

Participants:

Guy Windsor

Curtis Fee

[Audio Length: 0:12:11]

RECORDING COMMENCES:

Guy Windsor:

Let's take the first play of the first master of the dagger and then we'll use that to discuss how you enter the play. Curtis is going to come to strike gently towards the side of my head and of course, you will do this wearing masks. We will do this without so I can talk to you. Again please. So first master left hand extends towards the threat, the threat is here, and his first play is I turn that away from me with my wrist pushing the dagger blade that way and I'm using his line of weakness as we discussed before and if I keep that turn going, the dagger will just pop out. Fiore has it drop to the ground. I prefer for our purposes catching it and sticking it in. Now I have the dagger and I'm going to gently throw a mandritto towards Curtis, he's going to do the same thing. That's it. Take the dagger and stick it in.

This is an important point. As Curtis comes to strike and I take the dagger away, you'll see that it's very common. There you go, mate. Do you want to have a go? Give that back. That is terrible training practice because what you're conditioning yourself to do is having disarmed an attacker you then rearm him. This makes no sense. So when we practice whatever you're practicing, you should never pass the dagger from one person to the other. So if it's his turn to have the dagger, I attack and he takes the dagger away. We don't have to be terribly vigorous about it but we have to be always mindful of using the dagger to defend yourself, using the negative strike, and never ever harming somebody who might be using the dagger against you. That's the first thing.

The second thing is as you can notice we are doing this very slowly in a very artificial setup. I am standing still and I am waiting for Curtis to come and gently stab me. Now hold on a second. If this was any kind of real situation, the absolute last thing I should do is stand still and wait for the attack. I should run away, I should call the police, I would probably have a better chance of survival against a lunatic by jumping out of that window, we are one story up, and landing in the street than by trying to defend myself against a murderous attack with a dagger. It is difficult to do. The fact that I'm standing still and he's taking a shot at my head and I'm doing nothing about it should tell you this is very artificial. But the first way of setting this up is I stand still, he moves, and we're being completely choreographical. So I stand still, he moves, I defend myself, there's the technique. Your turn.

Alternatively, as the defender, I could trigger the attack by some action of my own. I could be for example coming in to gouge his eyes out and his response to that is to pull out the dagger I didn't

The Medieval Dagger Course: The First Master plays 1 and 2: disarm and counter

know he had and then I have to take it away. So he comes to gouge my eyes out, I go to stab him in the face, and there we go and you will find as you work through the dagger material that some plays work beautifully with the defender waiting and the attacker attacking and others don't work that way at all and other plays work very easily if the defender is moving first and the attacker is responding because it puts the various parts in the right place for the play that's about to occur. For the purposes of this exercise, I want you to stay very relaxed, very slow, very artificial, very choreographically.

As Curtis comes to strike, I get out of the way. This is the first way of doing this play because this puts me out of his reach, it takes me out of his line of strength, and I'm organizing myself along his line of weakness which makes this action much easier. The most common way of doing this play is with a discredere diagonally. Want to try that? You may find maybe you're standing with the wall right here or as a bench behind you or something, as it comes in you might just do it standing still. This is not optimal because the last place in the universe you should be is where the attack is going to but try it standing still. That's it. There we go. Lastly, if you have the time, if you see the attack early enough, and you're waiting in the right place to do this, as it comes forward you can step into the attack and you step into it diagonally on the line that you were in before. This gets you closer obviously but most importantly it disrupts your opponent's measure and it disrupts their structure. That's it.

For the purposes of this exercise, I want you to practice it in those three ways and make sure you're comfortable with all of them and then just think to yourself the one to spend the most time on is the one you're most likely to use and that is the one with the discredere. So once more. That was the discredere.

Curtis Fee:

Sorry.

Guy Windsor:

That's okay. You had time for it. Having got control of the dagger, let's have a look at the second play of the first master of the dagger which is the counter to the first play and this is how it works. As I come and strike and Curtis sticks his arm in the way, from here obviously this is his line of strength no but if I turn my arm over, now I'm operating in his line of weakness. From here over, over and in it goes and as Fiore says you can stab him in the chest. Again. When you're practicing this, this is the point at which you go oh, it's your turn to have a go at the nice cool new technique. Have a dagger and if I was there, I would whack you for it because obviously you don't go around arming your opponents. Instead when it's Curtis' turn to practice that technique, I do the attack but I leave out the counter which is obviously not optimal but it's better than just passing him the dagger. Do you want to have a go at that technique? From there, he turns it over and sticks it in. Again. That's it and stick it in. Same thing from the other side.

The Medieval Dagger Course: The First Master plays 1 and 2: disarm and counter

Let's set this up as a three step drill. Step one, Curtis strikes, I do nothing. Step two, I do the remedy which is the first master's first play and I have it so we just...that's it. For the third step, he makes the counter. That's it, stick it in. Again. give it a little bit of umph. There you go. Now leave out the counter. Dagger's mine again. So my first step, he does nothing. Second step is the remedy. Give me the dagger back. Third step, the counter remedy. Any technique has a window of opportunity in which it must be done and with this play, we have a very easy way of indicating the end of that window of opportunity and we're going to do this by simply adding an extra step on the part of the attacker. So the attack is going to come in here and the attacker is just going to keep going and gently place the backhand on the face of the pass. When Curtis does the disarm he has to get my dagger away from me and stick it into me without getting my left hand into his face and we can do this slowly. This is not about speed, this is about timing, about getting the action done within the necessary time. Better but you're standing still. Watch. You didn't see that. Again. Get the motion. Tap me on the head. Boom. We're all friends here but your contact's good.

That's the window I have to do my technique in. That's okay, plenty of time because if the technique is properly done -- let me just pass the dagger back. If the technique is probably done -- go very slowly -- at the moment here, my turn makes that step really difficult for you because I'm basically putting your shoulder in the way of your step and now I get to play. So you indicate the window of opportunity with a gentle continuation of the left hand. That is the simplest, easiest, beginner-level way of doing this but it's important to introduce this early because what tends to happen is you get used to doing the technique against somebody who will attack like this which is completely unrealistic. Nobody in the history of the world has ever tried to murder somebody with a dagger by doing this. It's always multiple strikes and movement but we can't start with a flurry of attacks. You have to learn how to deal with a single attack that's nice and easy to see before you start dealing with multiple attacks but you must never get used to having an opponent who just stops and this is a safe and easy way of getting your partner to always indicate that there is a finite window of opportunity in which to do the action. Again please. I failed. Yep, give me a nice, clear indication of that. Oh no, my technique isn't working. What am I going to do? I'm going to make it work.

END OF RECORDING