

## SURVIVAL INSTINCT

BY SARA FOGAN

**T**he irony of the situation didn't escape Christina Linhardt. While she was a music student at the University of Southern California several years ago, a transient assaulted her in Topanga State Park. The attack occurred the day after the 22-year-old started the Rape Awareness Defense program, which was being offered by the Los Angeles Police Department. She has since trained in *Krav Maga*, *kempo*, *aikido* and *iaido*. At the time of the attack, however, she had no martial arts experience and had yet to learn most of the moves taught in the RAD curriculum.

At first glance, the slim co-ed appeared to be no match for her burly assailant. Nevertheless, she managed to rally her wits, courage and survival instinct to fight back.

According to the Southern California resident, the attack occurred in broad daylight on a deserted trail. She veered from the main path to spend some time alone. "I saw these branches, and they looked like they were tied together by grass," she said. "It felt weird—like a strong intuition that was telling me not to go beyond that point. I almost heard 'No,' and I went beyond it anyway. I was feeling defiant."

Almost immediately, she saw a man who introduced himself as Bill. "He was about 6 feet 5 or 6 feet 6, an Af-

PHOTO BY MATTHEW CAINE (DIGITROPE)



Christina Linhardt

rican-American with bulging eyes," she said. "He looked homeless because his clothes were torn; he looked dirty. I think he even had stuff hanging in the trees."

Initially, Bill seemed harmless, but as the two continued walking up the path, he acted as though he knew her. Linhardt became wary. "I remember him saying, 'Oh, I would see you at Pali-sades High School'—which I didn't go to—and telling me, 'I go there, too,'" she said. Later, after police arrested him, the man told the detective they used to go dancing.

Eventually, she asked Bill to leave her alone so she could meditate. He walked away, then came back carrying a trowel.

"That made me nervous," she said. "I thought: Oh, no! Now I need to start thinking about getting away from here."

The encounter turned into a nightmare. Bill suggested they continue up the trail toward a campsite, but when they arrived at a clearing, it became obvious the campsite was his and no other hikers were likely to show up to help.

At one point, she heard the hum of helicopters patrolling the park. Both of them looked up, then the man threw her to the ground and pinned her down. "His hands were huge, big enough to hold both my hands together while he started punching me with his other hand," she said.

Linhardt believes the assault lasted at least 10 minutes, during which time Bill tried to tie her up—"I wouldn't let him get my hands close enough together," she said—and beat her. At some point, he donned heavy leather gloves so he could continue punching her, and when she wouldn't stop screaming, he started hitting her with the trowel.

She repeatedly tried to escape and

---

**“His hands were huge, big enough to hold both my hands together while he started punching me with his other hand.”**



continued screaming for help as she endured at least 100 punches to the face. "A couple of times, I got away, and he got right back on me," she said. "The amazing thing is, I didn't feel the punches at all. It was the numb factor."

Throughout the attack, her overriding concern was that she didn't want to be raped. "I thought, I'd rather die," she said. "But I didn't know what to do. I remember even saying to him, 'I don't want to play this game anymore.' "

When Bill started licking her face, Linhardt bit off his tongue. "It wasn't premeditated; it was a natural instinct," she said. "When I bit him, there wasn't any blood because the tongue contracts. His eyes just bulged even more. He jumped off me and ran into the bushes. He probably was spitting out the blood. I started running."

Eventually, she came across some other hikers, who called the paramedics. The police met her at

the hospital, where doctors examined her and treated her injuries. The assailant was apprehended soon afterward when he was spotted wandering along the Pacific Coast Highway "with a hole in his tongue," she said.

With the man behind bars, Linhardt has worked hard to establish normalcy in her life and study the martial arts. She began by earning a green belt in Krav Maga. "It was definitely very aggressive, and I needed that at the time," she said. "It was very valuable for learning basic [skills], how to just *fight* if somebody attacks you on the street."

These days, Linhardt is on a new martial path: kempo. "There's more of the Asian background with the meditation and the focusing," she said. "It's still aggressive, but it's giving me a little more of the art form that, a while ago, I wouldn't have wanted. But now I like that."

"Part of me wonders if the outcome of the attack would've been worse with me knowing martial arts," she said. "If I knew some martial arts, if I tried fighting back, would I have been able to do even more and aggravate him even more? I've wondered about that constantly in my martial arts classes. How much better am I now? I so don't want to find out, yet I'm so curious."

One thing Linhardt doesn't wonder about is the importance of showing no fear in a threatening situation. If your assailant detects fear, you're more vulnerable. If you're confident, you have a better chance of surviving, she said.

The intention behind your technique is another key to survival, she added. "I remember in Krav Maga, there were a lot of girls who were much more buff than me, who had more arm strength. Their punches were one-third the strength of mine only because I had so much anger behind mine. It doesn't matter what size you are. You can go completely crazy and do superhuman things because of adrenaline." ✘

About the author: Sara Fogan is the managing editor of Black Belt.

**Grand Master  
Chief Roman's  
Distance Learning  
Home Study  
Program**

**Order one program  
& receive the other half!!!**

**American Kenpo (Parker) \$995**  
[www.blackbelt4all.com](http://www.blackbelt4all.com)

**Red Warrior Tushkahoma \$995**  
[www.tushkahoma.com](http://www.tushkahoma.com)

**972-496-1900**

**Receive Your Black Belt Certification  
Today When You Order**

Adrian Roman \* 3434 Briaroaks \* Garland, TX 75044  
adrianroman@speakeasy.net  
America's 1st and only Native American Grandmaster