



VirTra – Virtual Interactive Coursework Training Academy™ (V-VICTA™)

***CONTACT AND COVER CONCEPTS***

**VirTra**



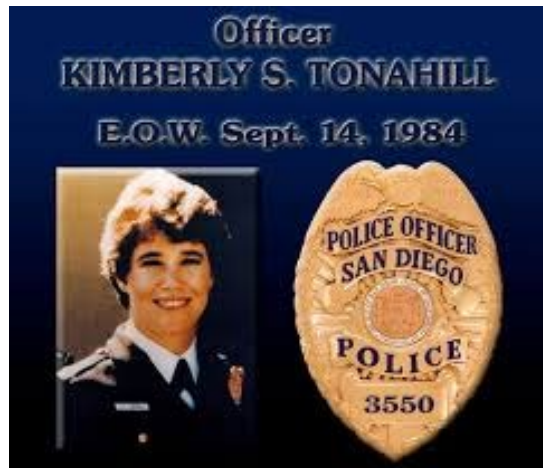
# *CONTACT AND COVER CONCEPTS*

## Introduction

# INTRODUCTION



- **Contact and cover concepts** were born from multiple tragic incidents in law enforcement history
- One such example is the “Grape Street Park” incident



# GRAPE STREET PARK



- On Sept. 14, 1984, San Diego PD Officers Kim Tonahill and Tim Ruopp were shot and killed by an armed suspect.
- Ofc. Ruopp was writing the suspect and another male a ticket while Ofc. Tonahill frisked the suspect.
- A struggle ensued, and the suspect shot and killed Tonahill, then moved to shoot Ruopp after, who was at his patrol car.



# *CONTACT AND COVER CONCEPTS*

## Overview of Roles



# THE TWO ROLES



- Contact Officer
  - Business/administration part of the team
  - Communicative; seems to be the most active
- Cover Officer
  - Overwatch/protection part of the team
  - Job is to keep everyone safe

**Do not bend the roles or make them ambiguous!**



# *CONTACT AND COVER CONCEPTS*

Training, Tactics & Procedures



- **Officer Roles** – Determine the roles of each officer early in the encounter
- **Ballistic Cover & Concealment** – Should be used during approach when available
- **Officer Positions** – Must be established relating to all subjects, not just one. Subjects may have to be moved.
- **Triangulation** – Uses the subject/group as the “point” of the triangle. Helps avoid crossfire, control subject(s) movement



# TRIANGULATION



Red circle: Cover officer

Yellow circle: Contact officer

Middle: Subject





- **Distance** – Contact officer is closer to allow communication, frisk, etc., cover officer is further back to spot threats
- **Subject Movements** – Controlled by contact officer. Subjects should be kept in the officers' view and not be allowed to move around.
- **Reactionary Gaps** - Minimum space needed to ensure that you can properly react to a threat



# *CONTACT AND COVER CONCEPTS*

Duties & Responsibilities of Contact and Cover Officers

# CONTACT OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES



- Communicate, contain and control subjects
- Performs arrests and searches
- Communicates with cover officer and dispatch
- Typically primary for use of less lethal options



# COVER OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES



- Protects contact officer
- Remains aware of surroundings and third parties
- Relays intelligence information to contact officer
- Maintains “triangulation” concept
- Provides lethal cover



# *CONTACT AND COVER CONCEPTS*

Visual, Verbal & Physical Pre-Attack Indicators



- **Clothing** – Does it fit the environment and the person?
- **Appearance** – Does it provide any context or warnings?
- **Immediate Surroundings** – Are there potential threat areas or avenues of escape?
- **Body Language** – Do you sense fear or aggression?





# VERBAL CUES



- Yelling and/or threatening
- Incoherent speech
- Aggressive language
- Tone of voice (what is it communicating?)
- Fear or hostility in verbal dialogue
- Loud, pressured speech and guttural noises may signal a risk for excited delirium syndrome



# PHYSICAL CUES



- Teeth grinding, clenching teeth or fists
- Tracking officer position
- Security pats (may signal location of illicit item or weapon)
- Excessive eye contact
- Abnormal breathing pattern
- Aggressive or fearful facial expression
- Physiological responses to drugs or alcohol
- Muscle rigidity





# *CONTACT AND COVER CONCEPTS*

Critical Concepts



- Know when to switch roles – switching is OK, blurring roles is not
- Use the right tools for the job
- Know the roles and positions of officers involved, stay in your role
- Know yours and your partner's limits





- Effective communication to other officers and to dispatch
- Effective communication between officer and subject
- Communication must be effective both verbally and non-verbally