



Episode 5 – Master Adam Grogin | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, welcome to episode 5 of whistleskickMartialArtsRadio, my name is Jeremy Lesniak your host for the show and the president of whistlekick sparring gear and apparel. On today's show, we have Master Adam Grogin, a lifelong Taekwondo student, instructor, promoter and competitor from Northern New York. I met Master Grogin last year when we were introduced by Master Huzon Alexander, you may remember him from episode 1. Master Grogin is a great guy and he's doing more to spread the martial arts than most people I know. You'll see what I mean when we get into the episode. I was really struck by how dedicated he truly is. For some people, the martial arts is a calling and Master Grogin is one of those people. Listen. Master Grogin welcome to whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.

Adam Grogin:

Hi, how are you today?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm doing great, thanks. I really appreciate you being here.

Adam Grogin:



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Well, I'm really honored to be here so thank you so much for the invitation. I'm really excited about this.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh cool, let's get into it. This should be fun. Why don't you tell us a little bit about your history with the martial arts?

Adam Grogin:

Let's see so I've been doing martial arts for about 28 years now. My main background is of Korean style Taekwondo, a little bit of all the different types of Taekwondo, ITF, WTF and [01:18](#) and that. But I'm also pretty experienced with a lot of different things such as Wushu, Wing Chong, I really like extreme martial arts and the acrobatics, a little [01:28](#) so I'm pretty diversified but say my meat and potatoes is definitely the Taekwondo world.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow, that's pretty broad, now you are not just a practitioner of the martial arts you're also a school owner and tournament promoter.

Adam Grogin:

Yup, I own a school called Pil-Sung Martial arts it's Korean words and it's in Albany New York we've been here [01:52](#) just about celebrating our 10th anniversary so something I'm very proud of with that. We're a small school you know we focus a little bit more on the quality of our students and I do consider it as a school, not a business and we have a lot of fun here.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh cool, congratulations on that anniversary. That's a big deal.

Adam Grogin:

Thank you, thank you very much.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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How did you get started in the martial arts?

Adam Grogin:

Actually, my parents tell me I was very young at the time that it was the movie the original karate kid in the 80s that I saw when I was probably 6 years old and they brought me to start up some lessons after that because I wanted to. Now it's been going on like I said 28 years and I've never stopped and I never took any breaks and just kept going the whole time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You're certainly not the first person on the show to reference the karate kid. In fact, the episode that we recorded earlier today made mention the karate kid and I think we had one last week that talked about the karate kid.

Adam Grogin:

Nice.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Certainly, yeah, certainly an influential movie for...

Adam Grogin:

Absolutely changed

Jeremy Lesniak:

most martial artists in our generation.

Adam Grogin:

Absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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When we talk to people who have been involved in the martial arts for a long time and I think we could safely say you're a lifelong martial artist.

Adam Grogin:

Yes sir.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now the whole lot of years between your age and that start point

Adam Grogin:

Yes sir.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What would you say the martial arts has done for you?

Adam Grogin:

The martial arts, I don't want to say it changed me because there was never a chance to be changed I started at such a young age that there was nothing about me [03:21](#) but I would say it formed me. Who I am today, I attribute 100% to my experience in the martial arts. It really, I know a lot of people say it's a way of life but I don't think some people when they say that or people when they hear it truly understand when people say martial arts is a way of life, how much that means. I mean it's not just an activity, it's not [03:42](#) I do, it's not a sport, it's who I am and if I've had a conversations with people or family or my wife and you know would I ever stop, I don't know who I'd be if I wasn't a martial artist cause that's so much a whole who I am so when we talk about what it's done for me it's made me the person I am today, it's given me the fulfillment that I have in my life, the things that make me happy and the ability to get back which I appreciate, but also we know I have other careers that I'm involved with too besides martial arts and my success in those I attribute to the personality traits and characteristics that I've gotten out of being a martial artist, the confident leader, somebody with focus and discipline which are all the things I've learned from the martial arts has helped shaped me throughout my whole life so I mean all the things that people talk about that martial arts is supposed to do or could do I feel like I'm a living breathing proof of that you know not to sound like a commercial but it is possible and I'm I feel like that's the things I've gained from it.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I completely agree, some of the phrases you used are things I have found myself saying to others and it just kind of gave me the thought, you can take the man out of the martial arts but you can't take the martial arts out of the man. Even if you did stop training, you would still be you.

Adam Grogin:

Exactly, it's you can't stop, but I don't know how to not to be me and me as a martial artist. One of the, it's our, I had a slogan I created at my school, I'm not big on marketing but the little slogan I came up with that, I wanted to kind of try to come up with a way of saying what I'm saying is that I don't teach martial arts, I create martial artists cause that's kind of like the way I see my representation of martial arts is I'm not teaching somebody a sport, an activity or how to defend themselves, I'm creating a different person, changing them or developing them or forming them into a different type of individual.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's fabulous, I'm actually jotting that down, show that in my show notes.

Adam Grogin:

Yeah, one day that just hit me I was like jackpot, I felt really good about that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah for sure, cool. So why don't you think about a low point in your life that your martial arts experience helped you through`.

Adam Grogin:

Oh, that's an easy one for me. See, I've always been a martial artist, it's always been my passion who I am, everything I did growing up I didn't do any other sports I did just martial arts I worked at my martial arts school as my first job, I lived there basically, it's always been my life. But in my you know late teens early 20s, I had a career path that did not include owning a school, I always wanted to be a martial artist but I wanted to find a pretty financially successful career for myself, I'm very goal oriented and I at the time felt that martial arts schools, I didn't want to be involved with that cause the financial gain possibilities but sometimes unfortunately mean having to compromise a



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little bit you know with quality you know it's not the case for everybody but unfortunately I think sometimes that is the case. So, I had a very distinct career path of that was going into grad school [06:48](#) and I was going to always be a martial artist but I never planned in opening a school. Unfortunately, in my early 20s I went through a lot of personal changes and some things that happened unexpectedly at my personal life that caused me to really need to just stop and it put me at crossroads and I didn't know where to go and what I was going to do. My plans had changed due to unforeseen circumstances.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Can you give us a little bit more detail? I don't want to pry too much but you know that's a time of life where a lot of us went through some pretty unexpected stuff and big stuff.

Adam Grogin:

Yeah, unfortunately I was into school and grad school to [07:26](#) medical career is where I was aiming and at the time some really unexpected things happen with family and with a relationship I was in and it kind of just stopped me right there and I was at a loss for a short period of time and I [07:41](#) stopped school and I didn't know where I was going to go with my life. And one day I just decided that financial gain or success or not, I need to focus on what makes me happy or makes me who I am and that's when I said to myself I want to open up my own school and I just focused all of my energy on that and within 3 months I had a building a lease of school and everything just kind of happened and my martial arts school and the goal of having a school and my martial arts really got me through that hard time and now 10 years later I couldn't be any happier that decision I made is where I found myself and where life brought me. Following my passion of martial arts as my focus, not worrying about anything else.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's you know what's striking me about your thoughts there, there are a lot of business coaches and life coaches out there who would say just what you've done. Follow your passion, you know all that and here is a concrete example of you going on a path that you thought was going to lead you to happiness. One that martial arts was going to play maybe a side role or a secondary role and when that path didn't work out, you jumped back to the thing that you knew the best martial arts and you made that your passion you made that your career.

Adam Grogin:



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Yes

Jeremy Lesniak:

And if we skip forward 10 years, I don't know where you were going in medicine, maybe you would be making more money but I'm going to guess you would probably be working harder and you probably would be a little bit less satisfied at the end of the day. I don't know what do you think?

Adam Grogin:

Yeah, I'd absolutely have been in a much more financially stable position than I am now. The fact that I run my school, the way I run my school is not advised by most business coaches and things like that, I'm very much about my students, about my quality and not about smart business decisions at marketing but at the end of the day I'm happy because not to be a modest in any way but I've developed over 10 years a reputation in my area, my area is very saturated in martial arts schools and there's a lot of great guys out there with great students and also guys that are very successful business owners in my area but at the end of the day I have a reputation among all these schools that is something I'm very proud of` more proud than any big pay check could bring me and even though the careers I found for myself during the day are not as financially satisfying as the career I was going to go for, the fact that I have my school my reputation and in my happiness with my students it definitely trumps all other things.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well you know different people, excuse me, different people define success differently and it sounds like you've really found

Adam Grogin:

Yes, you're right, I'd definitely would agree with that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome, awesome great answers.

Adam Grogin:

Thank you, sir.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

You're welcome, so next question goes into who's been influential in your life. So, I'd like to rule out your instructor or instructors those that you know were charged with leading you up through in the martial arts. Was there someone else that you can think of that was really influential in your martial arts path?

Adam Grogin:

So, I guess what I'd say, if I had a primary master that I would attribute most of my early education too and then I had a couple others that influenced me at younger ages, but still they would still fall into category of instructors. So, if I'd stay from that, I would say that the next big milestone actually happened more recently in my adult martial art life where I had grown up in this particular Taekwondo world that unfortunately because of the way a lot of that is was very isolated. It was more of the outside influence so while that was good to get a pure taste of a particular style, I feel there's a lot of gain that can happen from being exposed to other thoughts, other systems, other things and of more recently in the past 10 years I've actually been involved with the United States breaking association, world breaking association. I started out cause I host some martial arts events that I had sanctioned by that organization just looking to extend the horizons of the tournament. But in the process, I became very close, like a mentor student relationship with the founders of that organization [12:09](#) was named Grandmaster Ralph Bergamo the other is Master Drew Serrano they are the founders of the world breaking association, they're very famous breakers. On a side note breaking is something I've always been very passionate about. We did a lot breaking in Taekwondo nothing like it's being done these days but I've always been passionate about breaking I'm a smaller stature man and especially martial artist so I enjoyed breaking cause the fact that I was able to develop my key energy and I was able to do feats that people didn't expect a smaller statured martial artist to do. I was able to break piles of board or different things that you'd expect from a big guy to come out [12:46](#) am a little guy when I come out. So, I used to always enjoy finding that inner energy so I naturally had a connection with this breaking association and over the [12:55](#) 10 years besides growing the organization where I'm now the [13:00](#) regional director for the organization [13:02](#). I also formed this mentor student relationship with both the masters that run the organization and I've had more personal gain I think in the past 10 years for me myself as martial artist learning from them as much so as I did in my early years just learning through the ranks of my early career so I would really say that they've been huge influences on me especially taking me to a world class level that I would be identified at now for my breaking skills.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Cool, cool do you have a favorite break, favorite breaking technique?

Adam Grogin:

I guess our favorite sometimes tend to be what we're good at and my 2 specialties would be in the breaking events there tend to be, there's concrete divisions and then there's wood divisions, there's quantitative division which I call power divisions where it's all about how much you break so 2, 3, 4, 5 whatever the guys are up there they all break the same techniques so the all hand or all elbow and they put up a stack and whoever breaks the most would be at quantitative division. But it also have like a judge division with a score that's created. So, in the power divisions I'm pretty good I would say modestly at wood hand and at concrete elbow, are my 2 favorite events that I competed and won.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, cool and what's your best personal best with each of those?

Adam Grogin:

Let's see so for concrete elbow at the ISK world breaking championships at the US open in Orlando Florida last year, I placed fourth in the world for the lightweight and I broke 11 and then my personal best for wood hand I think is 12 or 13 I think I did at a competition a couple of years ago. Around that, so I'm pretty proud of those numbers.

Jeremy Lesniak:

As you should be.

Adam Grogin:

Thank you, sir.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Those are very impressive numbers. So, I know and I'm sure listeners have picked up on it at competition it's something that's big for you it's important to you. Of course, we met at a martial arts competition and I just saw you a few days ago at a martial arts competition. So, having, going out to all these competitions is there one that sticks out?



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Adam Grogin:

Yes, and actually, I'll preface that a little bit with what you just said about competition I think it's important, I love talking about competition in general because I think it's a great thing. I know a lot of people are sometimes weary of it and some schools are weary of competition because sometimes you know if your student doesn't do good they might quit and as a business move it's not good but growing up for me I, like I said martial arts is my life it was my world and all my friends here in my martial arts school so for me the best part was the weekends cause you'd train all week and then every weekend we go to tournaments and you'd road trip together as a kid you'd be in your friend's parents' car with your friends or they'd be in your car and you'd go all around then you go and eat afterwards or when you went to faraway tournaments you might go to Disney world or all these fun cities and you do the sight-seeing and that's like when you form the relationships and bonds with the people that you shared your martial arts with and I think that's why at an early age competition was instilled at me as being so special not even for the competition but more for the bonding and camaraderie that happens among students and that's what helps keep your school strong is that family and bonding, so that's what was always instilled in me at a young age that competitions are so important. So yes when my school started growing a little bit I started [16:26](#) right into competitions and there's a couple of things I'd have to say about competition I think are good and one thing I don't remember who heard this from, a master said this to me once and I feel that this is so valuable I repeat to my students all the time and I look for opportunities to repeat it myself but I can't take credit for it and this master said to me once that one competition, a student goes to one competition whether they'd do good or bad it's equivalent to like 6 months of classes they said. Now maybe that numbers are a little irrelevant or a little exaggerated but the point they made I feel is true that there's so much that can be taken away from a tournament more value than you can ever get in the classroom or at months and years of training just by being exposed, seeing other things, seeing what other people are doing. To put yourself on the spot and get out there in the ring by yourself, not to mention the amount of training you put in ahead of time to prepare for the tournament. So yes, I think there's a lot of value at tournaments, my school is known for doing tons of tournaments I do more tournaments than other school in my area. My students don't have to do tournaments but we like to do a lot I mean I travel around and yes, my most, the one that sticks at my mind the most at tournaments I would have to say is the Arnold Martial Art Festival and I'm actually sad to say that because I actually haven't attended that in like 2 years. But I used to go every year to it out in Columbus Ohio and it is definitely the most unique and amazing martial art tournament I've ever been to.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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What makes it unique, you know for those of us that haven't been?

Adam Grogin:

Right so the Arnold Sports festival is the gigantic, most gigantic event I'd ever been to beside the martial arts section and I think the advertisements/posts that they have more athletes than the Olympics event but what was awesome at the martial arts section for me when I walked in there is I, well I'm a Taekwondo guy and [18:19](#) of different things. I'm definitely an advocate for loving all styles maybe some styles have strengths and weaknesses that are different than the others but I find the beauty in all of them for what they bring and when you walk in to the Arnold Martial Art Festival, it's just one gigantic room but in that gigantic room there's like 20 rings all set up for a different style and they're all right there next to each other. So like right over here might be mats for those guys doing jujitsu, and right next to that there might be a boxing ring with some guys doing Muay Thai sparring and then right next to that might be some puzzle mats on the floor with some traditional karate guys doing some [18:57](#) and then next to that there might have a concrete floor and there would be some guys doing some board breaking and then over here, there's another boxing ring and they're doing a different type of kickboxing or Muay Thai and the over here there's some Taekwondo guys and then over here there's some Wushu guys and it's all in the same room at the same time and that's the only time I've ever seen it like that and that's what just blows me away it's amazing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That sounds like a lot of fun so I would guess that you would suggest to anyone that hasn't been should try and make the opportunity to go?

Adam Grogin:

Absolutely, I mean besides the martial arts, I mean I know you know from the body building, weight lifting [19:34](#) huge but the vendors, oh my god, hundreds of thousands of vendors there, free samples, products just amazing fun everywhere. If you're into other sports, you can watch obviously the weight lifting and body building, gymnastics and cheerleading and Ping-Pong I can't even name all. Amazing experience but yes, the martial arts alone I mean I had been there as competitors who brought my students competitors but also spectator and it's just so must fun to be had and I mention you know I'm a road trip guy I love the road trip so for us from New York that's a good 10-hour road trip but we get used to rent like a 12-passenger van get a whole bunch of us together and just make it a fun time so I highly recommend that one and that place.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh cool, yeah, it's the second time that you mentioned that you like road trips and you mentioned being on the road with your friends as a kid any good road trip stories?

Adam Grogin:

I have a couple so I ran a team of martial artists that are some my students and some students from other schools in the area I know that it's not that unusual out in the bigger competition world but in my local area it's kind of an unforeseen thing like people didn't really do that like students can go to other schools to train or be a part of teams but I kind of worked hard at building relationships to break down walls and kind of found the one or two special individuals that were like teenage early 20s from different schools and they were kind of not that they love their school but they were alone there so I kind of brought them all together to thrive together not for the purpose of promoting my own school but more for the purpose of growing as martial artists. So, we had a lot of fun for a long time where we did a lot of road trips and tournaments and it was me and my team was probably you know at any given time 6-12 maybe 17-24-year-old guys you know we just go around to do tournaments and stuff. One funny story I guess I have is you know I took it pretty seriously even though it was all for fun and we used to do like team demo at different tournaments and things like that and one time we were headed to Maine for a tournament and one of my guys got booked for work he had those waitress job, waiter job excuse me waiter job somewhere and they booked him and I was pretty mad and I told him that you know he was supposed to [21:48](#) for that time and so we couldn't really do the demo for the competition without him because everybody has specific role and not to mention you take out that role [21:56](#) people kind of had a unique flavor to them, they brought something special that was a catalyst for everybody else. So, we all decided that we weren't going to let him skip out and we got into our van on the way to the tournament. We went to his house and we actually kidnapped him, we like to joke and say we kidnapped him as ninjas but we didn't really get into ninja costumes, we didn't had those uniforms but when he tells the story he always says that he was kidnapped by ninjas. But we showed up at his house knocked on his door and told him to get into the van and he did it cause he knew he had to he knew we're going behind and he lost his job because of that, we did an awesome job at the demo and when we got home I have made a few phone calls and I got him a new job within a week so I didn't feel that bad about it and to this day we all have a pretty good story to tell the fact that you know nobody gets to [22:43](#) out everybody has to be dedicated to our team and you don't get to call in, you're going to be there we're also going to show up and take you.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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That is dedication and that's certainly a great story. Glad to hear that you were able to get him another job.

Adam Grogin:

Yes, yes of course.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, how about your experience with competition I mean we talked about why the competition is good and the benefits and some of your history but how about now do you still compete?

Adam Grogin:

Yeah, I actually would say that I am more proud of my recent competition than that of when I was younger. I was mildly successful in my younger days competing, I had some good wins and stuff and I was a good competitor but I think that more recently I mean I got out of competition in my mid 20s when I opened my school and I focus a lot on my students and then breaking kind of reintroduced me to competition and reinforced me to start training harder again [23:39](#) up to a new level and to this day now mainly compete in breaking I do dabble a little bit and some forms and fighting in weapons in a smaller competitions but I unfortunately I don't feel I have the time to commit to training to bring that [23:54](#) level right now to focus on myself but with breaking I definitely do compete a lot with that I enjoy it and I'm pretty proud of it I do a lot of the competitions for the organizational part of the USBA WBA and now I've been lucky enough last year to compete at the Us Open for the ISKA which is something I'm very proud of.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great, that's awesome. So, let's switch gears a little bit and do some martial arts culture. If you could train with any martial artist living or dead, who might it be and why?

Adam Grogin:

That's tough I remember I was thinking about this one, okay I'm actually going to take you in a slightly different direction if you don't mind as I answer this question.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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No, that's fine.

Adam Grogin:

There's a lot of amazing real martial artists out there that I have the utmost respect for but what really has driven me, most of my martial art career is actually the fictional characters. I am definitely a product and child of all of the martial art pop culture and characters, fictional characters from the 80s and 90s like that is really where my passion just kept growing from is all of those individuals that made martial arts what it was perceived as in the 80s and 90s which I realize is not as real or as down to earth and serious as the real martial artists were in the 70s and 80s but whatever it was that they were doing in those 80s and 90s movies that was a little bit out there a little bit fictional that's really what struck a nerve with me at an early age and formed my passion. As a matter of fact, in my school I have a TV and I made that thing of clips from all of the 80s and 90s movies and they are playing all the time because they will make me happy and reminding me and motivating me as to why I am here in what I'm doing. So, I don't know if I would pick a real martial artist or perhaps a fictional if that makes any sense.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It does, well that's entirely up to you, this is your question to answer.

Adam Grogin:

So, I still got to pick one.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You do have to pick one I'll hold you to that.

Adam Grogin:

You know what I'll say, I'll say that the first one called, there has to be a value I guess in the first thing that pops into your head whether you're certain or uncertain the fact that's the person that pops in your head says something and I'm going to say Ernie Reyes Jr. or Sr. or both. They kind of fit both of the two things that I just said to you both real life amazing martial artist but also a big part of the fictional character martial artist that I grew up with that I had a lot of respect for. So, I would guess I would pick them and I don't even, didn't realize myself I would pick them but now that I think about it I would pick them.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, they're both fantastic and I think my earliest memories of martial arts on TV were with Ernie Jr.

Adam Grogin:

Yup that's what I mean

Jeremy Lesniak:

What was the name of that show? Do you remember that show?

Adam Grogin:

Show?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, there was, I want to say there was a TV show that he was on. I'll have to look that up, if I can find it.

Adam Grogin:

He was on an MTV show in the early 2000s called the Final Fu that was like a game show martial art thing on MTV.

Jeremy Lesniak:

No this was back in the mid 80s.

Adam Grogin:

He was in the movie the Last Dragon as a little kid which is an amazing piece of martial art pop culture that I love.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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I'll look it up after [27:19](#)

Adam Grogin:

Yeah let me know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great great choice, do you have a favorite martial arts movie.

Adam Grogin:

I couldn't pick one, I could ring off a couple to you real fast such as like I said Last Dragon, is one of my all-time favorites, it's super cheesy, super silly but it just, it strikes a nerve and it gets you motivated. Matter of fact last August this past year I went to a tournament in Maryland and I walked in the lobby and Taimak I believe if I pronounce his name the actor from there was standing there and that was the first time in my life I was ever star struck. Never been star struck by anybody he was there I ran up to him, a 34 years old I'm like I was like a little [27:58](#) oh my god are you who I think you are and I got my picture with him, it was amazing. What was it called, best of the best great one I actually met when I was younger the lead char, Phillip Rhee I met when I was younger from best of the best who I like a lot cause he's a real-life Taekwondo guy and even though in best of the best it was there were karate team from the US, one guy was a Taekwondo guy, the Korean team was there, it's very close to home for me I loved that movie. I also love another cheesy cheesy one was that No retreat no surrender from the 80s, love that one. The mortal kombats you know were great when you're a kid, Surf Ninjas with Ernie Reyes just to name a few. Well I know it's not really Bruce Lee but the movie dragon the story about Bruce Lee is an all-time favorite of mine I think that, I don't know cause I mean I don't know if there's guys out there in martial arts that knew him and I don't know how they feel that movie depicted him but as a kid growing up I feel that movie depicted him amazingly and I feel like Jason Scott Lee the actor in that did an amazing job I mean I don't know who to compare [29:08](#) out there that would know but as a kid growing up that struck me amazing and made me have a love for Bruce Lee with that movie.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well that was a good movie, I remember that one. Do you have a favorite actor, martial arts actor? We've talked about a bunch of them.

Adam Grogin:



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Yeah, I guess I'm a big fan of in more recent times [29:28](#) Jet Lee more than anybody. I just like not even his martial arts I guess I like his acting I like the way he acts which is martial arts and has like this just bad ass [29:39](#) him on screen. There's a lot of other guys who are more talented at, I think with what they're showing on screen martial art wise and things like that I feel like and while I have the utmost respect for Wushu I love Wushu I actually did Wushu like Jet Lee does but I just feel like what he does on screen is not necessarily what he is as a martial artist but I just love it comes across on film.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, he's a fantastic martial artist and a great actor.

Adam Grogin:

Yeah, he'd definitely be one of my faves.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, how about books are you a reader, any martial arts books [30:08](#) recommend?

Adam Grogin:

I am embarrassed to say I'm not as big of a reader as I like to be but if we talk about books I have one book that's at my mind that changed me forever. It is a book called a killing art and I apologize I don't remember the author,

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's alright.

Adam Grogin:

I don't even remember how I stumbled upon it. This book is a book about unfortunately all the underhanded horrible political things that takes place or took place behind the scenes of the Taekwondo world in the 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, all the way up to 90s and I growing up a Taekwondo guy all the things that you think you know or don't know or do know this book sheds light on so much and it just when I read it blew my mind as the research that this guy did and pointed out all these crazy political things that took place and it was just was amazing and in a good way or a bad



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way I mean it's good to know what somebody perceives as the truth or I mean what he has probably good evidence of and things but it didn't make negative in anyway about anything but it was definitely very enlightening to say the least.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I've read that, the synopsis of that book and I actually gave it as a gift a Christmas time I don't know if the person's read it yet but now that you're saying it again it's exciting me and I need to get my own copy and read it because it does sound fascinating.

Adam Grogin:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

Backroom intrigue.

Adam Grogin:

It was amazing when I got this book, I read it I couldn't put it down which is not like me I love reading but I'm not a big reader so for me to have not put this down was amazing and the names there were a lot of names in it that who are very familiar to me in my world and then I went and I was so blown away by the book I went and bought like 5 masters or grand masters that I associate with from my Taekwondo world and I gave it all then like you said it was a gift from you guys have to read this and then it blew their mind and we had conversations about it and now my high ranking black belts I actually require all of them to read it so we can have discussions about it just so they can understand our history so to say.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh cool, I think that's great.

Adam Grogin:

Thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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So, last question

Adam Grogin:

Okay

Jeremy Lesniak:

Any martial arts themed goals that you might have that you want to share something you're reaching for.

Adam Grogin:

Yeah, when I would talk about my ISKA competition last year that I competed in and I did pretty well in I guess that while I had the best ambition for myself and goals and worked hard I didn't know how I'd fair and I did pretty well last year and then I actually opened up my eyes to the fact that I would like to go after a ISKA world title which is actually my goal this year is to train harder, I came in at 4th like I said last year in the lightweight division and my goal this year is to try to come in at 1st place in ISKA world title.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well, that's fantastic and good luck with that.

Adam Grogin:

Thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Maybe we can have you on again once you knocked that one down, you can tell us all about it.

Adam Grogin:

I hope so and I'm working very hard at it and hopefully will be a good year and you know what if it's not then next year I'll do it [33:13](#) It's okay.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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That's right, I have no doubt that you'll get there.

Adam Grogin:

Thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So that kind of brings us to your opportunity to tell us what you've got going on I know you've got some tournaments coming up that you're promoting and just give us [33:27](#) of what's going on in your world.

Adam Grogin:

So like I said before my area in the [33:32](#) region of New York is very rich in martial arts they've lots of martial arts schools and for many years most of them didn't mingle with each other and one of the biggest things they take pride in is that I kind of brought competitions at community to our area by starting small and just building relationships and now I run lots of tournaments in this area competitions as well as seminars and clubs where schools are mingling with each other, it's something that is been very positive. The biggest event that I run every year is now on its 9th year it's called the North East open that's Saturday August 15th in Albany it is a, I'd like to say it's a mom and pop hometown tournament with a national feel. I do it in a nice hotel it has a big feel to it but the people there just the average joes that you know are local people that don't do a lot of big competitions so it's great for a beginner but in the black belt division there is some really good high ranking competitors that could give other high ranking competitors you know still good competitions, it was kind of a good mix and the event is definitely more about camaraderie than competition I would like to say which was kind of a goal for all of our events. Everything we do we're always, we go by the rules, we have nice rules that make everything fair but we're not all about rules and article 32 on page 73 of the rules states you have to do this we're all about good experience and friendliness and camaraderie with our events so we have that one in August which is definitely is a favorite in the area but also I've given a name to all of the circuit that I'm running in this area it's called 518 martial arts, 518 is our area code here and it kind of spreads everything out and everybody kind of uses the 518 area code as kind of a name for thins in this area so in 518 martial arts we have a lot of small events one of them is coming up at the end of April it's called the capital district open we actually call that like the little sister of the Northeast open just kind of a little hometown event to help people prepare for the northeast open so we have that going on too, so those are two of the main ones we have going on right now.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Great and we'll make sure we have all those linked in the show notes.

Adam Grogin:

Thank you, thank you very much.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, people can come but if people who are going to come in to attend one of them the North East open in August would be the one

Adam Grogin:

Yeah it's definitely a favorite I mean I will say that we get 80% locals from our area and 20% coming out of town which great we've got people from Canada before international as far away as Virginia Texas Florida Indiana, we get a lot of people but it's mainly the locals but those locals do need outside people to keep mixing it in so you get new blood new friends new people to compete against so that it doesn't get boring we always look forward to new friends to come and we do things a little differently but most people tend to enjoy the friendly spin and camaraderie that we do at this event compared to different tournaments.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And of course, it's a beautiful time of the year in upstate New York so if someone wanted to wrap your event into a vacation

Adam Grogin:

Oh yeah there are so many places to go around here our visitors' bureau actually sets up a table and you have the beautiful lake George is an hour away, where tons of summer stuff Saratoga springs there's so much to do in summer time within an hour of distance from Albany that if people want to wrap it in for summer vacation there's so many possibilities.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Great cool, that just about does it, I want to thank you for being on. We really appreciate your time here on whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.

Adam Grogin:

I really appreciate you having me, thank you and I wish you the best of luck with this I know that I think it's a great thing and I hope it takes off and I'm going to tell everybody about so thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thanks for listening to this episode of whistlekick martial arts radio, thank you to Master Grogin for coming on and talking to me, please be sure to subscribe to the show so you never miss one of our weekly episodes if you liked the show we'd appreciate a five-star review on iTunes.