

Sid Heal Part 2: Understanding Tactical Science

JON BECKER: This episode of The Debrief is dedicated to the memory of Sid Heal. When we began this project, our primary goal was to capture the history and stories of the men who developed special tactics before we lost them to time. Weeks ago, we made the decision to launch the show, 2 episodes we recorded with Sid. Sid has been my friend for more than 3 decades. It was the key part of my early career in tactical education. Without Sid's influence, I'm not sure our work would've developed into what it is, and I'm certain I would've been a different man. As a result, it seemed only fitting for Sid's episodes to leave the series.

Sadly, a few days ago, we lost Sid. As we're preparing for his memorial, I anguished over whether we should release these episodes and what the right thing to do was. That anguish ended when Sid's family gracefully told me that I needed to release them and that is exactly what he would've wanted me to do. The Special Tactics community will always remember Sid as a force of nature, as a teacher, as a Marine combat veteran, as an author, and as the quintessential student at the tactical game. I will remember him as a great friend, a man of deep faith, a loving father to his kids and grandkids, and a dedicated husband to Linda for almost 52 years.

I'm very grateful for the time I got to spend with Sid. His impact to the Special Tactics community was profound. And I know he will be remembered by his teams, his friends, and his students for decades to come. I'm also grateful that got to have this conversation with Sid just weeks before he passed, and to be able to share that conversation with you.

JON: My name is Jon Becker. For the past 4 decades I've dedicated my life to protecting tactical operators. During this time, I've worked with many of the world's top law enforcement and military units. As a result, I've had the privilege of working with the amazing leaders who take teams into the world's most dangerous situations.

The goal of this podcast is to share their stories in hopes of making us all better leaders, better thinkers, and better people. Welcome to The Debrief.

JON: My guest today is Sid Heal. Sid is a legend in the Special Tactics community, and a key figure in the history and evolution of special tactics in the United States. Sid is a retired...five of the United States Marine Corps, serving numerous combat deployments including the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and Operation United Shield in Somalia just to name a few. Sid is a

retired commander of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and has led the Special Enforcement Bureau, the Emergency Operations Bureau, and a wide variety of other assignments. Sid is the author of several books and literally hundreds of articles. Sid has taught at the US Army War College, is a former board member of the NTOA, is the former president of the California Association of Tactical Officers. So, Sid, the last time we sat down, we ended with the genesis of your book, Sound Doctrine. Talk to me about what the origin of the story was for Sound Doctrine.

SID: When I became an officer in the Marine Corps, I had been enlisted for 10 years. And so, the Marine Corps began putting me on a career path. It was understood that there were certain courses that I was going to be required to complete successfully. And I estimated between 1978 and 1986 when it was the first time I really led as an officer, troops in harms way. The Marine Corps had conservatively spent over a hundred thousand dollars on my education. I felt comfortable being in charged. It was not like it was my baptism of fire as an officer. When I became a captain in the sheriff's department, I had a handshake and a new badge. And so, I decided to apply the strategy behind what the Marine Corps expected of me in law enforcement. I signed up for every major school that I could attend that they would let me go, Command College for California Center of Leadership Excellence, the FBI National Academy. These were months-long or years-long courses. And yeah, they did change my thinking.

I wished everybody, especially at the command rank, could attend either or both of these schools. And I know we have some other ones, but they're not driven as much by the organization such as the Marine Corps, as they are by the personal initiative of the students. I think you can get a better class of students for that, I will say that, but the trade off is that we've got people that are going to get promoted that have not demonstrated the initiative, and do not have the skills and all of the abilities that have gone through these courses. That was really when my research took a serious turn. As a matter of fact, Sound Doctrine, was originally a paper that I wrote for a master's degree called A Scientific Approach to Tactical Decisions.

And I ended up arguing with the professor. And to his credit, in my opinion, I won the argument by explaining some scenarios, where his particular strategy would not apply. And it was the first time that, I think that he'd thought about it. What I later coined was looking at it at the inside of the windshield. The vast majority of people that see police actions, are looking at it from the outside. There are a lot of things that are influential that people don't understand that when you're in law enforcement, I'll just give

you one as one example. We're not allowed to flee. When it turns sour on us, we're not allowed to get up and say, "I'm not going to play this anymore. I'm going to quit. It's too dangerous. It's too messy. I don't know what to do."

We're expected to bring that situation to a position where the public feels safe. People who enjoy law and order, and sausage, shouldn't watch either one being made because as I've mentioned before, it's messy. I don't have a phaser; I don't have the ability of making it look pretty. We're trying to save lives, and injuries. I really don't know how to put it any better than that, and that's probably why somebody would be more eloquent would be able to explain it, so that even the activist could understand that we're as not as indifferent or unfeeling as I think, they think we are.

JON: Yeah, it's interesting. I remembered, God, 25 years ago, having that conversation with Daryl Gates over dinner. And one- We were talking about Rodney King; it was after he retired. And it was, you know, post everything all the litigation was over. And he said, you know, his reaction when it happened was to fireball. And he couldn't because, you know, of the way the worlds worked and everything else. But I said, "You know what? What's your thought?" He said, "You know, people need to understand that you only use- You only win a fight, by using more force." Right? The guy that wins the fight is the guy that throws the last punch. And so, it is- And sometimes you misjudge. Right? Sometimes it's a couple of extra runs. And what you get at the time was, I know you're going to maybe occasionally throw 1 or 2 too many punches. I don't want you to throw 20 extra punches.

SID: People think straight fights are boxing matches or wrestling matches. But I got to tell you, even the ones that you watch on TV with ultimate force and mixed martial arts don't compare. The closest thing that people might have to judge these that they might have actually experienced is a dog fight, growling, and biting, and scratching, and hitting with feets and knees, and elbows, and biting ears off. And I'm not exaggerating.

JON: No. I think we are- The thing is, we are almost- We've almost risen to a point where we're too physically secure. We are distanced from violence. Yeah, we see it on TV, we see it in movies. It's not a personal thing. Most people have never been in a fight, most people have never been punched. And so frequently, you have people looking at the actions of an officer that's in a fight, who have never been in a fight. Well, he hit him 3 too many times.

SID: I wish, and it'll never be seen on reality TV, and I won't mention any names, but to watch a deputy sobbing because we couldn't save the hostages. Sobbing, or giving up his marriage, transferring, because he held himself to a standard, that was so unrealistic that no one could have done better under the circumstances. He could not face the team members, even though we tried to come back. And I can't, don't, even the number of times when they just ended it all. They go in the locker room, pull out their gun, and it would be over. It's bad enough going to a funeral because an officer was killed. But we can't tolerate our failures in something that we have dedicated our lives to. And I realize that I'm getting a little upset.

JON: But it's close to home.

SID: It's closed to home, and the thing is I'm not using these as hypotheticals. I could see these people, and one case, this guy had 2 bronze stars from Vietnam. And he had been wounded twice and could not tell us why he thought he could've done better, without sobbing to the point we couldn't understand him.

JON: I think it's difficult for people to understand: one, how complicated the situations are, two, how personal they are. But more importantly, I think that everybody looks at these things and they think that there's always a winning solution. And there's not, there's not. You know, you look at how many these scenarios, or just you know, there is no way to win. You know, I recently interviewed Lee McMillion. And we talked about the Pena case.

SID: There's another giant.

JON: Yeah, for sure. But you have a guy with his own kid, who's going to kill the kid, and he's shooting at you. And there's no winning situation there. This is not going to be like everybody high-fives and goes home. And I think that it's very easy from the outside to look at these things and say, "Oh yeah this is easy. They should've just done this." It's really easy to win the football game Monday morning, it's a completely different experience when you're in there and your life is dependent upon it. So, when did it first occur to you that these 2 doctrines dreams of law enforcement military needed to come together, and you needed to start working on that?

SID: As a new sergeant, I was assigned to SEB, Special Enforcement Bureau as a team leader. And we were encountering shootings. And without the labor in point too much, it was literally like being in Vietnam again. At least to me, I realized that there was a lot of things different like it's not a hostile environment and everything else. But I knew that I was not going to be able to live with the fact that somebody got hurt because I

wasn't up to speed. And I was not up to speed. Not just in the rural-urban environment, in the actually, the thinking. And so, I spent a lot of my own money, went to the government library in Los Angeles, which was the cheapest place to get specialized books. And a lot of them were monographs which I really liked because the author wrote it for the love of the subject, for lack of a better term, rather than how good it's going to sell. And so, as a result of that, they tended to be shorter and more tightly focused.

So, I bought a lot of monographs and continued to do that through all my reserve training, to the point where I got to actually meet some of the authors in the Marine Corps, Dr. Joe Strange and, Dr. Russell Glenn, I'm trying to think of them. And I kept notes. It wasn't that I was smarter, it's the fact that I was succeeding because I had already thought through the problem. It was one of the things that General Mattis eventually said was the fact that the most important five inches or six inches on the battlefield are between your ears. I don't think anybody could put it better than that. But I didn't put it that way until he had said it. But I understood it intuitively. And so that was really where it started. But I didn't put a pen to paper other than for my own personal use until 1989, when I wrote the first article. And that was at the request of John Coleman.

JON: And then, how far after that, like when did you really start writing Sound Doctrine?

SID: 1999 probably. Well, no I take it back, it was earlier than that. It's probably, where I had made the decision to do it before I died. Like on a bucket list was on a beach in Somalia, which is kind of like a funny story by itself. I started it when I first got back, and I can't tell you how many attempts I threw away. I never written a book, didn't know what a book should look like. I asked 2 people Larry Richards and Mike Colonel in the Marine Corps, Tim Anderson, who was also LAPD. If they would look over my shoulder and give me some ideas. Sound Doctrine is actually a lot more extensive. I have thrown at least that much stuff away; I didn't throw it away because I spent so much time writing it. But it was Tim's idea to keep it short, and to write it as a primer, not as a textbook. And so, Sound Doctrine was written for people that had never been in the military, had never been in law enforcement, but these tactics could be explained so that they would be understandable. And so, we use competitive games like soccer, and football, and basketball, and baseball, and chess, and- Because it has a lot of the same attributes and characteristics of any other conflict. Somebody wins and somebody loses.

JON: That's interesting. I remember you using the analogy of checkers to explain, checkers versus chess to explain the initiative. And it's- So, I didn't realize that you and Tim- I knew he was your colonel in the Marine Corps, but I didn't realize that that was the genesis. When did Dick Odenthal get involved?

SID: He got involved when Larry Richards died. Larry Richards had a stroke, and so I asked Odie to look over my shoulders for field command. Field Command was actually a text. It's written for instructors or college professors that are going to go into this at a deeper level. And to explain stuff, it really duplicates a lot of what Sound Doctrine does. And Sound Doctrine explains the concepts and why they're important. But Field Command actually goes into more depth because it's a textbook, so-

JON: So, if somebody was to say, "Well, I want to be a student of the game. I want to understand this." Would you recommend they start with Sound Doctrine? And then move to Field Command?

SID: I usually- I get that question a lot. And I usually ask them, "Where are you in your career? What schools have you attended?" Sound Doctrine is a primer. It's written as a primer. And it's not going to hurt to read it, you can spin through it, if you already gone through. Then some of the critiques that I've had is that it's very basic. Well, that tells me that this guy is at an advanced level. That was intended-

JON: Yeah. If Chinese 101 is too easy for you, it's because you're in Chinese 201.

SID: That's right. Well, that was the whole point with Field Command. And so, then I would tell them that, "You can read Sound Doctrine but you're probably going to get frustrated when it's teaching you things that you already know. So, I would just recommend start with Field Command."

JON: So, why don't we walk through some of the key topics in both Sound Doctrine and Field Command. And talk through, kind of your perspectives, like- Obviously, you and I can sit here for 4 days, and work our way through Field Command. At some point in the future, we may do this again to try and go deeper. But one of the questions that you know, I get most often for you, because I went out to a lot of people and said, "Hey, I'm interviewing Sid. What do you want to know?" And there were several topics that came up that people said, "Hey, please ask this." So, why don't we start with End State. Because that seems like a logical place to-

SID: That actually is a good place to start. Because it I could pick one concept that is responsible for more debacles, is the lack of a clear End State. They haven't thought it through enough to know what it is that they're actually trying to achieve. I have videos that I show that I divide up the class. You're going to look at this from the administrator trying to explain it to the city council and the public. You're going to look at it from a force review that's trying to use it to learn from for teaching. You're going to look at it from an activist standpoint, looking for everything bad, whether it has rational logic behind it or not, the fact that you can identify something that didn't go right. And then show them a couple of these videos.

Probably the single most common misconception, what was it that you were trying to achieve? It's really the metric that is necessary to judge whether your course of action is contributing to achieving your End State. The End State is really what is necessary for this to be a successful operation. One of the key things that activistness is the fact that, that determination is usually done under risk at harsh time constraints, and uncertainty. And as a result of that, they don't understand that we don't have time to look for an optimal End State, the perfect thing, the best situation. We're only looking for a satisfactory one. And we understand that if we had the time and the resources to go back and do it again, we wouldn't do it the same way. Humans do not repeat unproductive behaviors.

So, the first thing I would say is, define your End State. What is it that we're here for? What is it that we're trying to achieve? If we're sent, and I use these as one of the examples that I can see, and this was my own department, to prevent a suicide, what is it that we can do. And this particular case, the best thing probably would've been getting in your car and leave. There's no value at it at you being here. So, one thing I agree with a lot of the activists is that we need some training in this. And I more than training, we need the education. Training helps us do things better, education tell us to do the right thing to begin with.

JON: Well training teaches us the technique; education teaches us the why.

SID: Yep. And that was probably my most asked questions to the point where everybody has actually in unison repeated it. Because I would go, "You know my next question." And they all repeat in unison, "Why?" I don't just want you to tell me what you're going to do. I want you to tell me, how it's contributing, why it's necessary. So, I enjoy that. But that'd be the number one place I would start.

JON: Yeah, it's interesting. One of the ways that I describe when I'm talking to somebody is, you know the next time you go on vacation, where are you going to go? Oh, I'm going to go here, what are you going to do? Well, I'm going to do this, this, and this. Imagine if you started that vacation by getting in your car and making a decision to go right or left. Because that End State, that's what you're doing. And even when you get there, you won't know you're there.

SID: When I teach the class, I show a picture of a golf course. And I ask the class, "What club do you use?" And a lot of them play golf, I don't. I wouldn't know if it's a good club or a bad club except for one thing, there's no flag, there's no hole. It makes a difference how far away it is, which direction of the wind is blowing. Is it on a slope? And then on the next slide, there's a hole with the slide. And now they all have some idea of how to achieve that objective. That is how important the End State is. I use golf because it's a benign example, but it's absolutely imperative before you can develop a plan to know what it is you're trying to achieve.

JON: Well, and so I think that's actually a good Segway to the next one which is maneuvering in time and place. So, talk to me about that.

SID: Most everybody understands that tactics unfold in places. We talk about key terrain, and observation, and high ground, and choke points, and things like that, but they don't understand a lot of them. That time is also a dimension. And as a result of that, doing the right thing at the wrong time is just as bad as doing the wrong thing anytime. For those that have been involved in police work, how many times have we searched an empty building? And the suspect is gone. It's not that our tactics were faulty. As a matter of fact, we're using the same tactics that we would use any other time. And a matter of fact the medications were effective when the suspect is there. But the timing was off. You can actually maneuver in time just like you can maneuver in space. And so, we start with illustrating the purpose of initiatives. The freedom of action, the ability to choose, the time and circumstances under how the next episode is going to unfold. That provides a huge advantage. In some cases, the advantage is so huge, it's decisive in nature simply because we have the ability to exploit the circumstances. Another one is density. One of the reasons that tactical operations are so much more complex when there's a lot of people involved it's because there's a lot of activities that compete with each other, and in some cases, even conflicts. Which means if you do this one thing, we've been deprived of the ability of doing something else. Probably a good example with riots is the objective to counter them and arrest the perpetrators, or to disperse

them. Well needless to say, it's going to take a completely different set of courses of action to achieve depending on what you've decided. And that's something that needs to be chided ahead of time. It's not something that you can go halfway through and say, oh, we're going to change direction. Needless to say, we need to be able to change direction, but that's not really leadership. With the military, especially with the Marine Corps, driven by events, we're simply following The Path of Least Resistance. That is not leadership by anybody's definition.

JON: No. The Path of Least Resistance is down the river and off a waterfall.

SID: Yeah. Or overusing a device, like a tactical device, like a taser or a beanbag. It works well, so we'll use it again. It worked twice, so we'll use it 50 times.

JON: Well, we see this right now with Dynamic Entry and No-Knock Warrants. Right. This is a raging topic in the media, and actually recently, the National Tactical Officers Association came out with a position paper on No-Knock Warrants. This was not all that popular in some circles. What are your thoughts on that?

SID: I've responded to that article the first I see it. I saw it on Facebook, and I responded right then. I'm all for it. It had become the default. When I became a captain, I was a unit commander of the Special Enforcement Bureau. And one of the things I told my lieutenants, "If you bring me a course of action, and the only thing when I ask you why we chose this, and the only thing that you defended was you've always done it that way, I'll cancel it. I will not allow that to proceed. Then you can either come up with a different course of action or defend that one." The idea was, we can't accept things at default. We've become lazy. What- We accept risk that we shouldn't have no business accepting. We normalize it. Well, SWAT's a risky business and therefore, it's just because the nature of the assignment. That used to light my fire. The lieutenants will tell you that I became passionate about that. So, when I talk about maneuvering and time, and space, the space is the easy one. They can see it; they can touch it; they can feel it.

The maneuver elements are physical, people, and things, and weapons, and vehicles, and planes, and all kinds of things. But time is a notional dimension, meaning that it exists really only as a mental image. And so, as a result of that, you're dealing with abstract concepts that are actually manifesting of themselves in different ways that we can exploit. The objective for instance in maneuvering in space, is to gain and maintain

control of key terrain, terrain that provides a market advantage. But the objective and maneuvering and time is to create and or exploit opportunities. Opportunity in the simplest form is really a window in time where circumstances provide a temporary advantage. And so, as a result of that, some cases we can create them with distractions and things like that.

But in other cases, we need to recognize them and exploit it. And I'll just tell you that it's been frustrating for a lot of my students that have completed a full-length course and I got to tell you, I'll be the first one to admit, it's grueling. But they end up in a tactical situation where they know more than the people that are leading them. And I have to tell them, "Don't give up your career over this. Make your case without an argument, unless it's a safety issue. You're on a bound, duty bound to remain subordinate to your superiors. Your day will come." And that's one of the things I try to soothe them with. It's kind of interesting, I've been retired for some years now. I can't tell you the feeling of euphoria, ecstasy, exhilaration, that I get when one of my now commanders, incident commanders calls me or sends me an email, and says, "Thanks so much." I remember he will cite something that I might've used a metaphor to illustrate it, or an anecdote, or an illustration. Rarely do they cite the concept verbatim. But the fact was they remembered from the story or the exercise that we did. I don't even know how to explain it. It makes every hour that I spent studying this, or writing about it, or teaching it worthwhile instantly.

JON: Yeah, you have a unique ability to capture complicated concepts. And I think this is part of the reason that you've been able to fuse these things and put them in a way that people understand them. The unique ability to capture a complicated scenario, and paint it in a very simple, frequently funny story that stays with you. And I'll give you one. I'll give you a couple, actually. First one is, that guy couldn't find a giraffe in a flock of sheep. I cannot tell you how many times after the first time you told me that, I've used it. But if I had to pay you a licensing fee, you'd be a rich man. The second one, and in going back to Dynamic Entry, I remember when you went back to SEB. And we were having- That was- What year was that?

SID: When I went back? 2000. Early 2000. I think I was promoted in 1999.

JON: So that's 20 years ago. And we were having conversations about Dynamic Entry and No-Knock Warrants, and how you know, you didn't really believe in them. And you said something that was profound. It was just kind of a classic Sid off the top of your head. You said, "Here's a problem

with Dynamic Entry. The guy inside the house has made so many bad life decisions, that the sheriff is knocking down his door with a SWAT team. Given that guy 30 seconds to make the right decision is not going to yield the right result. Let's give him an hour to think about it." Right? He still may make a bad choice. But that's the perfect example of maneuvering in time.

SID: At least he made an informed decision.

JON: Yes exactly. But that's a perfect example of maneuver in time. You're slowing the event down to get to a point where you are more likely to have a positive resolution.

SID: One, I've had so many mentors over my lifetime. And many of them are accomplished and recognized on an international level. One of which was eventually Major Alec Ron from Israel. And he was at Entebbe, and I asked him about Dynamic Entries. This was clear back in 1987 or 1988. And we were debriefing Entebbe in detail, far more than any of the books I've read. But one of the things he said in his heavy Israeli accent, and I will probably insult him by trying it. But he, "I'll tell you something, Sid. You cannot control everything. If you continue to do this, you will lose people." Boy, he could not have said anything that grabbed my more attention. With the Marine Corps grabbed me by the back and swivel that, these people were following me because they trusted me. I needed to be worthy of that trust. And that was a major impetus. I was already doing it and he just put it in words better than I could have. But here's a guy that was in situations that they wrote books about that was validating the same conclusions that I had reached stumbling and bumbling along.

JON: Yeah, I think what's lacking in a lot of cases today, and this was a conversation I had with Mike Hillman as well. When you guys inherit the problem, you inherited the problem. And there was no solution. There was no how-to book. So, you had to build a how-to book, and the process of building a how-to book means building a "why" book. The problem is that the why book hasn't been handed down. The how-to book has. And to some degree Sound Doctrine and Field Command are the why book that people need to read, they need to understand. You know, it's things like End State and maneuvering in time initiative of- You know, that's the part that I think, people really is lacking today. We're teaching the how, we're not teaching the why.

SID: One of my real hero's was a guy named John Schmidt. He was a major in the Marine Corps. He was certainly more higher ranked later,

eventually he retired. But he was the primary author between one of the first books that we were required to read as officers called War Fighting. It's War Fighting FMFM 1, Fleet Marine Force Manual 1. Then it became MCEP 1, Marine Corps Doctrine Publication 1. He had a gift, and I thought it was a gift, of being able to make it so that I can understand it. After having personally experienced it and talking with him, it wasn't so much of a gift as it was willing to drill down so that you understood it well enough to explain it. Not just reiterate somebody else had said.

When it came time to write Field Command, I used one of my kids' textbooks. For instance, I bold printed the first time a concept was introduced. I italicized the explanations so that they would jump out. I realized that that's third grade stuff. But that's where we're at with some of the people, when I was talking to General Zinni, and General Conway, and General Mattis, and then. These people were so far ahead of me that had I not read, I would not have understood anything that they had described to me. They were at a level far beyond what I was going to be able to translate. And so, as a result of that, I tried to take these concepts and make them as easy to understand even at risk of overgeneralization. In many cases, I've made it obvious that in the simplest terms or- So the people understand the concept itself is more complicated than I'm explaining it. But for our purposes, you can understand the essence. When I was asked to explain, in fact I got asked several times to condense this down. I couldn't condense it, it's not a condensation. It is a distillation. I had to leave things out to be able to get the essence of this.

If I could leave people with just this one idea, it would be this: Concepts are universal. It's all of the applications that are contextual. I can explain the concepts, and most experts, even if they disagree about a lot of things, will agree on the concepts. This includes activists. It's the applications though, that are really the true art of war. The concepts are the science. I can explain it, I can prove it in many cases. I've got exercises and games that I play with students, so it becomes intuitive. But there may be a thousand different ways that actually applies in real life.

JON: So, if you were looking back at 30-year-old Sid or 35-year-old Sid, where would you start teaching yourself tactical science?

SID: I'd start by convincing people that there was a tactical science. The sad part about it is that we've got most law enforcement officers, without any understanding, that they can support their decisions with solid reliable science. Tactical science is probably closest related to military science, but as soon as you say military, you can drop-

JON: Yeah, everybody freaks out.

SID: That's right. The- I have several games to illustrate how this works. But tactical science is a soft science and that's problematic. Hard sciences like mathematics, and astronomy, and physics-

JON: Math is easy because it has its answers.

SID: That's right. It has- You can build a spreadsheet; it doesn't matter who puts the data in. It's going to give you one answer. But soft sciences like economics, and sociology, and psychology, and other things, don't use algorithms and formulas to give you one answer. They use probabilities and interpretations to give you a range of probabilities. The fact that you didn't pick the best ones is not your fault. It's the nature of the science. But the sad part about it is, because there's more than one right answer, is problematic with many administrators. Because if they believe there's more than one right answer, there can be no wrong answer. Simply some answers that are better than others. Well, I can tell you, if you can understand the science, there's wrong answers. And we have the debacles that we have to live with in law enforcement that cannot be justified.

I make a fairly lucrative sideline out of testifying in court as an expert on tactics. I'd be honest with you; I could triple my income if I wanted to do it more often than I do. I don't enjoy it. I usually limit myself to 2 cases per year, because it keeps me sharp, it keeps me on the edge. Anybody that has ever gone through a deposition by a well-trained experienced attorney, is going to get a level of detail that you will never get from a report or from a PowerPoint, or anything else. So, I do that. But I got to tell you, I don't enjoy exploiting it. I would rather avoid it all together, but every once in a while, and I don't take retainers and everything, and I give them the first 30 minutes for free. And the only reason I limit it to 30 minutes, if you can't explain it to 30 minutes, I'm not going to understand it and you're not going to understand it. But I'll just tell them. And I've said, we're not going to win this case. I'm going to tell you, that I hope there is damage control, which by the way, almost always the kiss of death.

I've had several attorneys hire me even after I told them. We're not going to win this. I'm not going to say we did everything right. But I've actually read cases where I've called up and said, "You don't want me on the stand. If this guy makes you an offer, take it." Well, that is not how most experts that I dealt with, especially the opposing experts, think. I get paid the same whether we win or lose. But my contribution largely has been simply explaining the rationale behind the decision-making because I could

articulate it. And the person that actually had to make the decision, made the right decision without the ability of explaining why. If I can get that jury to look at me and say, "You know what? I don't agree with that decision, but I understand why he made it." We're done. We could do that because there's more than one right answer.

JON: If you were going to develop a young officer now, you know, through lieutenant, what would your reading list look like?

SID: Oh, I hate to say it, but it would be voluminous. It's hard for me to read a good book and dismiss it. Now I have had some books where I've said, "Read at least the last 3 chapters."

JON: Where do I start?

SID: I'd ask if you're looking for leadership. I got to tell you, there are a lot of really good books from the business community that have applications in law enforcement and tactics. One of the game-changers for me was *In Search of Excellence* by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman. "Management by wandering around, catch people in doing something good." I mean this is a book I read about 35 or 40 years ago, but still had such an influence on me that I can quote moments to this day. Most people outside a print wouldn't even know. Another one was *Information Anxiety* by Richard Saul Wurman, really the context that comes out of this book is the fact that, you don't need to know everything. You need to know how to find it. One of the things, though, that really hit me with this book is, the truth is not enough. It's only important if you believe it. It can be completely inaccurate but if you believe it, you're going to act on it and pay the consequences. So, it's to your benefit to make sure that the sources you're using are something you can rely on because they've actually changed your ability to think in certain ways.

Man in Mission, Tony Kearns' book, I'm trying to think of this one, *Going Pro*. It's basically, what's going to be necessary for you to be a true professional. I could go on and on and on. And I'm, hate to do under this forum because I'm going to forget something. And I got to tell you that, we put reading lists together on crisis-decision making. *Crisis-Decision Making*, Gary Klein, *Source of Power*, *Intuition at Work*, *The Power of Intuition*. Malcolm Gladwell-

JON: Which one, Blink?

SID: Oh, Blink is one of the ones that comes to mind. *Dog Saw*, *Freakonomics*, I could go on-

JON: Do you have reading lists? Do you have a recommended reading list?

SID: I also keep my library; the list of my library eventually became too large for my memory. So, I put it into an Excel spreadsheet so I can remember where I put the book. Nowadays, a lot of my reading is electronic, and the advantage of electronic is the fact that I can do an electronic search. So, if I remember one concept that I want to amplify or get into, all I have to do is remember the book. And then I typically, I have several books that I have in 3 formats, hard copy, electronic copy, and-

JON: Audiobook.

SID: Yeah, the actual book, a software. So-

JON: So, I would love if you wouldn't mind sharing, kind of Sid's recommended reading list. I would love-

SID: I'll get that. I'll dig it out if you want. I have a-

JON: Yeah, I'd love to- Because we're going to- We'll do detailed show-notes, that as we go through concepts and talk about things, we'll reference out. So, I would love to include at least a link, to say here is you know, Sid's recommended reading list.

SID: I cut it way down. The people that I usually deal with, don't like to read. They definitely don't like to study. They don't see it as contributing especially to their careers. They'll go out and spend two and a half hours picking up weights, but they won't spend a half hour reading. And so, I've cut it down to, if you read a book a month, which to be honest with you, it's not difficult, you'll be lightyears ahead than you were this time last year. So yeah, I've got it. I've got leaders, team leaders. I've got one for crisis decision-making, I've got one for risk management.

JON: I love that. If you'll share them, I'll actually put them up-

SID: I'll send it to you tonight.

JON: Yeah. I'll put it up on the recommended reading list. To think, what I love to do to conclude our time together, is go through some rapid-fire questions. Short answer, you know, give me Sid's off-the-cuff thought. What's your most important habit?

SID: Reading and writing. I say reading and writing, you can't write if you don't read. But writing it also forces you to put in your own words, which means that you have to understand it.

JON: Leader versus manager, what's the difference?

SID: The leader is far more developed and is able to handle things that won't fit into a management profile, particularly in commanding. One of the things that's emphasized to us in the Marine Corps is that I don't care if you don't know anything about basket weaving or not, if you're in charge of this project, you better find somebody who does. But you're still responsible for accomplishing this end state.

JON: What do you think the most important thing is for building an effective team?

SID: Trust. I don't really have to think about that too far, but if they don't trust you nothing else is going to matter. And if they do, nothing is going to stop it.

JON: What do you think the most important characteristic of an effective leader is?

SID: Character. We can teach the skills, but if they don't come with a sense of obligation as responsibility, as part of the package, they'll just keep the seat warm for the next promotion.

JON: If you could have dinner with anybody, alive or dead historical figure, who is it?

SID: Wow. That a tough one. Dealing with tactics or life-

JON: Yeah. Let's go with dealing with this topic.

SID: I have been privileged to have dinner with a lot of the people that are dead now. One, and probably not for the reasons that everybody would think, would be Gunnery Sergeant Harris, who was really the one that got me started. He broke me in Vietnam, he was a Korean War veteran. And he punished me. I was the champion sandbag feller of Northern Ichor, but he never busted me. And I got to tell you, I deserved it. Now I had "office hours."

I was private twice, PFC twice, and Lance Corporal once, and Corporal twice. The sergeant major would literally shake my hands one day and call me a shit bird the next day. I'm using the exact terminology. This is- I had office hour, I had company office hours, battalion office hours. I was on a suspended bust when I got out of Vietnam. And the deal was, if I would stay in the bush where I excelled, I can go home as a corporal. But if I came back and screwed up, I was going home as a PFC because I was on a suspended bust. I would like to meet that man once where I could thank him for putting up with me and setting the tone.

The information that he gave me, not only saved my life so many times I can't even begin to describe it, it was always understood that it was not a gift. It was entrusted. And I was expected to pass it on. If at some point in time, somebody writes a eulogy, I think the highest compliment that you can give me was that I was a teacher, I was a mentor, I took the information entrusted in me and made it available to people that also needed it and benefitted from it.

JON: Anyone that has ever known you, would write that eulogy.

SID: I hope so. It's interesting. I have lots of medals. I don't have a single award hanging on my wall. I don't have a certificate. I have a number of college degrees. I've never hung them on my wall. But I have a picture of my team in the first Gulf War, where one of the troops wrote on the picture, "Thanks for getting us all home." It's almost impossible for me to describe that, without the feeling of pride. That this guy who was only 19 years old, has now got kids and grandkids and is home. I don't even know how to describe, I have no words for the feeling that it means to me that, I wasn't always successful. But I can say, I never held anything back. I did the best I could with what I had, and I was better as the years went by. I don't expect perfection from many of my troops, but I expect the dedication that feeling of responsibility.

JON: I don't know that I can end this on a better note than that, Sid. Thank you so much for sitting down and having this conversation.