

... NOBODY TO BLAME BUT MYSELF...
THOUGHT I COULD BREAK THE IRON RULE:
NEVER EVER DO FOR OTHERS
WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR
THEMSELVES!



Field Commander's Manual

by Roland Sykes

You are the target of enemy action. The bull's eye is on your back. This is war.



Land mines! Watch your step!

It appears that you have been lulled into a false sense of security when in reality you are smack in the middle of a War Zone.

How did this happen? Have all your scouts been captured? Is your radar being jammed?

Here's the real question.

Have we simply surrendered under the full frontal assault of the disability-industrial complex? Have we one and all knuckled under to compulsory normalcy?

Sun Tzu, Chinese master of war during the Lu Dynasty way back in 512 B.C., had this to say about war: "It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected."

Now why should you listen to this old dead Chinese guy? Because his work has been required reading for successful generals for more than a thousand years now.

Believe it: our President has studied Sun Tzu and his *Art of War*.

George W. is the son of a wealthy former President who was himself once the director of the CIA, our secret police. Talk about forward recon and deep cover! This new Bush confirms what I've always believed, that it's not who you know, but rather who you know and what you have on them that counts — your ability to make them helpless so that they will do your bidding.

George W. lost the popular vote but won the presidency based on a holdover from our nation's colonial past, the electoral college. As Sun Tzu would say, "Take advantage of conditions that prevail on the field of battle".

George W.'s electoral 'victory' turned on disputed votes cast in the state where his brother, another states-rights mercenary, is governor. The NAACP was ready to mop up Florida after a massive and successful voter registration campaign. But police squads in black precincts broke their all-time record for traffic stops on election day, racial-profiling

the would-be voters. Thousands more new black voters were stalled or stopped with mail notifications from Florida's Secretary of State bureaucratically but illegally barring them from the vote. Segregated the way we are, the way African Americans are, we sure make easier targets. Fish in a barrel.

Even so, six million people got to Florida's polling places, awarding Bush a 327-vote margin over Gore — before the recount was begun. Then the GOP National Committee went before our nation's high court, a states rights stronghold, and shut down any recount at all.

Gore did not lose Florida. States rights took it. Brother Jeb Bush sure brought home the bacon for his family — and the whole damn hog for states rights.

Yes, there were a few skirmishes, but in the end they took our command post without firing a single shot. Sun Tzu would call their maneuvers "supreme excellence."

Let's not forget that under George W.'s hand, Texas led the nation in the number of children incarcerated for the crime of possessing a disability. Catch 'em young and snuff 'em — that's the W. Way. He had the nation's worst record on disability issues and led the pack in executions of alleged criminals, too.

He has promised to appoint like-minded human rights violators to lifetime positions on our federal courts.

Could it get any worse? Just watch.

Engage forward reconnaissance

So what can we do?

There is a rule at the Bombay, India, Golf Club: "You must play the ball from where the monkey drops it."

FOR TACTICAL MANEUVERS

Don't look for specific how-tos in this manual. It's about **strategy** — something this movement often lacks — so we can get our focus on straight. Next *Mouth Sykes* will return, accompanied by frontline warrior Kathleen Kleinmann, with actual battle tactics, tried and true.

You can fool some of the
people all of the time. And
those are the ones you have
to concentrate on.

— George W. Bush



Now it's on us to play the ball from where the monkey dropped it — not from where we wish it had dropped but from where it did drop. We have to start where we're at to get where we want to be — to the land of the free where it's legal be ourselves, out from under any social worker's life-management regime, free from the prison camps of compulsory normalcy, free to be monsters and proud of it.

In order for us to get there you, yes YOU, must first recognize that you are at war. You are the target of enemy action. The bull's-eye is on your back. Compulsory normalcy is in effect, remember. You are not normal.

A primary rule of war: There are no non-combatants in a war zone. You have to decide if you will attempt to pass for normal or if you will fight. Which side are you on?

You never hear the one that gets you, the round that takes you out.

We took our worst hit so far in the Supreme Court's *Alexander v. Sandoval* decision. [See Power News, page 4.] Women, Blacks, Hispanics, people with disabilities — anybody whose civil rights were guaranteed by the regs and statutes based on Title Six of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — felt safe. Until the Supremes began lobbing heavy ordnance like *Garrett v. Alabama* and then *Alexander*.

Alexander v. Sandoval was an obscure case, focused on the discriminatory effects of English being the official language of the state of Alabama. This case didn't even show up on our radar screens until it was too late to send in reinforcements. In the end, *Alexander* reversed many years of settled case law on the citizen's private right of action — your right to

sue in federal court to stop your state, or any other recipient of federal funds, from discriminating against you.

States rights won. You lost.

You didn't hear that one hit? Well, you've heard it now, and now is the time to recognize that you are the target. You.

You are at war, you have no army, and the only one who can come to your rescue is you. The agencies, the government, the professionals, even mental health won't save you. You are all you've got. The only thing left to decide is this: Will you take sides and take part in this war or will you surrender?

THE ALEXANDER DECISION

In *Alexander v. Sandoval*, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed 35 years of prior high court decisions, ruling that **only federal agencies can bring suit against states and other entities receiving federal funds when they deny individuals or groups their civil rights**. Even federal agencies, the ruling added, reversing itself again, cannot bring suit against states when their practices have **discriminatory impact**. Intention to discriminate must be proved. Because a state can say, *We didn't mean to*, very few civil rights suits are likely to go to the courts.

What breaks our resistance

Beware the enemy. He wants you to believe that you are winning when in fact your army has already been taken.

Sun Tzu writes, "Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting." In other words, make them helpless, deceive them. Get them to do what you want and make them believe they will benefit from it.

They gave us special education — voters always appreciate those special things. But they didn't bother teaching us to read.

They know how dangerous literacy can be to a republic.

Supreme excellence consists
in breaking the enemy's
resistance without fighting.

— Sun Tzu



Kathleen Kleinmann of TRIPIL, the Center for Independent Living in Washington, Pennsylvania, says, "People come in here to the center all the time and you can see it. There was no serious attempt made to teach them to read, let alone get them equipped for a job. They were written off by their schools, by their families, by the VR system, by every system."

This is how they break our resistance. That's the true purpose of bureaucratically-ruled help: Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, HUD housing assistance, Vocational Rehabilitation. Not one of them *sounds* threatening, but they were put in place to win votes and to break your will, to give you just enough to keep you placated but never enough to let you grow and prosper. They know that if you did, you might want to be in control.

This is true of all government policies and programs that keep us down and lead us to failure. Think of the VR counselor who plans on a job for a C-5 quad where he can earn \$8 per hour. "He could never support himself" becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when he can't, under this plan, afford the assistance he needs to get out of bed in the morning.

With their helpful programs, they have made us helpless, broken our resistance, and now they will get us to do what they want. Or will they? It is up to you. It always was. This nation, remember, was founded "in order to form a more perfect union." The current contract isn't perfect enough? Get out there and change it!

Kathleen Kleinmann, whom I quoted a minute ago, is a woman who gets her theory from real people, at street level. Here is what she wants you to hear about getting out there

to change it. "Changing things is using your voice, using your vote. It's pressing the courts through legal action to address injustice. It's demanding enforcement of our laws. It's personally supervising the politicians, reading the congressional record of what they said about you. It's showing up at meetings and public hearings and wherever you can raise the issues. It's challenging the people who hold power, holding them accountable, and..."

She stopped at that point and said, "Listen to me, all I'm describing is the way democracy is supposed to work. Citizen involvement is what democracy IS. The disability community could take real leadership here."

But are we at war? For real?

You might say, okay Roland. If we are at war, where are the casualties? Come with me a minute and look into the faces of our prisoners of war. You could easily become one yourself.

Truth is, our nation and our states, our politicians, operate a system that incarcerates

and exterminates people like us, people with disabilities —without due process and without cause — in violation of the Constitution and the civil rights granted therein. Last year my own state, Ohio, spent roughly three billion dollars on this system. You read that right. Billion with a capitol B.

As you read this, prisoners in this war are being wounded in and dying in nursing homes, personal care homes, state loony bins and county hospitals, group homes, developmental centers — every "congregate setting" — and most of the time from preventable causes. We take casualties every hour of every day.

Government at all levels operates so that doctors can sentence you to life under lock and key for the crime of having a disability. They don't call it what it is, extermination, cuz that would make it too hard to camouflage.

Their code word for extermination is "admission," as if it's a college admission, as if people are banging on the door to get in.

Either your doctor or an institution doctor signs the admitting order, essentially saying that the treatment he prescribes is your only hope. And trust me, the paperwork will be on file to legitimize this transaction. If it were not, the professionals wouldn't get their payoffs. Those payoffs are threatened by the Supreme Court's 1999 decision in *Olmstead*. Institution operators and the politicians who do their bidding felt that coming and reacted. States rights means your state's right to lock you up if somebody can make money thataway.

The physician who signs your admitting order knows the gruesome facts. That the average life expectancy in such places is only about fifteen *months*. That the people admitted are subjected to cruel and unusual punishment. That most die from mistreatment, over-medication, or from the new, incurable rogue pathogens that congregate in congregate settings. "Admissions" is murder and they know it.

Yes, of course politicians know



this stuff. But politics is not about doing the right thing, never has been. I don't know about you but when I hear politicians refer to their "long years of public service," I choke.

Enemy camouflage — calling this treatment "special" — has succeeded with the public.

Most folks "just know" that nursing homes are necessary, that folks go there when they get "too old." Truth is, the only folks in nursing homes are folks with disabilities whose community support systems broke down. They could no longer make it to the doctor or the grocery or maybe just the bathroom. They could no longer run the vacuum cleaner or do some other everyday thing. Or maybe someone didn't want them around once they turned into monsters. Nobody but us monsters gets in.

Think about it. If admission to nursing homes was based on age, what would be the cutoff date? When you figure that out, tell the world so all of us have a chance to forge our birth certificates ahead of time, or to escape. (*Where's that bus!*)

DISPATCH FROM THE FRONT LINES

Ed Bell at the CIL of Richmond, Indiana, sent out a message concerning a customer of his center who became a casualty of the state. "She was 35 years old," he wrote, "quadriplegic.... She had an accessible home of her own and a family — a mother and a 14-year-old daughter.

"Her goals were to get out of the nursing home and back into her own home, and to get a new wheelchair that would prevent her recurring pressure sores. She was unable to live in her own home due to lack of attendant care, a bureaucratic SNAFU, and a pile of red tape. Our center staff took great steps to assist her in achieving her goals.... the endless, convoluted government regulations were the worst enemy that we had to fight.... We were unable to help her in time. We are sad to report her death."

Nobody is breaking down the doors to get herself "admitted" to a nursing home. It's a different deal with loony bins. Anyone with a third-party payer can get in. And some folks do bang down the doors to get themselves locked up — for help, can you believe it? Maybe later they'll get wise to the con. Maybe not.

Either way, a prisoner of war is a prisoner of war.

Knowing all this, what can we do?

Reconnaissance and recruitment

These two functions are absolutely essential if an army is to be effective. Development of leadership, alliances with those of like mind, plans of attack and gaining of ground will occur naturally when your reconnaissance and recruitment go forward correctly.

Without reconnaissance and the ability to effectively use it, there is no path to victory. We cannot lead our troops into battle when obstacles lie in wait, well camouflaged. That way lies massacre.

Without recruitment there are no troops to mount an offensive. That is the path of total surrender.

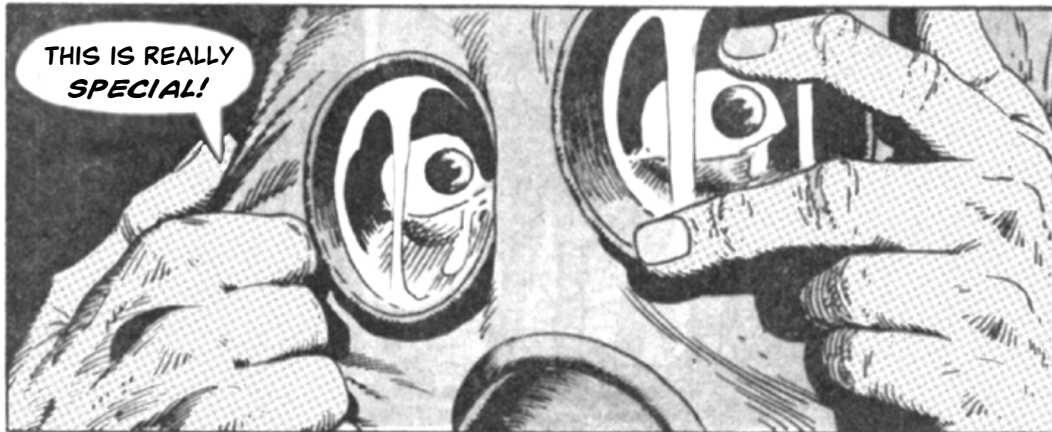
Without recon and recruitment, we lose by default, not knowing where to attack or, more importantly, even that we should.

Camouflage and deception

Sun Tzu lays it right out there when he says, "All warfare is based on deception," and that "all deception is warfare." Anyone who lies to you is the enemy. And you know who lies to us most and best — politicians.

Politicians are elected to run our government structures, including the bureaucracies that do their bidding. The words *politician*, *polite* and *police* derive from the same root word, *polis*. These words are all about control. If you do not respond *politely* to *politicians*, they will call the *police*, their troops.

Once you see through the enemy's polite euphemisms, his camouflage, you will know that you are at war. Some weapons do not look dangerous but are deadly when used against us: suits, briefcases, statutes, regulations, policies, procedures, court decisions, court orders and lies. You are their target. You are



the poorest of the poor and let's face it: even with the best of training and rehabilitation, you can't be normal.

Not even if you want to.

Meanwhile, the enemy is engaged in active deception. Deception is an act of war. Recognize that you are at war with the politicians and their obedient functionaries. They want you to believe they have your best interests at heart. Meanwhile, they deceive you.

Recognize this and become a warrior for justice.

The craft of the warrior

Recognize that the skills of the warrior are vital skills for you to own and to call forth as circumstances demand. For an arsenal of warrior skills, check out www.dimenet.com/drcfm. That's the full Disability Revolution Commander's Field Manual.

Most people see no need to study war's purpose, means, methods or practice. Lacking this knowledge, they are helpless against the war machinery of the disability-industrial complex. Its media is spinning. Its coding machines spit out elaborate p.r. faster than we can counter it, camouflaging the brutal reality as "help." Radar jamming is in full effect. The enemy believes that due to your faulty recon, you will not even suspect that you are at war.

Our new President sees that we have no army capable of turning him back, that there is no broad public support behind our campaign for freedom. He is free to lob heavy ordnance at us in full public view, without regard to collateral damage. In mid-May he nominated

Jeffrey Sutton to be federal appeals court judge. That's a lifetime appointment and a real plum for one of compulsory normalcy's hired guns.

Sutton, former Solicitor for the state of Ohio, went mercenary and hired himself out (at a much higher pay rate) to represent Ohio and other states fighting the ADA at the Supreme Court in the *Garrett* case. He won. Patricia Garrett lost. We all lost. His appointment is the payoff for his work on behalf of states rights. Remember our President's promise to appoint like-minded folks?

George W. acts as if we are clueless. Some of us are. One of his most profound statements: "You can fool some of the people all of the time — and those are the ones you have to concentrate on."

Avoid capture

It is imperative that you not be captured. They have literally millions of us prisoner as it is. Like them, you are at the mercy of "friendly

Most people are helpless against
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disability-industrial complex.



fire” from your county social worker, from professionals, paraprofessionals, all the “helpers” and their programs. Evade their prying eyes, their loaded questions. Tell them as little of your plans as you can.

And be careful of the alliances you make. Always watch your back, or have a trusted fellow warrior watch it for you. We are outcasts, not even progressive enough for the progressives. They see clearly what many of us do not: We are not normal and never will be.

Note: There are no non-combatants in a war zone. There ain't no demilitarized zone in this here war, no matter how much you wish there were. Now is the time to either suck it up, put on the armor and enlist, or else surrender every scrap of your freedom.

You could go into deep cover, impersonating normalcy — which may require curative surgery or a brain transplant — or jump into democracy and fight for your life.

Which will it be?

LAYING OUR PLANS

In future engagements with the enemy we must master the four arts of war: Reconnaissance, Recruitment, Mobilization, and Attack.

Recon

In order to be informed and to inform others we must have good reconnaissance. On the web, check out www.dimenet.com/hotnews and www.dimenet.com/actions for breaking news on many battle fronts. This is our radar screen.

Read *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu at www.dimenet.com/drcfm. Take the old master's lessons to heart.

Study the Movement Action Plan at www.dimenet.com/map. Utilize its map and its methods to advance on all fronts. Even a great commander is lost without a map.

Another thing Sun Tzu teaches us that we must factor into our planning: “Strength of defense will not insure victory. Only strength of offense will insure victory.”

If you hunker down in your foxhole long enough, eventually they will overrun your position. With the best of defenses, but with-

If you hunker down in your
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out a good offense, defeat is inevitable — it's just a matter of time and attrition.

Careful study of *The Art of War* and the MAP mentioned above will provide you with useful information. It will help you to realize how much reconnaissance is needed to get a clear view of the conflict and of how future battles may unfold. Yes, battles. There will be many, on many fronts, before compulsory normalcy is defeated.

You must study the enemy. Where are the enemy encampments? What is the strength of their troops? In what manner have they been trained to fight? What are their tactics? How much ordnance do they have at the ready? Are they likely to expend it? If so, what are they most likely to target? (A little tip here: If at all possible, have your troops avoid target areas where the ordnance is likely to rain down hard.)

How long are their supply lines?

What are their strengths and weaknesses? How can their weaknesses be exploited to your advantage?

Knowing these things will allow you to assess your enemy, and yourself, greatly increasing your chance for victory in future battles.

Sun Tzu also teaches the importance of assessments. “Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”

Recruit

Recognize that you are not alone. Spread the word that we are at war. Seek alliances with all who have a clue about the gravity of the situation and wish not to be crushed but to be victorious.

Scout for recruits, actively. The community meetings you attend are one place to spot new recruits. Nursing homes and other institutions where our prisoners are held are a rich source of recruits — but only if you can get them out. Otherwise, engage only in covert missions or new recruits will likely fall to enemy action while awaiting the rescue team.

Do not hesitate to enlist them if you can get them out. They have only, on average, fifteen months' life expectancy once the enemy "admits" them. They have not just freedom but their lives to gain from joining with you. Engage them. Educate them. Recruit them.

Don't expect to find battle-ready recruits. Most people with disabilities are trapped in bad situations, our lives more complicated than most because we are subject to the force of poverty. We are often imprisoned in dependence, unable to see the forest for the trees. Your pool of recruits may seem unlikely warriors.

Remember that no army ever recruited a well-trained soldier in full battle gear.

Working with recruits is not easy. All

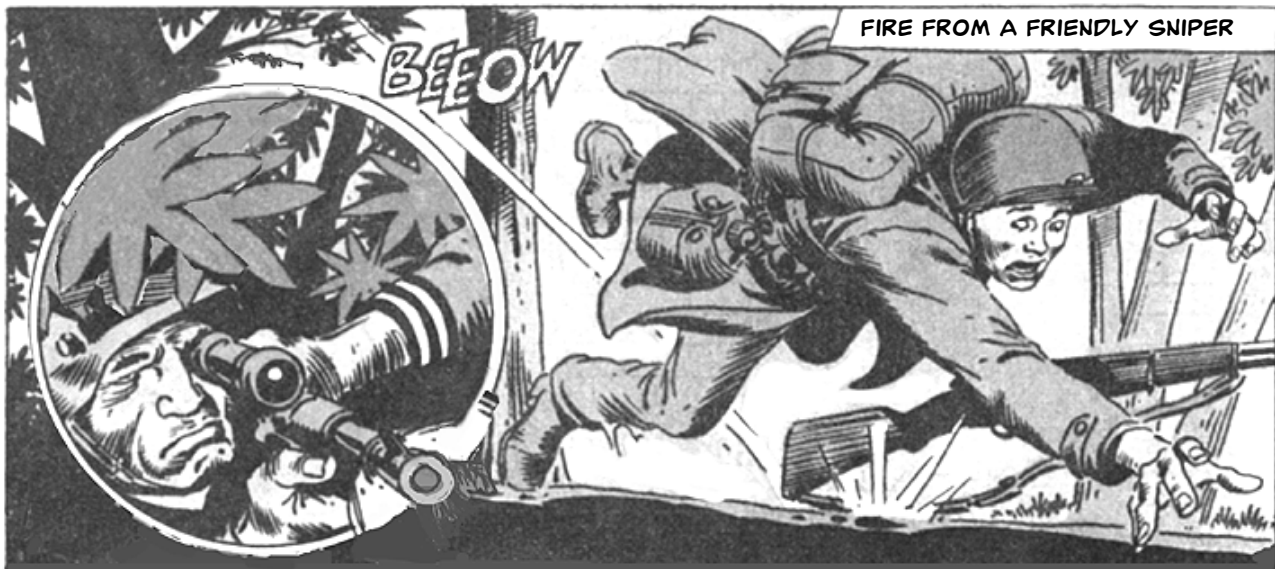
recruits start out raw. They must have training in how to recognize enemy tactics, how to envision victory, how to prepare, how to fight. Your job is to enlist them, teach them that we are at war, show them that with their help we can be victorious, train them in methods and tactics proven over time to bring victory.

We need not reinvent the wheel. There are plenty of old dead folks who recorded the lessons they learned for the benefit of future recruiters, future warriors. Study them. Share the knowledge with others of like mind. Heck, share the knowledge with those who are *not* of like mind. People change. You will find allies in strange places. Look for battle scars, the marks of the fighter.

Recruiting is a process where each one teaches one. As you train a recruit, you are training him to train others. Mama always told us, "We are all ignorant, only on different subjects. The problem is that some of us choose to remain that way." Don't let ignorance remain. Vanquish it with truth. Spread the word. Recruit. Educate.

Our army has an iron rule: Leave no soldier behind. Not one. Solidarity is our greatest strength. Leaving wounded soldiers on the battlefield has proven to be the disability movement's greatest weakness. I'll say it again: **Today we leave no soldier behind.**

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Mobilize

When mobilizing for action, you must have a plan. Sun Tzu teaches: “The general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.”

He’s saying that your plan is critical to your victory. When planning, first seek to put yourself in a position which is beyond defeat. Then wait for the enemy to provide you with the opportunity to defeat him. When he provides the opportunity, and he will, you and your troops will be like the ocean rushing from the topmost heights of heaven. Have no compassion for the enemy. Do not flinch. Crush him. He would surely crush you.

Again: All warfare is based on deception. Watch for spies. Do not reveal your plan in advance. When circumstances differ from your expectations, vary your plan accordingly.

He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared.

— Sun Tzu



Action

The Movement Action Plan (MAP, see web address above) is the guide I use to gain perspective on the disability rights movement. I recommend it to you.

I learned from it that social movements are always collective actions in which the populace is alerted, educated, and mobilized — over years and even decades — to challenge the holders of power and the whole society to redress social problems and restore critical social values.

By involving the populace directly in the political process, social movements foster the concept of government of, by, and for the people. The power of a movement is in direct proportion to the forcefulness with which the grassroots expresses its discontent and demands change. Hear that: forcefulness is key. Our progress is directly related to how well we organize and forcefully, non-violently, demand change.

The central issue of any social movement is the struggle between the movement and the power holders to win the hearts (sympathies), minds (public opinion), and active support (the louder the better) of the majority of the populace. It is the majority which ultimately holds the power to either preserve the status quo or create change.

This does not mean that you wait until you have convinced the majority before you act.

Always, your battle actions should serve to inform the majority.

Centralized power holders now make decisions in the interests of a small minority, keeping the majority in the dark while undermining the common good and aggravating critical social problems. Why else would my own state's legislature be debating how to pay nursing homes for 12,000 empty beds while people on long waiting lists cry out for community services?

People are powerful. Power ultimately resides with the populace. History is full of examples of an inspired citizenry becoming involved in social movements that achieve social and political changes — even topple tyrannical governments. Those few who hold power know that their power depends on the support or at least the acquiescence of the masses.

Opportunity

This is your opportunity to be the commander. Be an army of one while you recruit, recon, and reach a crossroads where you can join with allied armies on the high ground.

Attack

Gather your troops and engage the enemy on the battleground, a place of your choosing. Seek out the enemy's weak points and exploit them to advantage in furthering public understanding. Expose the lies. Expose the inconsistencies between publicly-stated policies and actual practice.

He will win who knows
when to fight and when
not to fight.

— Sun Tzu



5 RULES OF COMBAT

Combat Rule # 1 YOU ARE IN CONTROL.

No one can do anything to you unless you let them. When you figure out that you are letting them do it to you, you won't go along with it any longer.

Sure, you might say, but that isn't always true. Perhaps not.

But if they got the drop on ya, and they do, why did you let 'em? In most every instance, we participate in what occurs in our lives. We choose the scope of our personal responsibility. We choose how to react to others, what we will believe in and fight for. If the power holders commit evil acts, and you are not stopping them, you are letting them do it.

This first rule is the toughest for most folks to assimilate. Nobody really wants to take responsibility for the way things are now. Until we do, we are lost.

Combat Rule # 2 YOU ARE NOT JOHN WAYNE.

Don't try to John Wayne them. Never, and I mean never, take them on by yourself. John got away with it, but that was in the movies. Go it alone and they will beat you bloody. I have been consequenced enough for my John Wayne-ing to speak from experience. Always recruit an army of like-minded individuals to help take the ground, inform the people, and eradicate the injustice.

Combat Rule # 3 BE NOT NICE.

It isn't useful to be nice when the people in power have their thumb two joints up in your eye socket.

When they are deceiving you, they rob you of essential information, information you must have in order to reach your goal. They deceive you because they do not wish a public fight. They know that if the public had the truth, the power holders would lose their grip on power. They know this. So should you.

Revealing that your radar has located the target *will* get you consequenced. Be ready! When you attack, attack by surprise.

Combat Rule # 4 **SPEAK YOUR TRUTH
QUIETLY AND CLEARLY. EVENTUALLY
YOUR WORD WILL BE LAW IN THE LAND.**

Get up there and speak truth to power. It won't happen overnight, but it will happen.

An example from my own life: In 1978 I was asked to testify before the Select Subcommittee on Education of the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressman Paul Simon, having just been named Chair of the Subcommittee, held his first hearings on the Rehabilitation Act in his southern Illinois home district, presumably friendly territory. I was a graduate student there, at Southern Illinois University. Thinking I'd be a safe witness for their cause, the faculty picked me to testify.

This was back in the early days of the implementation of Section 504 of the Rehab Act. The Act bars disability discrimination in programs which receive federal financial assistance.

After protests and demonstrations by people with disabilities across the U.S. in 1977, the feds released regulations at last, regs requiring all recipients of federal funds to make their programs accessible. A year later, tensions were still high and bigots had not yet run for cover.

The president concluded his remarks by saying he did not agree with the 504 regulations. He asked the committee instead to develop a few model campuses and send all students with disabilities to them rather than require every college to make its campus accessible. Integrating all campuses was out of the question, too costly, he said.

I was next up to testify. Rep. Simon asked me what I thought of my university president's comments. I answered that his comments were bigoted. I told them that anything less than making every campus accessible was totally unacceptable from a moral standpoint.

I said more, that unless the state VR systems could show, beyond a reasonable doubt and using empirical evidence, that their involvement had some positive effect on their customers, VR should be abolished in favor of a system where the customer was truly in control of the services she or

he received to become independent and employed. I told them I saw no need for the feds to allow states to keep more than half the funds spent on vocational rehabilitation when they had produced nothing tangible to show for it.

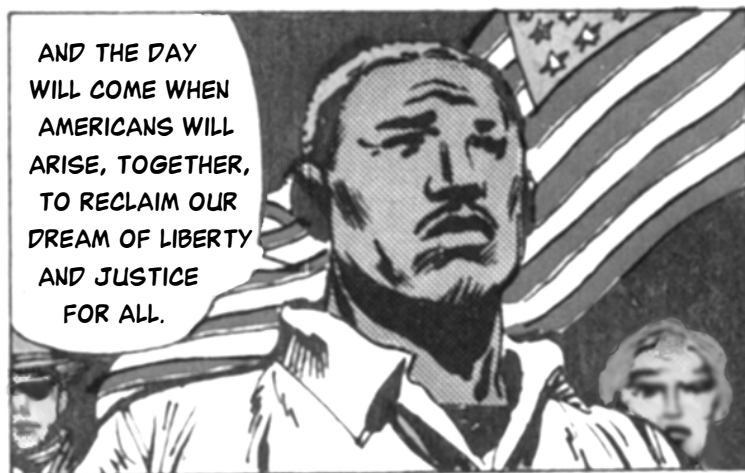
I told them I thought they should fund a nationwide network of self-help information centers to assist people with disabilities in living independently in their communities.

Twenty-three years later, those three truths spoken to power have come to pass in one form or another. Section 504 applies to all recipients of federal financial assistance. Centers for independent living were funded — though far short of what's needed to create a truly nationwide network. And people with disabilities in some states, perhaps all states someday, will get a "Ticket to Work," in theory allowing them to bypass VR and take control of their own employment preparations and job searches.

More recently, I was elected Chair of the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council. Many in the Ohio disability community understood that our state had long since declared war on us. The war became visible once advocates clearly communicated that they expected to have a Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) with the powers and duties authorized by federal law.

Since I'm the one who in 1985 proposed that SILCs become a part of the Rehab Act, I watch what's happening on that front.

Over the last seven years we have heard



various state politicians, bureaucrats and advocates tell us what we cannot have. We have seen them camouflage their power grab with the myth that the SILC is like all other governor-appointed bodies.

In fact, the Rehab Act that authorizes SILCs says this, in part, at Section 701:

The purpose of this chapter is to promote a philosophy of independent living, including a philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self help, self determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy, in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

The Rehab Act also spells out that the SILC is to be free to carry out its duties as it sees fit, "free from political influence from all other government structures." You read that right: free from political influence from all other government structures.

Those purposes of the Rehab Act could not possibly go forward while we allow states to incarcerate and exterminate us, could they?

Along with other disability rights advocates in Ohio, I read it as meaning that the SILC must take action to stop or change systems that have been constructed, the ones that operate against our freedom right now. When our SILC communicated these views, we came under fire from the state.

It started with representatives of the Rehabilitation Services Commission and Gov. Voinovich's office telling us that the SILC could not be a freestanding entity. It had to be part of the Rehabilitation Services Commission. We pointed out that federal law says otherwise. Their response: "We will do what we want, regardless of federal law."

Our response was to go to the legislature and have them put language in the budget bill that allows us to hire and supervise staff exempt from state hiring and personnel policies. We won that one. But the state fired back. Under the governor's most recent salvos, the state rehab agency cut the Independent Living budget by \$330,000.

Then, in spite of the federal law saying that

He will win whose army is
animated with the same
spirit throughout its ranks.

— Sun Tzu



the SILC chair is to be selected by the SILC itself, the governor appointed a chair, a fellow whose primary function was to sabotage the council's effectiveness. Our governor openly flouts federal law. Today our state is like the frontier west where the dude with the most firepower rules. We will not surrender. We will win, I promise you, because we are willing to do whatever it takes.

Combat Rule # 5

BE WILLING TO DO
WHATEVER IT TAKES.

You can start right now. Yes, *now*. Become a soldier for justice. Become part of and involved with the disability rights movement. Become informed. Speak truth to power and make every day a march for freedom by doing something to move us closer to our goal. You will take hits. Keep fighting. Never surrender. Leave no soldier behind.

Action is the key. Don't just think about it and have meetings about it. Do it.

Remember that we are safer when we fight openly, in public. They don't want to take you out in a public place. They dislike messy collateral damage, especially in public view.

When they do take one of ours, through their "admissions" process, rip the camouflage away. Make it public knowledge and keep it public until the prisoner is released.

I will return to these pages in September with a Tactical Manual. Meantime, see you on the battlefield.



Commander Roland Sykes provides logistics and communications for the disability revolution at large. Team tools are his specialty. He has a web page at www.virtualcil.org. You can reach him by email at rsykes@gimp.com or by mail at PO Box 317046, Dayton, Ohio 45437-7046.

YOUR WEIRDNESS IS YOUR POWER

by J. Quinn Brisben

You have a tactical advantage. Use it.

The whole idea behind the disability rights movement is to get the rest of the world to respect the uniqueness of your body and make such accommodations to it as will enable



you to live a full life. Thus, your body is the most important part of the idea you are trying to get across. You fight the injustice of the world by matching your good idea against the bad ideas of a prejudiced and unjust society.

You must be firm in your faith in your idea, which includes your body. Gandhi called this firmness in the faith *satyagraha*, which Martin Luther King translated as “soul force.” It is not the same as non-violence or non-anything else, although our struggle is best carried on without violence and with love toward those who oppose us. It is a positive thing, and we must use our unique bodies and qualities positively to make the rest of the world accept us as we are and permit us to make the contributions to society that we can.

Our unique bodies are of a strange and extraordinary character, what the world calls weird. Weirdness has always carried the idea of being caused by witchcraft or some other supernatural agency, and it is frightening. I have worked in many social causes, and only in the disability rights movement is there such a strong tendency for our potential supporters to throw money at us and run. A character in a Bertolt Brecht’s *The Threepenny Opera* who makes beggars look more horrible to increase their earning power remarks “The rich have hard hearts but weak nerves.” Their own normality embarrasses them, and they either stare or work too hard at not staring. However, most people find us attractive enough once they get to know us.

One of our most important fights is to be seen in public until people get used to us, and we should fight every effort to hide us away. When people get over being frightened of us, they sometimes find us funny. This is all right if they are laughing with us and not at us. As W. C. Fields once remarked “A comedian is not a person who does funny things; a comedian is a person who does things funny.” We look funny, we move funny, we eat funny, and we

make love funny. We should enjoy this and let others enjoy it, too.

Last year my wife and I had dinner with our ADAPT comrade Sanford Greenberg in a restaurant in Austin, Texas. Other ADAPT comrades Bill Scarborough and Debra Martinez were there on time, but Sanford was late because cab drivers kept saying that they could not find his house. When he finally got there, we had to use Bill's unpowered chair to get him unloaded and inside because Sanford had not brought his heavy power chair along.

The dinner was joyous despite the fact that Sanford is difficult for us to understand. We talked about his efforts to observe his Jewish faith during ADAPT actions, and our many arrests together. My wife and I decided to take him home, since cab drivers who could deal with his problems are hard to find. He kept us laughing by repeating "I'm a ba-ad boy!" in the accents of Lou Costello. He was able to buzz us into his complex, but my wife had to take his key and bring out his power chair.

My wife had never used a power chair before and her erratic progress in getting out to the car was hilarious to Sanford and me and somewhat scary for her. We laughed all the way back to our motel.

Many of my Jewish friends are extremely loyal to the State of Israel but naturally distressed, as am I, at some of the actions of its government, especially the admitted use of torture by the Israeli army and police against Palestinians suspected of terrorist actions.

I joined a Christian Peacemaker Team delegation to make a peaceful protest against Israeli injustices. The Christian Peacemaker Teams accepted my services and treated me with great consideration despite the fact that I do not belong to any of the historic peace churches that make up the group.

On June 4, 1999, I protested against Israeli actions against Palestinians near the city of Hebron, defending the rights of the Jaber family. They had farmed land there for more than a century. A recently built bypass highway that ran from Israeli settlements in Hebron to Jerusalem split their land. The family was not allowed to move farm equipment from one side of the road to the other, and their irrigation water had been cut off. A gas station for Israeli settlers was being built on Jaber land.

Together with a number of Israeli and

Palestinian peace groups we held a protest ceremony there, planting a symbolic olive tree. An Israeli police officer told us to move on. I said we would as soon as we had sung a few verses of "We Shall Overcome." He told us to move immediately or be arrested. I decided to make tactical use of my body. I told him that, if arrested, his men would have to carry me to the police van. I weigh about 365 pounds. We sang four verses and left without being arrested.

All of us can use whatever resources our so-called disabilities have given us. My ADAPT comrade Kyle Glozier cannot speak in the ordinary way, but he has a voice synthesizer that makes him sound like James Earl Jones speaking from a burning bush, a formidable weapon in the hands of a young man still in his mid-teens. Last year he used it against a famous American avatar of violent action and defeated him utterly. The actor Clint Eastwood testified at a congressional hearing for a bill that would give innkeepers relief from suits under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Kyle's testimony followed Eastwood's, and he used his wonderful voice to point out that the ADA had been in force for a decade and that no such relief was warranted. The bill wasn't heard from for a while [although it's up for consideration this year], and the opinion expressed in this journal was that Eastwood had been totally outgunned by a small young man in an electric wheelchair with a voice synthesizer. >>>

Kyle Glozier has a voice synthesizer that makes him sound like James Earl Jones speaking from a burning bush.



The main point is to use our weirdness as well as our ordinariness to tactical advantage. The results can be astonishing. Three weeks after the conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery march in 1965 I was part of a group of Detroit and Chicago schoolteachers encouraging African Americans to register to vote in Montgomery, Alabama. The publicity accorded the march meant that we had more than ordinary protection against violence in its aftermath, but it was still a potentially dangerous situation. We decided to spend our last day in Montgomery's downtown distributing voter registration leaflets to both blacks and whites. I could not use my first choice of location; the plaque set into the steps of the state capitol where Jefferson Davis had been inaugurated in 1861 was closely guarded by state troopers and unavailable to the likes of me. My second choice was in front of a shirt store, according to its plaque the site of the telegraph office where Davis had sent orders to General Beauregard to commence firing on Fort Sumter. My companion was Gil Kimura, an American of Japanese heritage, a teacher in the Chicago public schools.

In 1965 the man who headed the Montgomery chapter of the White Citizens Council, the leading racist organization there, leased that store. After a while he came out on the sidewalk to tell us that everything had been all right between the races before us damned outside agitators showed up there.

I replied that I had been born and raised in Oklahoma, a state that had had the same segregation laws as Alabama. Several of my

relatives lived in Alabama. I added that I was in Montgomery at the request of local citizens and had acted entirely under their direction during my stay. He thought about that for a spell, then went back inside.

Less than an hour later, he confronted us again. He allowed as how the whole damned bunch of us ought to be locked up in concentration camps. Gil Kimura told him that he had been born in a concentration camp in California in 1942, and this had not prevented him from working for African American voter registration in Alabama. The experiences of his family and other Americans of Japanese ancestry had rather encouraged him to be here. The storekeeper went back inside.

When the White Citizen came out again he forsook verbal argument and kicked me in the shin. I was twice his size but pledged to non-violence. Non-violence worked this time. Genteel Alabama ladies passing by were appalled by his bad manners and made a special point of taking our literature and promising to pay attention to the arguments made in it. We soon had distributed all the leaflets we had.

We use what we have in any way we can. Elaine Sayghal, ADAPT's beloved "Spitfire" from Philadelphia, uses her absolute fearlessness in the face of arrests to help deal with her mental difficulties, and so do a lot of us.

Toby Tyler from Milwaukee uses his professional demeanor as a policeman — disabled while performing his duty — to forward the movement's goals.

Justin Dart uses his business expertise and enormous political influence with his Washington associates.

Four-flushing politicians have learned that it is dangerous to lie to a superior negotiator like Utah's Barbara Toomer.

The quiet Erik von Schmetterling and the flamboyant Jimmy Schrode of Philadelphia make a marvelous team.

Jeanine Bertram Kemp is not alone in knowing how to apply the lessons learned in one social movement to another.

We were not cut to identical patterns with a cookie cutter. Our individual qualities, our very disabilities, what many think is our weirdness, can be our greatest strength. ✦

Your weird body is the most
important part of the idea you
are trying to get across..



I'm a Hurricane

I'm a big boss storm and I will do you harm.
You'll wonder what hit you when I turn on the charm.
I'm a freight train running round your brain,
I'm a pistol-packin' Papa, I'm a Hurricane.

I snap the trees in two, I break 'em like a stick.
Some people think it's naughty but I think it's a kick.
I'm lookin' for a party, gonna have some fun.
Gonna get my jollies when my work is done.

I'm a Hurricane. I'm a Hurricane.
Go to war, Miss Agnes, I'm a Hurricane.

Some people say I'm crazy, some people say I'm mean.
I'm two hard places that you're caught in between.
I ain't playin' with you, I ain't foolin', Jack.
I'm a big bam boom and you better jump back.

I'm a Hurricane. I'm a Hurricane.
Go to war, Miss Agnes, I'm a Hurricane.

— *Matt Daubert*

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THE ILLUSTRIOUS JUSTIN DART, JR., WITH NOTED SHITKICKER GREG JONES AT THE WHITE HOUSE IN MAY. PHOTO BY THE UNCOMPARABLE TOM OLIN

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