

# The Art of Mental Training

## Chapter 10

### Shots Fired

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All the typical, normal radio traffic was abruptly shattered. “Shots fired! Shots fired! Agent down! One Zero Eight to Control we need help! Agent down!”

On calls like that the com-center responds with a three beep burst that signals everyone to clear the airwaves. Three loud “Beeeeeeps”, and then: “All units standby – Shots fired, Shots Fired. One Zero Eight say your location.”

“One Zero Eight near the North West corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Hines - Location 3, we’ve been ambushed! Agent down with head wound! "Agent down!" You could hear gunfire over the radio, while the emotion in his voice sent chills down my spine.

“Repeat -- we are pinned down, we need backup, we need paramedics at Location 3. Two Zero Nine is down with a head wound. Oh my God - hurry - send help!”

“All units, all units, shots fired, agent down, location 3, all units respond,” directed the voice from the com-center.

The call struck me like a punch in the face. I shook off my disbelief and jumped into action. I was partnering with the case agent that night – an experienced and highly respected veteran. Jake and I looked at each other. Those were our guys on the radio. This was really happening to us. A routine surveillance had turned deadly without warning.

Within minutes other agencies of our Federal task force and the local police were responding. They began to as quickly as possible set up a perimeter barrier around the area in order to keep the shooter contained. Paramedics and all available units were on the way.

The idea is to close the perimeter. No one gets in or out. One of the task force agencies began to set up a command post at nearby parking lot.

High-level narcotics traffickers can be ruthlessly violent. Tonight they'd proved it once again. My heart was pounding as we raced towards the scene.

When something like this happens, the only people on the radio should be those that are on the scene. Everyone else should be listening for details. Where are the shots coming from? Which direction should we not approach from? Where is the downed agent? The goal is to clear a path to him, push back any attack, and render immediate aid.

By the time we sped on to the scene it was getting dark, the perimeter was in place, and there was an airship overhead. Our immediate goal was to reach the agent who had been shot. As we approached there was a patrol car guarding the part of the perimeter that blocked our access.

"Can't go in," said one of the officers.

We identified ourselves with credentials and badges.

Despite that he still refused: "Sorry, guys. The command post says no one in or out."

"The command post? Listen, I'm the case agent," Jake asserted. "I'm telling you to move your vehicle or I'll push it out of the way with my car. Do you understand? We have an agent down in there and his partner is calling for help. We're going in!"

The officer complied, moving his car. As he closed the perimeter behind us once again, the airship above immediately noticed us entering and came on the radio asking us to ID ourselves. (Our undercover cars didn't have large identifying numbers on the roof as police cars do.)

"Fed 2-7 is rolling in." I responded.

"Air -3 to Shop-2-7; be advised that you are entering the kill-zone. Stop. Do not proceed. Back up."

Jake grabbed the mic from my hand. "Air-3, – Fed 2-7. Point us to where the agents are—repeat—direct us to the location of the downed agent."

"2-7, continue moving straight ahead – northbound . . ." But before they could tell us how far ahead, the command post stepped on the airship's transmission.

"Fed 2-7, you are to report to the command post immediately."

Jake and I looked at each other, wondering who was sending these orders to us.

"Fed 2-7 report back to the command post immediately – acknowledge!"

Jake was thinking. Finally, Jake responded.

“Negative CP, Fed 2-7 will not leave the area. We’re going in to find our agents.”

“2-7, exit the area immediately – we are waiting for a SWAT team. That’s an order!” barked the voice over the radio.

“Negative,” was Jake’s instant response; as he turned the volume down and looked over at me.

By this time we’d both recognized the voice as that of a supervisory agent who just happened to be dating the Assistant US Attorney assigned to the task force. For some reason he thought he was in charge. The reality was that he was from another agency, and his own training was flawed. His experience with things like this was zero, zip, *nada*; yet he’d dared to assume control. It was clear that the other agencies liked his idea of waiting around until a special tactical team could arrive. After all, no one could say for sure where the shooter was.

“Okay, he’s keeping everybody out and they’re listening to him. We aren’t going to get any help from them. They’re afraid. If we go back to the command post we’ll be taken out of the picture. Are you ready to move forward and do this with me?” Jake asked.

“Let’s go.” I told him. “The chopper said straight ahead.”

Then suddenly - two more shots rang out. We both ducked instinctively. Our guys were still under fire.

With the sniper still out there, our best chance of reaching our guys safely and perhaps spotting the sniper’s muzzle flash, would be if we were on foot. We had our vests, our MP-5’s, our 9mm’s, and our flashlights. We spilt up and started to move carefully up the street on different sides, using the darkness, the cars, the trees and the shrubs as cover. We moved in the direction that we’d been told our guys would be, using the tight orbits of the airship overhead as a general guide. Until finally, about another block away in the darkness, we saw what looked like one of our cars. We moved towards it. It was their car.

When we arrived at the scene the horrible degree of injury I saw on my friend made me angry. The other agent, holding his partner’s head together, looked up at us blankly and in shock. We had snuck up on him. He was dazed. “I thought you guys weren’t coming, How come they aren’t coming in?” he asked. “What took you so long? Where’s the backup? Why aren’t they coming in?” He was distraught; as he continued holding his partners head together kneeling next to him and just kept repeating, “I thought you guys weren’t coming. I thought no one was coming.”

“Look at me,” Jake told him as we all crouched low along side of the vehicle. “We’re here. There was never a point when we weren’t coming. Now listen to me. Tell us where the shots came from.” The agent pointed. While Jake rendered aid and tried to gather more information, I scanned the darkness and called in our exact location.

“Fed 2-7 to command post we need back-up and a rescue ambulance at location 3. We are two houses south from the corner - we are on the west side – expedite.”

“Negative,” replied the command post.

“Fed 2-7 needs a rescue ambulance now! Agent down with a head wound,” I growled into the radio.

“Negative,” was the reply. “You guys went in against orders, now you can bring him out on your own. No one else goes in until SWAT secures the area.”

I glanced over at Jake, my blood was boiling.

This was unbelievable. Seasoned agents and police officers were listening to this and standing by acting like cowards while “agent down” calls were being ignored because an incompetent with rank had taken control of a trailer labeled “Command Post” and had *conveniently*; put them all on the sidelines.

Jakes cell phone began to ring. By now several more of our own guys had begun arriving on the edge of the perimeter and, having heard the radio transmissions, started calling Jake directly. They began to penetrate the perimeter just as we had and work their way in towards us using their cars as targets, while we watched for muzzle flash. After helping us move the injured agent and his shell-shocked partner into one of the vehicles that had worked its way to us, we transported our guys out of the kill zone without any help from the other agencies that were standing by.

On the way out we had to start rescue breathing and CPR; by the time we arrived at the command post we were drenched in blood. We hurriedly transferred the agent into the ambulance.

Not sending in the rescue ambulance like we’d requested had cost our colleague precious time. Jake was on his cell phone when we both saw him coming. “Stay cool,” Jake advised me.

With no concern for our agent - he made his statement, “You’re both relieved of duty,” he told us, waving his arm like some sort of magician. “You’re both off this case.”

Jake ignored him as he put his cell phone away and jumped inside the rescue ambulance that was beginning to roll away with the injured agent. He looked back at me.

“Secure the crime scene,” he yelled. “I just activated the SWAT team and the dogs.” And then he was gone.

“What?” I repeated, amazed. I just couldn’t believe it. The dogs and the SWAT team hadn’t even been called?

While calling around for help, Jake discovered that the command post had yet to even put out a call for a tactical unit. I felt a violent anger taking over.

When I turned expecting to confront the “incompetent in charge” he was already headed back to the command post trailer. Our guys looked at me. At that instant, I could see things going in a very bad direction. I didn't want to do what Leo-tai's teachings were telling me to do - but I did - and I let him go. I watched the supervisory agent and his side-kick step back inside the trailer.

It was time to re-focus. “Let's go secure the crime scene.” I told our guys. And back we cautiously went into the kill zone once again, until the tactical team and the dogs eventually arrived and finally declared the area free of any snipers. The shooter was gone.

I'd just made it back to the command post area when Jake's call came through from the hospital. He let me know that our friend had died.

I remember how I looked at the command post trailer and then forced myself to walk across the street to separate myself from it.

I remember sitting down and leaning up against a tree in somebody's front yard that night, as my feelings of grief began to mix in with the anger that I felt towards the supervisor who had flatly refused to let the rescue ambulance in.

I remember thinking how these feelings seemed much too potent for any man with a gun to have going through his head.

I remember how I used focused breathing and Leo-tai's wisdom that night to help keep me from confronting that supervisory agent.

I remember thinking, and telling myself how this wasn't over . . .

But that for tonight — right now, — it *had* to be over.

**Remember: You must choose to control anger through a decision. For if you lose control to anger – then the anger will surely control you.**