

## The Lowdown

Deputies often respond to calls involving conflict, extreme emotion, and sometimes violence. A deputy faced with a tense, volatile situation has two primary goals: de-escalate the situation without the use of lethal force and provide for the safety of everyone at the scene, including him or herself.

Obviously, deputies arrive at a call with powerful tools at their disposal. They have non-lethal tools, such as handcuffs and pepper spray, and a highly lethal weapon, a Glock.40 semi-automatic handgun. If trained and certified, a deputy will also have a Taser, a conducted electrical weapon. Although rarely lethal, a Taser causes intense pain, and a person may suffer injury after falling to the ground.

However necessary it is for a public safety professional to have tools like firearms and Tasers, they are tools of last resort. In this month's edition of *The Lowdown*, I want to discuss two training initiatives I employ in my office designed to provide deputies with the skills and confidence to achieve their primary goals without the use of lethal force.

The first is a system pioneered by Dr. George Thompson known as verbal judo. Thompson's research convinced him that injuries almost always resulted from an escalation in a situation that occurred after law enforcement arrived at a scene, rather than from violence already underway prior to the arrival. He believed those trained in verbal judo would stay calmer in the face of the elevated emotions of others, deflect verbal abuse directed their way, and effectively lower hostile emotions through the use of empathy. Although Thompson died in 2001, his beliefs echo through my office and countless other law enforcement agencies across the nation. I arranged for the Verbal Judo Institute to train my deputies because I wanted them to be as competent with words as they are with firearms. I firmly agree with Thompson's main premise: it is safer for everyone if deputies are able to achieve voluntary compliance through verbal judo, rather than use the strong arm of the law to force it.

The Institute not only taught deputies new skills, it also increased their confidence and lowered their anxiety in interactions with distressed, emotionally charged individuals. Deputies with verbal judo skills tend to exude an air of calm confidence others pick up on. This confidence is also built through the other training initiative we've invested in since I became Sheriff. Gracie Survival Tactics (GST) is a modification of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu developed by Helio Gracie in the 1920s. The system helps peace officers and military personnel prevail even against larger, stronger opponents using skills such as leverage and redirection. The system recognizes the unique concerns of law enforcement, for example, if a deputy has to go "hands on"

with someone, he or she not only needs to gain control of that person with the minimum amount of force, the deputy also has to do so while protecting his or her own weapon.

Jon Daniel, one of my deputies, introduced me to his friend, Sunny Yu, who owns a Gracie dojo in Durham. In order to hold a GST “train the trainer” workshop, at least 40 people must attend. Sunny helped us enroll 64 participants, mostly from our agency and the surrounding area, and some from other states and countries. Members of the Gracie family came from California and spent five intensive days teaching participants the techniques of their proprietary system. Attendees practiced extensively and learned progressive methods to teach the skills to colleagues. We also invested in wrestling mats and had them installed under the detention center. Every week, my deputies and officers from the surrounding area have the opportunity to practice “rolling” with each other to improve their skills and build muscle memory.

GST, like verbal judo, is a game changer. A deputy should never look to fight, but it is ironic that those best at grappling need to do it least often. This is because they tend to project a quiet confidence that minimizes someone else’s desire to test them. This confidence also reduces a deputy’s anxiety in a tense situation, helping him or her better remember and utilize other skills and knowledge to help resolve the situation safely.

Our goal is to protect and serve everyone – even those who are agitated, intoxicated, angry, and perhaps looking to do us harm. We practice verbal judo and GST because they are effective, non-lethal ways to help us accomplish this goal.

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Gracie Survival Tactics (GST) is a revolutionary defensive tactics system based on Gracie Jiu-Jitsu that incorporates time-tested techniques into an easy-to-learn system designed to help officers humanely prevail against larger and stronger opponents. Active-duty law enforcement professionals, as well as military personnel and first responders, can access the GST system online, via our streaming video course, or in-person at our five-day instructor certification courses.

### **Almost a Century-Long Track Record**

Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, also known as Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu or BJJ, was developed by Helio Gracie. Beginning in the 1920's, Helio began his journey of tailoring the system to use various principles, such as leverage and distance management, to defeat opponents who were almost twice as large as him and much more athletic. Helio spent his long life testing and refining the techniques against all challengers.

"You take the time to first learn them, practice them, do them together, and then you have to start practicing teaching one another so that when you come back to your agency, you're able to bring it and [say], 'This is a better way to do this; this is a safer way for you, to prevent you from being injured, as well as cutting down on injuries to other people,'" affirmed Daniel.

Blackwood previously approved training for deputies on verbal judo, which is a discipline that entails body language, persuasion and nonviolent approaches to potentially dangerous situations.

Daniel noted that his department has a continued interest in putting deputies through training that enables them to better serve and protect residents of Orange County.

"Obviously, the public is constantly on the sheriff's mind and everyone's mind," he noted. "We want to serve people, we want to do the right thing, and by bringing this training in ahead of issues and troubles and problems that come in, then you're able to handle anything that comes up."

He talk to the sheriff about Gracie survival training. He went to the dojo in Durham that Sunny Yu runs. Somewhere there is a YouTube of Charles with him. Charles invested in the mats and put

them under the jail. He spoke with him about his vision. You have to put the time in to develop the tactics. You're trying to de-escalate a situation to achieve compliance those two things the de-escalation and the GST puts us in a better spot. Trying to make it an annual training talks about compliant strokes. You wear them down until they run out of gas. If all you have is a gun, you tend to solve each problem that way. We've got another way. It's verbal skills It is confidence. You know you can whip their ass so you don't need to whip many asses. You have the confidence to know you don't need to use lethal force you know you can outlast them you're not fearing whether or not they're going to get the best of you you know you can get them to comply it's far less lethal. We need to slow down and learn to talk and reason things out.

"The verbal judo philosophy is that when you react, the event controls you, whilst when you respond, you're in control." Among the goals are slowing things down, build rapport, recognize the symptoms of common mental illnesses

The Verbal Judo Institute is one of the nation's leaders in tactical communications skill. Derived in part from martial arts, Verbal Judo teaches individuals how to redirect aggressive behavior, diffuse hazardous situations and deflect harsh comments or verbal attacks.

when he came into office when the sheriff. When the sheriff came into office he wanted to give more effective training and conflict resolution through deflection and the escalating language. You're seeking compliance through communication. He went online he looked him up and he watched a session. There's a group called the Gallagher Westfall group.