

***THIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY
PUBLISHED IN THE SPRING OF 1998 IN
THE COLD STEEL MAIL ORDER
CATALOG, "SPECIAL PROJECTS"***

**COPYRIGHT © 1998 LYNN C. THOMPSON
COPYRIGHT ©1998 COLD STEEL, INC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**



RIPOSTE

(rĭ-pōst') ⁿ 1. A quick thrust delivered after parrying a lunge in fencing. 2. A quick, clever reply : retort.

Blade Magazine® locks out Cold Steel

The History of Blade Magazine's® 18 years of silence on Cold Steel Knives

The Bible tells us there are two types of sin. The first type is the sin of commission where we offend or "miss the mark" by actively doing or saying the wrong thing. The second type is the sin of omission where we "miss the mark" by *passively refusing to do or say the right thing*.

The concept of sin or wrong doing carries over into our criminal justice system where we have crimes of commission like armed robbery and crimes of omission like withholding evidence.

We believe Cold Steel has been unfairly treated by Blade Magazine® for the last 18 years. In that time Blade may have published as many as 216 issues and printed literally thousands of articles without once doing a single *feature* article on Cold Steel or placing any Cold Steel product prominently on its cover

In the following segment we will give the details of our "history" with Blade Magazine® and ask you to decide for yourself if we have been unfairly treated or are just a bunch of whining cry babies. But, before we begin, we want you to be more familiar with the position Blade Magazine® says they hold in our industry.

Therefore we have reprinted here exact quotes of Blade Magazine's® claims to fame from page 97 of the February 1998 issue of their magazine.

- "Blade - The World's #1 Knife Publication"
- "The First Knife Magazine - Publishing Leadership since 1973"
- "Founder of the Internationally Famous Blade SHOW"
- "Producers of the California Custom Knife SHOW/Blade SHOW West"

- "Founder of the Cutlery Hall of Fame"
- "Founder of the Blade® Magazine Knife of the Year® Awards"
- "Founder of the American Blade Collectors Association (ABCA)"
- "Founder of the International Blade Collectors Association (IBCA)"
- "Official Magazine of the Knifemaker's Guild"
- "Total Editorial Page Leader"
- "Total Advertising Page Leader"
- "Knife Industry's Book Publishing Leader...Publisher of Knives 98, Gun Digest, and 50 More Great DBI Books!"
- "The Only Monthly Knife Magazine"
- "The Only Fully Indexed, Alphabetized Knife Marketplace - Blade List"
- "The Only Knife Industry Trade Magazine Publisher - Blade Trade..."
- "The Only Knife Magazine Exhibitor at the S.H.O.T. SHOW"

Virtually No Recognition of our Achievements

Blade Magazine® has never been shy about beating their chest and extolling their accomplishments in the knife industry as we have just shown! However, they have been extremely reluctant to recognize any achievement or contribution Cold Steel has made to the industry and even more importantly to consumers. Just in case you are unfamiliar with the history of Cold Steel we thought we'd give you a partial list of our achievements here.

- First knife company to utilize a checkered Kraton handle. Everyone, and we mean everyone, in the industry using a checkered Kraton handle has copied us!

Continued on page 22.

- The first U.S. company to make a modern Tanto and the company **solely responsible** for establishing the Tanto and the reinforced point as a viable and widely successful blade style. (And the only company to spend over a million dollars advertising Tantos).
- The first company in over 100 years to successfully and continually market push daggers (in our product line since 1980) and to reestablish the push dagger as a viable and effective alternative to the traditional boot knife. Go ahead, check it out, there are dozens of no talent rip off artists in Japan and Taiwan who have made a fortune off Cold Steel's revival of the push dagger.
- The first company to produce San Mai III (three layered laminated stainless steel) and pass the ABS® test with a stainless steel knife.
- The first company to commercially sell Kydex knife sheaths (over 5,000 Ki Quick Draw Tanto sheaths made for us by the incomparable Galco Leather were sold in the mid 1980's. Smaller amounts of Kydex push dagger sheaths were also sold). Now look at all of our competitors strutting around pretending Kydex sheaths were their idea. (The credit, like so many innovations, really belongs to the custom knife making community).
- The first company to widely surpass the \$100 retail price barrier. Again, check it out. Prior to 1980 no other commercial knife company (with the possible exception of Randal Knives) had ever been successful at this price point. However, due to the phenomenal quality, strength, sharpness and cutting ability of our original Tanto, Cold Steel was able to break down the retail price barrier and convince consumers that our knife was really worth the money. Unfortunately for consumers, we have little faith in the quality and value of our competitors high priced offerings.
- The first company to manufacture a **Stainless San Mai Damascus** blade that could pass the ABS, Test (our Imperial Tanto).
- The only company to manufacture blades out of Carbon V steel that can out perform 99% of all custom made and hand forged knives, including Damascus steel. A claim never successfully challenged by *anyone!*
- The first knife company to make a video on its product that actually proved its claims of superiority with irrefutable evidence (see our 1988 Trail Master tape).
- The only commercial company responsible for the revival of the Bowie knife.
- The only U.S. company to ever commercially manufacture a Kukri (1988).
- The only company to patent the double curved blade (Nogales Clip Point).
- The first knife manufacturer to be recognized by the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence as the Specialty Product of the Year (Recon Tanto 1992-1993).
- The first knife company to make a folding lockback knife whose lock was able to withstand 125 lbs. of pressure without failing and whose blade was capable of severing 3" of manila hemp rope!
- The only knife manufacturer in the world run by a practicing martial artist with 27 years of experience and who is a true expert in the use of a fighting knife and who **has proved his ability** in a full contact, minimal armor, Dog Brothers contest against a world class, 100 bout stick fighting champion!

Cold Steel in the Movies But Not in Blade Magazine®

One of the things our President, Lynn C. Thompson and his wife love to do is to go to the movies. Over the last 18 years, Lynn has taken pride in the fact that Cold Steel knives have been featured in 9 major films with big name stars. What we can't figure out is why Blade Magazine® continues to cover movie and TV knives and leaves out Cold Steel's contributions to the Silver Screen. For those who may not be aware, here's a list of the movies we have appeared in so far:

- 1) Platoon® - The Defender I push dagger was carried on the web gear of Tom Berenger and he used it in a graphic fight scene with Charlie Sheen.
- 2) Red Dawn® - The original Tanto was carried and used by Patrick Swayze.
- 3) Universal Soldier® - The leading lady, in a great close up shot, uses Van Dam's Magnum Tanto to cut a transmitter out of Van Dam's leg.
- 4) Black Rain® - Michael Douglas faced a Japanese gangster armed with a Magnum Tanto in a lengthy fight scene in the beginning of the movie.
- 5) Total Recall® - Sharon Stone employed a big Safe Keeper I push dagger in a brawl in this science fiction blockbuster.
- 6) Flight of the Intruder® - We made a special edition stainless Bowie with blued blade and guard and a micarta handle especially for this film. We called the knife the Intruder Bowie and only 500 were ever made. You can see the Intruder Bowie in action at the end of this movie starring Willem Dafoe.
- 7) Color of Night® - Bruce Willis faced the Safe Keeper I in the hands of a psycho in this mystery thriller.
- 8) The Fan® - Robert DeNiro used our original Tanto repeatedly in this movie.
- 9) Face Off® - Nicholas Cage turned our Safe Keeper I push dagger against John Travolta in an opening scene in this action hit.

Never a Cover Photo

Every month for 18 years we have anxiously awaited the arrival of Blade Magazine® hoping against hope that finally it would be our turn to find one of our products gracing the cover. To date we have been sorely disappointed. As you can imagine this is a pretty bitter pill to swallow for 216 issues, especially when you see competitor after competitor like Spyderco® and Benchmade® reaping the benefits of a cover shot. Recently it has got even harder to take as we watch companies like Junglee® and Columbia River Knife and Tool® featured in cover photos, when to the best of our knowledge, they have been in business for less than two years!

The thing that bothers us the most about being blatantly ignored isn't our hurt pride or ego as we still have plenty of both! The real issue is the subliminal message we believe Blade Magazine® is sending to its readers by promoting our competitors products and achievements while disregarding ours. Think about it! How would you like to be an industry leader like Cold Steel and be locked out of the knife industry's premier publication for 18 years! Don't you think this might have had a negative influence on our business and made it harder for us to compete?

Never a Feature Article

Right now Cold Steel manufactures over 130 different products. It's hard to believe that in 18 years of business not a single one of them has found its way onto the pages of Blade Magazine® in the form of a feature article!! We just can't figure it out!

When we began our business in 1980 we had a tremendous hit with our original Tanto. By 1984 the Tanto was the rage in the U.S. and Europe. We mean it was totally hot! What did Blade Magazine® have to say about it? Nothing! Now, thanks to Cold Steel, the Tanto is one of the most popular and widely copied blade shapes in the world! No one would be selling Tactical Tanto folders if Cold Steel hadn't paved the way by explaining the benefits of the reinforced point (now bastardized by our competitors to the point of ineffectiveness) and spending over a million dollars to advertise it! All Blade® could say about it was nothing, nada, zilch, zip!

In 1986 Lynn Thompson, with the help of Master Blade Smith Dan Maragni, introduced Carbon V Steel and the Trail Master Bowie. The knife world has never been the same since. Now, with Carbon V steel the average guy could afford to purchase a Bowie knife that could out-perform 99% of all custom or hand forged offerings. By the end of 1989 with the help of Bill Bagwell's tireless promotion of the bowie in general (and that of Soldier of Fortune® Magazine) the Trail Master and Bowies were all the rage. Even the big boys like Gerber® jumped on the bandwagon with their Bowie, but, Blade Magazine® sat this one out. Not that they didn't appreciate the Bowie hit, as they did an entire special edition magazine on the Bowie knife, but they just didn't have anything to say about Cold Steel or the Trail Master Bowie.

In 1989 big knives were still hot and Cold Steel started still another industry trend with the introduction of the ATC Kukri. This knife's success spawned a host of imitators and spin offs, some of which continue to sell to this very day. What did Blade have to say? Nothing! Not that they didn't think Kukris were interesting, as they have done several articles on them, but they just didn't have anything to say about Cold Steel's Kukri.

In 1991 Cold Steel pioneered the commercial liner lock® with the introduction of our Ultra Lock. Yes, check it out, we were the first to offer a modern, Zytel handled liner lock with a unique Thumb Glide®, one handed opening method that didn't rely on a hole in the blade or thumb studs. What's more, our Ultra Lock® was the only factory knife at that time whose blade lock would hold 70 lbs! Again, Blade Magazine® was silent.

Now we come closer to the present. In the last few years Cold Steel has pioneered the black epoxy coated blade, drive on Kraton handle, high performance tactical fixed blade knife. This unique look has been so successful that a host of our Johnny Come Lately competitors have ripped it off and applied it to the **knife like objects** they make. What did Blade have to say about our tactical sheath knife hit? Nothing!

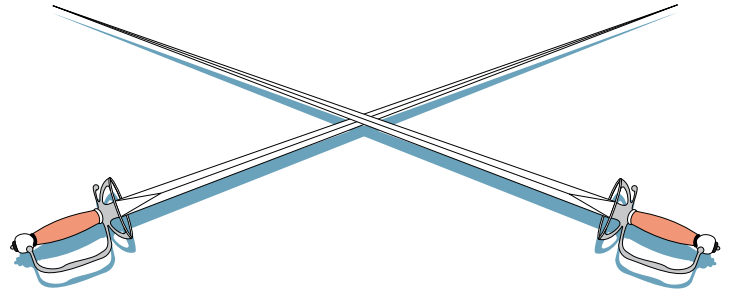
Finally, we come to the present day. Cold Steel, with the introduction of our Vaquero Grande, once again makes knife history by manufacturing the only folding knife to ever sever 3" of free hanging manilla rope and the first lockback to ever hold 125 lbs. and not fail. After two years of begging and pleading with Blade Magazine® to give us some ink on the Vaquero we have once again met with nothing but a deafening silence.

Conclusion

After hearing all of this we expect our readers to ask; why didn't you go to Blade Magazine® and ask them why they are deliberately ignoring Cold Steel knives? The answer is "We have"! When Krause Publications® bought Blade Magazine® approximately 3 years ago (36 issues ago) our President, Lynn C. Thompson, contacted Blade Magazine® and explained how Cold Steel felt about the treatment it had received at the hands of Blade Magazine® in the past. At that time he was earnestly assured that it was a "whole new ball game" now that Bruce Voyles no longer owned Blade® and that Krause Publications® held no grudge against Cold Steel and agreed we hadn't been fairly treated. In reliance of this, Cold Steel began to advertise more heavily in Blade Magazine® and tried to cooperate with them in every way. We even made a big effort to show our good will by attempting to attend the 1997 Blade Show® in Atlanta. On November 11, 1996, we contacted Blade Magazine® (we hadn't received an invitation) and tried to arrange a display booth. At that time we were told there was no room in the show for us despite the fact that the show was still 6 months away! Finally, after begging and pleading for several months, Blade Magazine® miraculously found a small space for us. In all this time the new owners of Blade Magazine® continued the silent treatment of Cold Steel by denying us a feature article or a front cover. Again, our President Lynn C. Thompson, sought to "mend the fences" with Blade Magazine® in a meeting at the 1997 Blade Show® with its publisher. At that meeting Mr. Thompson explained

to the publisher that Blade's® silence on the subject of Cold Steel was hurting our business and making it harder to compete with companies whose products were receiving feature articles and front covers. Blade's® answer was no one in the magazine was hurting Cold Steel and to be patient as something was going to be done for us shortly.

That brings us up to date as of this writing. At the 1998 S.H.O.T. SHOW held January 27-30th Cold Steel had a final meeting with the publisher of Blade Magazine®. At that time, when our president repeatedly told Blade that their 3 year silence on Cold Steel products combined with the previous 15 years of silence was hurting our business, our President was told for the final time no one at Blade Magazine® was doing anything to hurt Cold Steel despite the fact that no Cold Steel product was scheduled for a cover photo or a feature article at that time. You be the judge! Have we been unfairly treated?



Blade Magazine Breaks its Word

One of the major reasons we desperately wanted to attend the Blade SHOW® in Atlanta in May 1997 was that it was widely rumored that for the first time ever the attendees would select the best factory knives. This rumor was confirmed as fact by Blade Magazine® in their June 1997 issue on page 98 where they promised that "The people will now have a voice in selecting their favorite factory knife exhibited at the Blade SHOW®. All paid attendees will get a ballot allowing them to vote for the factory knives which have been submitted for this award. And to encourage attendees to take part we will be drawing our door prize winners from among the voters for this award."

The truth is Blade Magazine® broke its word to its subscribers, the attendees and the exhibitors as no ballots were distributed at any point in the show to attendees with or without a paid admission ticket. Instead, Blade® chose without any notice to subscribers, attendees or exhibitors to revert to the "good old boy" method of the past wherein anyone who came up with the money for a 10'x10' booth got the privilege of selecting the winners of the awards regardless of whether they were knife experts.

As you can imagine, Cold Steel was shocked and severely disappointed when Blade® broke its word. After all, we had sent 3 people clear across the country in the hope that our Vaquero Grande might receive a fair shot at being named "Knife of the Year"®. But, when we heard the exhibitors would be voting to select who won the awards we knew Cold Steel was out of the running. You see, the voting took place on Saturday and all day Friday we ran our Proof video tape showing the superiority of Cold Steel Knives via horrendous torture testing. We knew we had many fierce competitors who would be smarting from the effects of this tape and whose products would be badly "shown up" by ours. Under these circumstances we knew it was highly unlikely for our fellow exhibitors and competitors to award us any prize. What's more, our President, Lynn C. Thompson felt it was unseemly to partake in the unabashed politicking going on as one competitor said to another, "I'll vote for you in this category if you'll vote for me in that category".

This is the reason (along with the fact that 1/3 of our knives were stolen at the show and couldn't be displayed until the middle of Saturday) we feel Cold Steel failed to win a single award. It is also the reason we will boycott future Blade® shows until they decide on a method of judging that is **not dependent on one's popularity with one's competitors**. Cold Steel is **only** interested in what our **customers** think of us, not our **jealous competitors**.

The Truth About The Reverse Grip

by Lynn C. Thompson

Today it seems to be the height of fashion to extol the virtues of holding a combat knife, or even worse, a puny "tactical" folder in the reverse or "ice pick" grip. Check it out! The leading gun and knife magazines are filled with photos of alleged experts or actors sporting the macho reverse grip pose.

To counter the nonsense distributed by the media, including magazines, TV and movies, we thought it was about time for someone who is a genuine expert to explain the truth about this macho posturing.

We've been scratching our heads for some time, and the only reason(s) we can think of for the popularity of this ridiculous pose is that the media are either completely ignorant about knife fighting and/or believe that showing a person holding a knife in the forward grip doesn't look cool, macho, expert or professional enough to set the proper tone for their presentation.

Here then, in straightforward Cold Steel style, is the truth about the reverse grip — its advantages, and more importantly, its disadvantages — minus the hype.

Advantages

Remember that the reverse grip is a secondary rather than a primary gripping method. The reverse grip is seldom employed in blade to blade encounters. However, when correctly employed it can be effective at very close range and preferably after the opponent has been disarmed.

Power

The long suit of the reverse grip can be summed up in a single word: "POWER". No other gripping method, except the punch grip of the push dagger, allows you to put the full force of your body weight and the strength of your legs, hips and upper torso into a blow.

All this power is made possible because the knife is held with a straight wrist which won't collapse or buckle, even when the point is being hammered through the toughest obstacles! What's more, this same straight wrist allows the body to transfer considerable force to the fighting knife's edge as well, giving considerable potency and penetration to a limited number of slashing blows.

Trapping

In addition to power, the only other tangible advantage of the reverse grip is that it is easier to trap and control an opponent's limbs and take and hold him prisoner. Of course, that is if you have the skill.

Disadvantages

As previously stated, the disadvantages of the reverse grip far outweigh its advantages. Therefore, as a service to our readers, we have detailed the most significant of them here.

Lack Of Reach

The single greatest disadvantage of holding a knife in the reverse grip is that it drastically shortens your reach. Every offensive or defensive movement you make with your knife held with this grip at any range, including short range, is negatively impacted by this lack of reach! We cannot stress enough that reach is everything in a blade to blade encounter and even 1/2" can mean the difference. Every single cut, slash or thrust is utterly dependent on a perfect understanding of distance and reach! It is virtually suicide to give up 1/3 to 1/2 of the reach of your blade when locked in combat with a highly skilled opponent using a forward grip!

Lack Of Versatility

In addition to reach, the second biggest drawback of the reverse grip is its lack of versatility. All the reverse grip offers is a few basic hammer-style thrust attacks and only three cutting attacks. Truly effective backhand or backside cuts are impossible to achieve using the reverse grip, unless they originate in the movies, on TV, or in a magazine. Even worse, there is simply no way to deliver a long range cutting or thrusting attack with a knife held in the reverse grip because the arm must be bent to deliver any strike at all. This means no vertical whips or snap cuts can be made! Don't believe us? Spar it out, or take your chances!

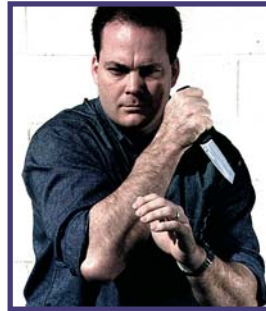
Lack Of Flexibility

The knife fighter must possess the attributes of agility and flexibility in the knife arm and wrist. You see, the primary target in any contact weapon fight is always the opponent's weapon hand. When holding your knife in the reverse grip, the flexibility of your wrist and arm are seriously compromised in both offensive and defensive situations. For example, when called upon to stop a hit or evade and counter cut an incoming attack on your knife hand, your range of motion is severely limited. If an incoming attack is approaching from a plane above your knife hand, you must move your entire arm substantially to get the correct space and angle to engage it with a counter cut or thrust with your blade. The prospects for successful defense with this slow and risky maneuver are slim to none in comparison to dealing with the same type of attack using the forward grip. Doubt us? Once again, spar it out!

Lack Of Accuracy

It's difficult at best, and many times impossible, to use the tip or edge of your blade with pinpoint accuracy when holding the knife in the reverse grip. The problem is threefold. First, it is more difficult to see the blade projecting from the bottom of the fist since it is often obscured by the

hand or arm. Therefore, judging the exact distance to a target becomes a guessing game. It's like trying to shoot a handgun with great accuracy without being able to see the sights — a very iffy proposition even with the highest of skills. Second, the straight wrist of the reverse grip results in the point and edge being largely guided by the arm and shoulder rather than the wrist and fingers. Third, the thumb, which plays such an



The empty hand can be easily cut or jammed backward into the knife arm. This could result in both your arms being "pinned" momentarily and leave you unable to respond to an attack. It looks macho but is actually really stupid!

important role in stability and control with the forward grip, cannot support the final movement of the point or edge. When the knife is held in the reverse grip, the thumb rests at the opposite end of the hand from the blade and points in the opposite direction.

Lack Of Defense

The final and perhaps the most devastating shortcoming of the reverse grip is that it positions the knife in such a way that it makes for a slow and awkward defense. Think about it! With the knife sticking out of the bottom of your fist, an opponent using the forward grip can take his point or edge directly into your weapon hand at a multitude of angles

without passing through the immediate and threatening defensive arc of your blade. Why? The reverse grip positions your blade well below the incoming attack and 5" or 6" further away than it should be. This provides your opponent with a huge window of opportunity which you can only close through a gross motion of your hand, arm and shoulder. Often, this is disastrously slow in dealing with a snap cut!

Another defensive nightmare is an opponent with highly advanced footwork. This type of adversary can quickly "turn you", opening your stance and defensive posture in order to attack your non knife-side flank. Caught in this position with the reverse grip, your lack of reach and wrist flexibility will make it almost impossible to defend against such an attack. Doubt us? Spar it out and experience the helpless feeling for yourself!

Conclusion

Until very recently, Cold Steel has been largely silent on the subject of knife combat. However, considering the proliferation of books, articles and photographs by non-experts on this subject we can keep silent no longer. At Cold Steel, knives as tools and weapons are our passion, and we have spent vast amounts of time and money researching, testing and training to perfect our skill and knowledge. While we freely admit that we don't have all the answers, we are actively searching and constantly seeking to improve.

Don't be fooled by the host of alleged experts, police trainers, gun writers, knife makers and knife manufacturers who have never seriously studied the fighting knife. Coming at you with false or misleading information can be as damaging as the sharpest of blades. We at Cold Steel have engaged in hundreds upon hundreds of hours of full contact knife sparring. That is what it takes to truly become an expert!



This stance puts the face and left side of the body in front of the knife hand where they can't be readily defended. Note how vulnerable the empty hand is.