

The Illusion of Violence

Combat Acting 100: Slaps & Slashes

“Safety. Simulation. Storytelling.”

–David McCormick

What is stage combat?

- The Illusion of Violence created by performers for an audience
- What do we mean by “performer”?
- Where’s my audience?

Why train in stage combat?

- Stories involve fights
- We want to **design, plan and show** great combat scenes
- We mustn't harm performers
- Like all performance skills, it takes **practice**

Safety

- Equipment
- Training
- Choreography
- Special effects

Part 1: Unarmed

Warm up

- Jogging
- Jumping
- Joint rotations

Pushes and the Straight-back Fall

- Shoulder push and ride
- Pushing away from the wall/superman
- Straight-back fall
- Two-hand push to straight-back fall
- **Safety Method: COOPERATION**

John Wayne Punch

- Where's my audience/camera?
- Operator distance, cue and path
- Victim shoulder-pivot
- Timing and energy, knap?
- **Safety Method: DISTANCE**

Round Punch into Block

- Where's my audience?
- Operator round punch
- Victim turtle-shell block
- **Safety Method: TARGET**

Haymaker with Duck

- Operator timing for safety, horizontal path, not tracking
- Victim duck with eyes ahead
- **Safety Method: TIMING**

Part 2: Sword

Sword Basics

- Sword shapes
- Grip
- True edge

Slash with Duck

- Operator cue with true edge, from outside or inside, wrist control
- Victim duck (bring the weapon with you)
- **Safety Method: TIMING**

Stance & Footwork

- *En garde!* Effacing the target, balanced between feet, straight spine, pronation/supination, off-hand position
- Strong and weak. Forte, foible, mid blade, flat
- Guard: hilt, quillions, knuckle-bow, pommel

Head Parry Defends Vertical Cut

- Safe & effective distance
- Operator arm mechanics
- Victim parry
- Timing and moving with footwork
- **Safety Method: TARGET**

Slaps & Slashes Summary

4 Safety methods

- Cooperation and victim control
- Distance
- Target
- Timing

2 Rehearsal rules

- Maximum safe velocity
- Choreograph everything



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