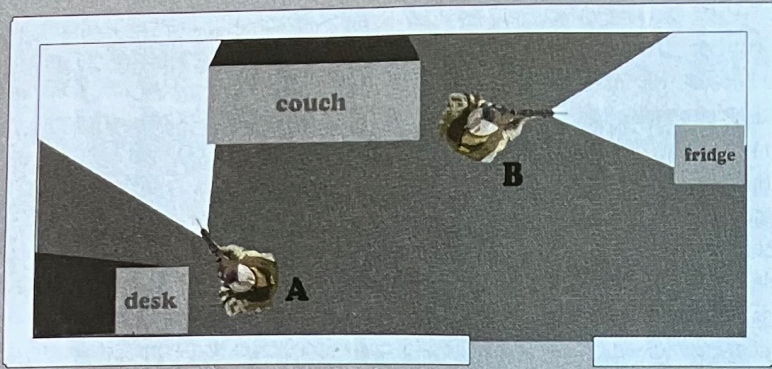
➔ **Right:** Here's the right way, and two common mistakes. The idea is to expose only three things: your eye, your muzzle and your light. Notice in one "wrong" photo, the operator is too well concealed—his muzzle is not clear. In the other, too much of his melon is exposed..



➔ **Above:** Here's a dramatic representation of why you need to transition your rifle to either the right or left shoulder. When both shooters have their rifle on the "correct" shoulder, they have an equal chance, but when the operator tries to corner with his rifle on the "wrong" shoulder, he has to expose most of his body in order to bring his muzzle to bear.



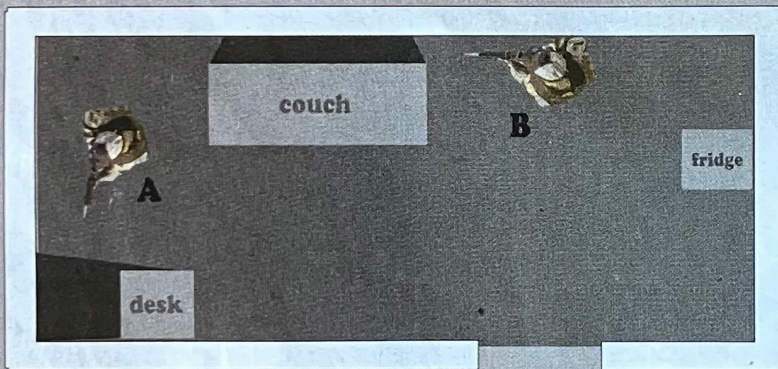
# 19



**'A' flashes couch first  
Then 'B' flashes fridge**

✔ Optimally, Operator A lights up first, then Operator B lights up instantly thereafter. The key is to not backlight the other guy while he is still moving into position. Another important principle is to "light and move," so as soon as they have cleared their corners, the lights go off and they immediately move to their next position.

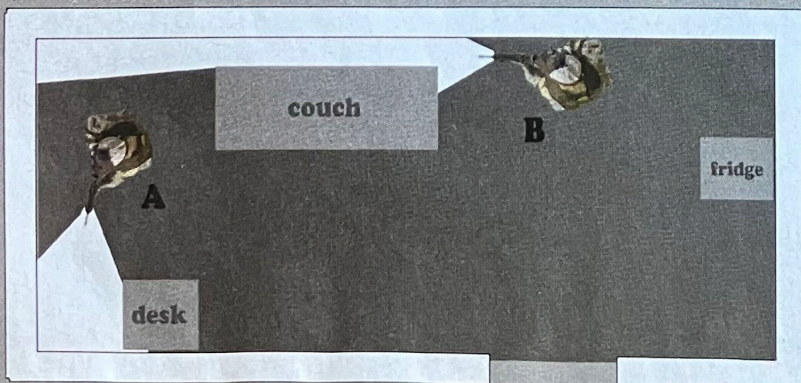
# 20



**With no lights, 'A' targets desk  
'B' targets back of couch**

✔ Operator A now moves to clear behind the desk and goes to the kneeling position. Operator B moves to clear behind the couch, also in the kneeling position. Speed and stealth are paramount.

# 21



**'A' quick flashes behind desk  
Then 'B' quick flashes behind couch**

✔ Operator A lights up first, and Operator B immediately follows, then both quickly move to exit the room.

If you run a SureFire M900 Vertical Foregrip, you can use the navigation lights, which give off a very low light signature to paint your path out of the room. The navigational lights also identify where the other shooter is moving in the room. This whole sequence can be done in 15 to 20 seconds.



