



Episode 220 – Mr. Scott Bolon | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

EPISODE 220



Mr. Scott Bolon

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello everybody! Welcome to episode 220 of whistlekick martial arts radio. My name is Jeremy Lesniak and I am your host here on the show I'm the founder at whistlekick sparring gear and apparel and I'm going to join you for today's conversation with Mr. Scott Bolon. If you're new to the show, maybe you're unfamiliar, with what we do, maybe you're tuning in for the second or third time, check out everything that we got going on whistlekick.com that's your hub to everything whistlekick on the web, from our social media to the half a dozen other websites that we do in addition to this show. This show is available in whistlekickmartialartsradio.com no hyphens or silly underscores or any weirdness in that domain name. whistlekickmaritalartsradio.com

Training in different martial arts disciplines at the same time is not simple. In fact, it can be pretty complicated for someone who has done it myself. Our guest today, Mr. Scott Bolon, is doing just that and it seems that he's on a mission to prove that failure is not a reason to quit but rather a fuel for success. I'm not going to dig too much into that because I'd rather let him reveal it to you as he does so well in the story of his martial arts story. Let's listen to the story of Mr. Bolon's path through the martial arts and see how he's persevered to reach where he is today.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Mr. Bolon, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Scott Bolon:

Thank you, it's a pleasure to be here.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Pleasure to have you. Listeners, we have, joining us today, a listener someone who, I think you and I exchanged a couple of emails before. You had, we had talked about you coming on the show, I seem to remember that.

Scott Bolon:

Yes, I had put in a few names. Kind of put forward a few names that were I thought would be maybe good, potential interviews for you down the road.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know, always looking for that, always looking to kind of connect the dots. If you've been a long-time listener you've probably seen, sometimes the guest run in these cycles. We have a Chinese martial arts cycle coming up and I think people are really going to dig the common thread there, that will be a lot of fun. But that's not what we're here today for, we're here for you, we're here for your story and your journey through the martial arts. I know it's got some different chapters, look forward to dig into that book a little bit. Let's roll back to the beginning, lets open that book up and talk about chapter one, how did you get started as a martial artist?

Scott Bolon:

Yes sir. So I guess my first taste of martial arts I was about maybe 5 or 6 and I actually had to call my mom and confirm that I wasn't you know imagining this or maybe you know to get my timing right you know I was like I think I was about 5 or 6 right and she said yes so I was about 5 or 6 and she had taken me to, I'm not sure if it was karate or taekwondo I do know they were white geese and but it was at a [01:49](#) center or something like that and you know of course you know child of the 80s you know this is 85 or 86 at this point and you know Segal's huge, Van Damme's huge, you know all those and so you know of course I want to do that helicopter kick you know and you know that's what I had in mind you know when my mom says we're going to a karate class and I said okay great. Well it wasn't anything like that, it was quite a bit of a let down from that, from the high-flying stuff that I had been seeing so that didn't last long and you know but I ended up seeking out see this would be about the time I was about



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18 or 19 just after high school during middle school and some of high school I was you know I was definitely the subject of a lot of bullying. I'm only 5'4" and I'm 145 pounds now but I'm pretty sure I was about a buck 20 soaking wet back then and you know not much of a well an easy target I guess is what you might say so you know I you know bullied a lot you know of course these kids are much bigger much stronger and you know you don't have anywhere to go with it other than my mouth, that was pretty much the best and only defense I had and I would just, I got good at talking in circles, talking in lots and lots of circles basically to the point where they got bored I wasn't feeding into it I wasn't giving them anything. You know I wasn't going to stand up you know and you know go toe to toe and you know so they'd get bored they'd walk away no it doesn't mean they wouldn't come back but at least they'd go away for you know maybe a day or two maybe less. Middle school was much worse but high school was a lot better cause I had actually moved from Columbus Ohio down to South Eastern Indiana out near Lawrenceburg Indiana and I was pretty well accepted when I came into that school system but there was a couple of bullies there and one lasted most of my let's see the sophomore into my junior year and so you know I graduated high school and the bully problem generally got resolved because he lost interest when I guess a friend of mine you know basically caught him and his friend bullying and I guess they went and had it out and so it didn't happen ever again he was always smart to approach me when no one else was around I wasn't stupid I had big friends you know but you know which are still my friends to this day from high school you know we still keep in touch and get together as often as we can you know we all have kids married and everything else but so you know I graduated high school and I didn't realize why I was seeking out at the time I was seeking out you know meditation, Zen, Taoism things like that I was reading those kinds of books not necessarily to you know quote unquote change religion but just to find I was seeking and in hindsight I realized I was trying to find a way to balance myself out because the truth is even though I was a happy go lucky person and I still am today I had a lot of, I've heard the word impotent rage, you've got all this anger but you have nowhere to send it so I kept it all boxed up you know it didn't affect me on a daily basis but I always you know I always knew it was there. So that caused me to really go after trying to find some level of balance and I'm always a big fan of martial arts movies from very early on like I said before all the way through you know when I saw some of the more of the Chinese arts and I loved how beautiful they were and then of course I learned you know I've discovered things about Taichi and the internet wasn't what it is today so discovering anything actually kind of impressive back then you know. Search engines are definitely not what they are today so I was looking for Taichi and in the yellow pages and yes, I know exactly what I'm saying when I say the yellow pages. I saw an ad for, it was for Tracy's kempo karate and it was you know kempo karate but then I saw Taichi and so I was like alright I got to call about this it was a little bit of a driveway maybe about 25-30mins away but it was an easy drive. There was nothing in anywhere near where I was at anyway so I knew I was going to drive if I found one anywhere so I reached out and then Master Mark Tracy he was, he told me about it and we agreed and I came out and started doing taichiing. I really enjoyed it but it was short you know doesn't take long to go through you know from start to finish so to speak and he had asked me if I'd stay on and you know take some kempo karate classes. At the time, I still when I heard the word karate I'm thinking basically what I was in as a kid that really kind of rigid,



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structured you know what we all think of quote unquote traditional Japanese karate and I was so infatuated at the time with Jet Lee and Wushu, Ray park in Star Wars episode 1 as Darth Maul. I was I mean I was a big fan of what I saw in their cause you know I grew up with Darth Vader, that was great but Darth Maul was a whole different looking thing and it was the movie itself was maybe not my favorite movie but I love you know what Ray Park with that character and I found out that he was involved in Wushu and things like that. So, I wasn't really receptive in the beginning when he said you want to stay on for kempo karate and I'm like well okay what can it hurt I'll do a couple of classes see what this is all about you know and he had told oh it has elements of Chinese and Japanese has a distinct Chinese and Japanese influence and there's jujitsu and I'm like well fine. Well I took one class and that was it. I mean all my thoughts of finding a Wushu school and all that stuff literally got tossed out of the car at 80miles an hour in the high way I saw this we did one group class and I've always you know it's kempo's very self-defense oriented and so you know in the first group class we're talking about strikes to the groin strikes to the throat, strikes to the eyes, you know breaking elbows you know and things like that well hyper extending elbows and there were air quotes on that one. And I mean I'm like alright, this, I'm signing up this is perfect, because for me you know I'm you know I always knew in any kind of a conflict I'd be the smaller weaker person of the two so and I'm learning stuff that shows me how to use my lack of size to my advantage. Using someone else's force against them and so I mean I was hooked absolutely hooked so you know that was late 99 or early 99 I take that back and so I mean I started progressing you know I was doing 4 lessons, 4 private lessons a month where you know that's where the real progress was is in the private instruction one on one with me and then master Tracy now grandmaster. And then the group classes were a supplement, they were a complement, they could be a theme a certain set up and we do a lot of thing based on a single side shoulder grab or you know a 2-hand choke to the throat and we'd work a lot of different techniques based on that but we're we really learned was on the one on one instruction which I loved. So, I'd do 4 one on ones in a month and I come to as many group classes so that I could get away with and you know I progresses I don't know relatively fast for me but when I look back I'm like wow that did take some time you know that really did took time to get through the belts and stuff like that. Then I probably around it would have been early 2004 yeah, early 2004 I had to take a break because me and my then wife we had bought a house gathered up a couple of dogs, you know car payments plans for a kid on the way things like that and just the bills started piling and so I had to walk away in it and I hated it but I knew it had to happen you know priorities and things like that but I always said I was going to go back absolutely going to go back, there's no way in the world I'm not going back. Well fast forward to see this would be October of 2014 finally i'm, I take that back to December of 2014 finally picked it back up, went through a divorce got my life back into sorts and my ex wife did too you know it was not a great time but we both come out better from it and stayed very, very friendly because of our son we you know keep everything on the up and up with each other and work things out together for him and you know I think we're actually better partners in that respect now than we were together so there were you know dark times that I was definitely did my own fair share to get to that point and but I met my now current wife back in 13 dated for a year got a house and my son his friend that he's been friends with since daycare started going to



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this place called karate town USA, which of course they'd teach Taekwondo but you know karate being you know as almost generic as seeing the word dentist outside any strip mall you know you don't see the whole sign you know amazing smiles down the streets it just dentist and so you know that his friend went there so he wanted to go and then at the time my step daughter she's now my daughter I had adopted her, I've been dad pretty much since me and her mom started dating and but you know I asked her I said do you want to do it, and she said yeah. She want to do it, of course she saw people you know jumping around, and kicking and things like that and she's very athletic very competitive a lot like my son and there's not a significant age difference only a year and 3 months so while one of them meaning my son as the quote unquote older brother that doesn't fly very well when that attempts to be done when he tries to be the big brother to her so we started at so he started at him and my daughter started at karate town it would've been september 2014 and I'm sitting there 3 hours a week and I'm like this is annoying I'm just sitting there, kept scrolling through facebook or you know a but I'm watching too because they're doing forms and I'm trying to make sure I mentally record this as much as possible so they can so I can help them practice at home and I just kind of made the mental kind of like aha I'm like this is ridiculous I can get out and do this but I thought by doing that I would just okay this will be good enough this whole satisfy me not going back to kempo cause I had already looked around master tracy had already moved down to florida from Forest Park which is close enough to me here in Florence Kentucky but he had already moved down to florida he took over a school down there closed up his school up here and there was no other tracy's system of kempo here, there is shaolin kempo and okinawan kempo but I'd have to start the ground floor again and that side I kind of just let that go and I was like well I'd do taekwondo with the kids and we started doing it and it was really great but it made the itch twice as bad as it was before. It just it was if I thought I was going to fly into the radar or something wehre I was going to this was going to be and nothing against taekwondo but it made me so much more irritated that I didnt go back to kempo because I was a second degree brown belt in there there was the color system like most systems but then, it goes from 3rd degree, 2nd degree, 1st degree brown belt then in the 1st degree black and then back up the scale so to speak and so it made the itch way worse. I was even doing hapkido, combat hapkido which they teach at karate town USA as well and I really enjoyed that but it still didn't fix it. It didn't make it go away just made the drum beat worse so I reached out to grandmaster tracy and you know it's not the perfect set up but we do, we started doing it over skype. I have a PC hooked up in my TV in my living room I moved furniture around every single time we do a session. I have a webcam on top of my 50 inch TV and so we worked the techniques that way and then he put me in touch with one of his students that's also appear, that used to go to his studio before he closed it down and he lives about 20 mins away and so that we used to not only for me but also for his other student Pete, we used that to supplement that lack of actual physical you know working with another human being so that when you work through a self defense technique which is I don't know if you know the tracy system at kempo and I think and there's a lot of variations that come from that lineage you know at parker's kempo karate Chinese kempo, american kempo, kempo 5.0, I mean there's a lot. There are a lot of them are very self defense technique oriented, there's a certain number of self defense techniques in every belt and then usually 2 katas. So it's not impossible to train



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over skype but there is, there are a few things that lack and so he put us together and so I've been it helped me to work towards my shodan which I did get this past april and it also, and I'm still continuing to I'm not teaching Pete, master tracy is still his instructor but I'm able to supplement that instruction for him and helped him to work out techniques and things like that when he's having trouble with things or work out a kata that he's having trouble with ok the transition here and there stuff like that so.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I want to dig in a little bit

Scott Bolon:

Yeah, absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I want to kind of unpack some of this, cause there's a lot there and I think there's some good stuff. So the first thing that I want to kind of I guess point out because you did a really good job talking about was this idea that you took a break and most martial artist if they've been training a long time have taken a break and that itch or that missing piece to your life that you're describing, whatever words you used, whatever words listeners you might use it's something that's really common you know I've said on this show enough some people maybe tired of hearing me say you know I think everybody should do martial arts at least for a little bit because of the benefits but it would be naive to think that martial arts is for everyone. I would guess that there would be a style taught in a way by an instructor you know in some location, time format that would work for everybody but chances of every one finding that are pretty slim some of us are predisposed to martial arts than others and clearly you were one of those folks yeah. You found martial arts that had, it was kind of ripped away from you.

Well in a way yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

In a way.

Scott Bolon:

It was a break I didn't want to take..

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Yeah

Scott Bolon:

But I knew it was necessary and of course in my mind I'm thinking okay, 6 months tops I'm back. Well didn't work out that way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right and then the second piece that I want to point us because you know let's be honest I mean let's address sort of the elephant in our own these online virtual remote training programs do not have a good reputation in our world.

Scott Bolon:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

But what you're doing is not that, it's very different.

Scott Bolon:

Yeah, I'm not doing a mail and DVD type thing or anything like that it's, it is you know grand master Tracy is on the other side of the camera so to speak and now this wouldn't work in certain other styles, it really wouldn't. There are certain styles well I could say taekwondo, there are certain things about taekwondo that it would be a big thing if you didn't have that physical location, if you didn't have that you know not just a training partner but a bunch of them. But in this case, because of the nature of the art it is possible it's not ideal but it is possible and of course it helps quite a bit because I do have another student to work with I helped him and he helps me you know towards our goals, our individual goals he has his goals for continuing on he's actually almost I think he's having a session tonight to get his last technique in and he will most likely get promoted at the gathering of Eagles in Dallas, August 11th and 12th I think so you know so it's not ideal but it's definitely not a I'd get a bunch of DVDs I start doing a bunch of stuff and then I film myself and I send it back in. No definitely not like that, not at all.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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And instead you know just kind of my thoughts on this cause I, there's a piece I want to compliment you on here you know most people are not going to put in the effort to maintain training in the style that they let's say they were born in or want to want to continue training in fact you know I could probably name of a dozen people right now who rather than look for another school to train in just kind of stopped training, you know and I'm not going to push them I wish they would train I wish they would train in any way right? Any training is better than no training to me

Scott Bolon:

Yep, absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But you know you and grandmaster Tracy deserve a pat on the back here for making this work but that's not really training you're doing.

Scott Bolon:

No not at all.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right and I just and this speaks to me as someone who you know you and I would probably get along really well cause that just says something about you and your passion for the arts and your passion for self improvement so I just wanted to point that out because it's not the same situation if somebody's listening in their car maybe I know we get listeners that listen while they're working they might, they might catch on he's training remotely and they might start to tune out, and I don't want to do that because you know what

Scott Bolon:

Yeah I know it's

Jeremy Lesniak:

Virtual black belts will not have a place on this show, not to say there isn't a place for that but where are the stories going to come from right?

Scott Bolon:



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Yeah yes actually. So yeah I mean it's you know you mentioned taking breaks you know I mean while I would never recommend someone taking 11 year break, it made my shodan test which was in person by the way which is in case anybody wants to know. It was in person and he does travel up here from time to time so it's not like we never do his dad great grandmaster Al tracy lives in Lexington which is about an hour south of here so he travels up from time to time and when he does we usually do everything we can to make time to have an in person session and sometimes it's nice day we can go out to the park and I'm a big fan of, I love doing it outdoors I think it's fantastic it's great so you know when I got to do my shodan test it's like you know that was a huge deal that made it all the more sweet I guess if that's what you want to call it. But you know as far as taking breaks go, my kids actually we just started having this conversation maybe a week and a half ago. I've been doing Taekwondo pretty consistently for about 3 years solid. Almost no breaks unless you know there headmasters there allan gates and sandy gates fantastic people unless they took a vacation, pretty much no breaks you know so 2 nights a week plus a 3rd two nights a month for sparring nights education sparring and competition sparring and things like that and my kids you know we've started having conversations cause I could tell that I senses burn out and I probably sense maybe a little bit myself although I'm to stupid to admit it, I'm just I don't have to admit burn out I'd just keep going. Even if I was grumpy, even if I've walked away feeling worse than maybe I did when I walked in or whatever and it's all internal it's not them it's perception. Perception is a reality and I'm just, I'm too stupid to not show up you know I'm too stupid to say you know what I need a week but my kids aren't that stupid they're much smarter than me and they wanted to talk about taking a break and it started out as talking about taking a month work which I was fine with and that spoke to me though that I was fine with it meant like okay I'm a little burn out too. But sometimes having that conversation, that conversation to allow the break to happen that takes a lot a bit off of you and it doesn't take it all off I mean still 3 years solid but the conversation evolved my kids were worried that their friends, people that they've been training with were going to rank up past them and things like so we modified that because they would miss this next testing cycle and so we modified it to take a break for this week which is just after the Kentucky Bluegrass games which is down in Lexington and originally that's when we said oh we're taking a break after that, that's a good place, work a lot, get to that, do it and then take a break. So it was supposed to be a month but now it's going to be a week and we agreed to every testing cycle take one week off if they wish to, but they can pick a week because testing cycles usually 9-10 weeks long and you know with the amount of tips that we have to earn, there's a plenty of time to get all that even taking a week off, there's still plenty of time. So it allowed me and them, they allowed me, they helped me to learn that as maybe, as big of an idiot as I am about martial arts and you know and I just want to just go and I want to train and I me and Pete we joke all the time that if I was independently wealthy I'd probably just train 5-6-7 days a week in anything, anything at all, they didn't, it doesn't matter. I'll go learn it all and of course that's not realistic but so my kids taught me that it's okay to maybe pull it back, know when to pull it back, know when to take a couple of classes and off because it's a grind. Martial arts is, some martial arts [29:00](#) better than others but and at least in my experience but martial arts is a grind it's about repetition it's about creating that natural automatic movement and so you can get burn out so you know and so I just wanted to talk



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about the break thing you just said something about breaks and I immediately had like oh yes yes yes breaks.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's an important subject because one.

Scott Bolon:

Because this is new to me, this is new right now as far as my break was forced and this break is chosen and it's not really a big break, but it's a small break taking like a little mini vacation just to let your mind relax for a week, that's okay.

Jeremy Lesniak:

At some point, I'll probably do an episode on taking a break because it's something that's you know it's almost a taboo subject.

Scott Bolon:

Oh yes.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Instructors are rarely going to encourage you to take a break because for most of them you know that, they could see that as impacting their finances and of course for someone that isn't feeling like they need a break and we've had guests on the show who have said you know I've been training for 50 years everyday and some of them I don't question that for the majority of us, to do something everyday is it can make it hard to appreciate it.

Scott Bolon:

You don't have context, you don't have, you're in the forest you're not seeing the forest and I have to say Grandmaster Tracy and both Mr. and Mrs. Gates all you know my 3 instructors that I've really learned under, grandmaster Tracy he was very supportive when I had to walk away he knew why although I'm pretty sure he thought I wasn't going to be going 11 years but then recently Mr and Mrs. Gates you know I brought it up to them I you know I was a little nervous about bringing it up because again it is you feel like it's a taboo subject and they were extremely supportive of whatever our break looked like whatever we needed if it helped us to stay long term you know give a little in the short term



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but to stay long term if that's what we needed mentally to stay in long term you know then they were absolutely supportive and they you know of course told me right away we support you tell the kids we support them and you know we are here whenever you're ready to come back we hope you come back soon but you know do what you need to do and figure out what works best for you and so I you know I can't say enough about you know being appreciative of that because you know you some instructors like you said would not be okay with that at all they would you know maybe try to guilt trip you a little bit because it does affect their finances I you know that's a reality so..

Jeremy Lesniak:

We just got a whole bunch of context about you and in fact I'm pretty sure we've checked off some of those other questions in a way and that's great you know that was a good narrative and I like when people are able to carry it through you know it's clear that you have a good sense of your journey and that's really you know, martial arts is a journey we've talked about that so many times.

Scott Bolon:

Yes it is

Jeremy Lesniak:

But for most of us it's hard to really look back and to have that 20-20 even about ourselves, you know we like to say hind sight is 20-20 you know I've done a few with these and most people aren't able to connect all, a lot of the dots you know you see where you've gone and I think that's great. I want to move on a little bit now, I know

Scott Bolon:

Yeah absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know you've given me some hints on some of the things that we're going to get into but let's call it story time, you know what's your favorite story out of all of your years of training that you'd like to share with everyone.

Scott Bolon:



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I have a couple and I have a couple because I didn't know if I would be able to talk at length about some of these, some of these are kind of short so I'll tell the serious one first is my black belt test and I kind of touched on that a little bit before but you know that long break and then coming back to it and it was very humble, humbling experience to I had to admit to myself that while during that 11 years I attempted to try to keep myself at least somewhat fresh online material you know the techniques I had done you talk about 30 techniques per belt and 2 katas per belt that's a small library even up to second brown belt. But I can't sit here and say that I was really good at I mean it would come in very very intermittent bits and spurts so it was enough to basically make sure that I never really truly lost all of it so to speak upstairs but I wasn't really there's a little bit of almost a kind of a depression involved in it you know kind of like as I'm doing it I'm also talking myself out of it you walked away you know you didn't stick with it and things like that so kind of like that two warring sides you know the positive and the negative so when I did finally go back and I started I mean every single morning well almost every single morning I'm pretty sure I had a couple of days where I stayed up a little too late and couldn't get up to work out in the morning but I would work myself through a belt and I mean even if I had to beat my head against the wall to get through it, I would get through it. And I have worked on that belt for probably most of a week then I would move on to the next belt. While at the exact same time working towards my first degree brown belt cause I had just gotten my second degree brown belt, which means the next set of materials towards first degree and so while I'm trying to refresh myself on everything and some of it came back really well some of it was like oh my gosh you know it's like finding something in your storage room and dusting it off and you're like oh my gosh I still got this that's great but there's quite a bit of it that it was like I don't remember this at all just nothing so coming back at it working of both the front end of it and trying to work my way up and refresh everything and working on the new material at the same time running down the Lexington whenever Grandmaster Tracy was in Lexington him coming up here whenever he's here skypeing as much as I could. That was almost 2 years let's see that would be yeah about 2 years and like I said end of '14 I started and just got my shodan back in april and grandmaster tracy has never put me up in a position where I was likely to fail even though I thought for sure I might fall flat on my face when a testing session came around. So we did the test and Alan and Sandy Gates were very very, very generous in offering their studio for me to do my test here even though they don't offer kempo karate there they've always respect that I did another martial art separately and I was separately working on that while doing Taekwondo and combat hapkido there. They offered their place up and we did it there and I was as nervous, stressed I mean I would like to imagine I did a great duck impression you know everything's calm on top but under the surface going 150 miles an hour. I'm pretty sure that there was some stuff I've topped too, there was some stuff get you know coming off above the surface but so we did our black belt test and I've heard some of the black belt test you know some of the people that you've had on and they talked about their black belt test and you know you know 4 days out in the woods and you know hypothermia or heat stroke setting in and it's and mine wasn't anything like that but it was huge to me it was a water shed moment. We start out we bow in and he's you know he in my mind I'm going okay Scott just go about 80%, just about 80% so that way you're not totally out of breath before you even get half way through. And then he



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names off the first kata and I know that you've talked about kata at times about how you do it like you're doing a fight and I do it like I'm fighting the worst enemies in my life the people I, I mean there's so that's it's a very cathartic experience for me when I do a kata because it is an exhausting, I mean I let it out. And I unload while trying to keep all my form together and everything else so my first 2 katas I'm spent, I mean I'm shot I'm just out of breath I'm huffing and puffing but I won't let it show I'm keeping my standing up nice and straight you know postured up and everything else and then we go to 30 techniques and I don't know how I didn't pass out but you know and then that moment when he says alright let's kneel so we kneel down and we go through the presentation of ranks ceremony and I mean I'm shaking. My whole body, my hands are shaking and I'm you know I'm trying to keep it under control but I between the exhaustion and then the anticipation the excitement the you know all that and then when I tied it on I mean it was a watershed moment I'll stick with that. And it's weird, I didn't appreciate how much it changed my perception of myself as a martial artist and my not to sound like I think highly of myself in that sense but like wow now I'm here where I've seen people at that stage or higher but that black belt and I've seen people there and now well now I'm here and then I mean it's something that it took me a few weeks to kind of really get used to seeing a black belt in the mirror instead of a brown or when I was in Taekwondo or when I was you know I want to be doing Taekwondo I wore I think at that time it was a purple. Well now I wear my black belt all of the time and then they respect my rank and they appreciate that and allow me to wear my kempo black belt there but I still do have to go through you know the progression I still earn my belts there in Taekwondo and hapkido separately but they allowed me to wear my kempo black belt there and to this day it's maybe one of those changing moments you know. I didn't appreciate how much it would change me, I had no clue that it would change the way I feel about myself as a martial artist and my position now as you know moving forward into teaching. So that's my big serious one and then I do have a short funny one doing we're doing sparring one night at a and doing Taekwondo sparring and I'm not the best there is by any large margin but I go hard and I give you a good it's going to be a good match. Even if I'm kind of flat that night I'll give, I'll make you work for it. So, the worst thing I've ever experienced is sparring someone who's very very new. And so my first match in that ring that night and it was a foreman ring as old guys doing sparring and this guy Kevin he's 6'3" I mean I don't even know, I mean he weighs a lot more than me. He is a big guy, apparently played football at least in high school maybe college I'm not sure so and I'm aware of the size difference. I'm not stupid enough to think I'm not I don't have a Chihuahua complex I mean I know that there's a size difference and I have to modify maybe my approach and things like that but I'm so jacked up I'm ready to go and I'm like this on every sparring that I'm ready to rock and roll. Well he brings this kick up and we call them punt kicks because that's what they look like, they look like they're punting a ball from the floor instead of bringing the knee up and then snapping the foot out and bringing it back you know nice controlled kick. So he brings his punt kick up and for some odd reason my mind told me hey put your foot out and lock that off to the side and get in and slide in and tag the chest. So I did that, my mind was wrong very wrong, because apparently if you want to get into physics I met force with force almost directly instead of kind of at an angle and I have never had what mass I do have which is not a lot but I've never had my mass so thoroughly ignored in my entire life. His kick literally



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picked me up off the floor in my mind I went through the ceiling and back down but I've seen pictures people had pictures by the way and they're hilarious. I mean I was picked up a full I don't know 4-5 feet off the floor and I landed down hard on my left side bruised my rear end but I felt as controlled as I could and I got right back up, I didn't stay on that ground for even half a second longer than I had to I got right back up and everybody was like oh my gosh are you okay and I'm like I'm fine I am perfectly fine right now but in my mind I'm going Holy bleep bleep bleep bleep bleep that didn't work and I tossed that plan out the door and I immediately came up with a new plan which was don't do that ever again with this guy. I did win my match I'll say that, I did win my match but wow that was a, that was one of those ones I won't forget anytime soon and I didn't walk quite right for a few days. That one lasted.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think we all have at least one sparring match or you know some kind of partners that sticks in our mind decades later

Scott Bolon:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

Where we think back and say I messed up, I messed up bad.

Scott Bolon:

Oh yeah absolutely, that was not a good move.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know let's be honest as human beings we learn best from making mistakes so as embarrassing as painful as it can be, it's best to screw that up within the training environment rather than when you really need it.

Scott Bolon:

I tell my kids and I tell other students there failure is the best teacher the best teacher I've ever had in my life. I don't always like it when it decides to teach me a lesson but those are the ones you learn you learn fast hopefully.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I think I know where we're going to go with it but it's completely up to you of course.

Scott Bolon:

Sure, absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'd like you to tell us about a time when things were really challenging and how you were able to reflect or lean on some of the context of who you are as a martial artist to get through it.

Scott Bolon:

Well, that would have to be, I'd have to basically put that on more or less the time when I was away from kempo and martial artist up to that point had been a bit of a saving grace it really I'd have to say it really made me whole it allowed and it was my outlet it also helped me provide myself some balance you know I'd done you know small amounts of meditation and I would try to meditate and of course self thought. Nothing you know nothing I didn't go to you know like another interview or I didn't go to a Zen monastery although when I heard that, I was like that's cool period. But you know but the farther I got away from it and not to take responsibility away from myself that mental way of training, that mental way of thinking it also started to fade a little bit on me. I wasn't as good of a person as I could be or should be and it's like you know the farther you get away from that light I guess if that's the way you want to call it so the less it shines on you and for me you know I wasn't as balanced I wasn't as kind and generous I'm not saying I wasn't kind at all or generous at all I just not not in that way that I was when I was very active in the martial arts and so you know I mean it not you know I mean I did my part plainly speaking you know I you know while divorce is not something I ever you know thought I would have to deal with you know and it takes to but I definitely earned my part of it and I'd like to say that martial arts helped me but at that time I was so far away from it that I probably wasn't able to receive that help so to speak I let myself get so far away from it mentally that it I wasn't the person that I wanted to be that I remember to be that I should be. So when I you know divorce happens and you know of course that's not always a great time but we stayed very amicable through the whole process. We made it work, we did what we had to do and you know and of course some of that lifts you know when things are settled and things kind of get start get back to you know a normalcy. But it was like an old friend waiting for me when I came back to it, you know just go in and dust it off you know or that friend you haven't seen in years but you just picked right back up like you haven't been apart and so I've really held on to that this time I really noticed that I didn't realized it then the way I do now. I didn't realize that I was getting away from who I was that I was getting away from who I want to be as a



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person as a father as a husband again as a mentor because I am now in that role a little bit. You know I teach my wife and I teach my sister in law I just started teaching my sister in law. So I'm in that role now too and so I really try to take stock of you know all that and I try to do my best to self analyze and so I took a lot of time to really think about where I was during that time and try to learn everything I can from it, try to find out okay what did I do wrong or where did I go wrong, what can I do better? And so when I came back to martial arts like I said it was just like running in to that old friend and picking your friend your friendship up right where it left off and it's helped me to really make a lot of progress in the last 3 years in getting myself back to where I want to be, who I want to be and you know and how I want to be. I did want to take a minute to give you information on Mr. Alan Gates and Ms Sandy gates

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure

Scott Bolon:

Those I think they'd be great people to reach out to they have, their background is definitely in Taekwondo and combat hapkido but they've also done kune do and they were he was big and I don't know if the name sounds familiar to you but I know he was a big tournament competitor for a long time. I'm not exactly sure where but I know he won more than a few trophies as a tournament competitor. So their place is called karate town USA and I can give you Sandy's phone number.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah if you could make an email intro, that's the best.

Scott Bolon:

Okay oh well I'll do that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Email or facebook intros are really best cause that I can feed people files and you know just copy and paste all the questions and something I wanted to mention to cause when you said gathering of eagles I was like there was something in my head about this when I went back

Scott Bolon:

Grandmaster Nick Chamberlain



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah

Scott Bolon:

Yes, well like I contacted Grandmaster Nick Chamberlain I told him I said I hope you don't mind but I passed your name along because well one I'd love to hear his story. But then I thought you know would be good at the end cause you usually let people kind of you know talk about what's going on with them what are they in to now, what are they moving on to and stuff like that. And I thought that'd be at least a good way to at least drop you know about that and he could tell a story and everything but I think he thought at the time that it was more of a, I don't want to say promotional but a promotional type of thing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh that ids what he thought cause I got a form request and you know we exchanged a couple of emails and you know like I said I don't take everybody and there was just something that smelled different about this and so you know I asked him you know my litmus test alright give me a little bit about your history, because if somebody is not willing to put in the time to write out in detail something, an thing you're not going to be in depth on the show and he completely dodged that and so I wrote to him and I said it seems like you just want to promote your event and that's cool but this isn't the format for that.

Scott Bolon:

Yeah thats not it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Check out martial arts calendar which funny enough, I don't think he ever submitted to which blew me away.

Scott Bolon:

Yeah, I almost put it in by the way when I typed that in and i'll come back to that it prompts me that like my google chrome prompts me like the security on it the security certificate is

Jeremy Lesniak:



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My web host swore that that was only affecting me

Scott Bolon:

Okay, nope it's not

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright

Scott Bolon:

So but I mean i'll be honest with you I do not know Grandmaster Chamberlain other than through facebook you know so this will be my first time going out to dallas which is where it's at and normally the tracy's used to run the gathering of eagles but they've kind of decided to let other area schools I don't know if you want to call it like the super bowl but like other area school can decide to try to host it. So I get the impression he's a real nice guy but I also know that I don't know maybe that's just literally I mean there's something being posted about it all the time lately and he's trying to get all these people to come in so maybe that's really where quite frankly where he's mind's at

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure

Scott Bolon:

Maybe down the road you know after this august 11th and 12th and 13th maybe all can get on the same page that'd be great but and I've told grandmaster Tracy that I put his name to you I would love whenever however as long as it takes for that to happen I would love to hear that because he grew up with Ed parker and his dad grandmaster ted sumner I mean and then of course that was when I mean Bruce lee was running around and you know superfoot and dennis santo and I mean just really awesome names and it's like meant to be a fly on the wall during those years. I'm sure it doesn't even hold I mean it probably doesn't hold up to my fantasy but I'd still that's still cool so but yeah so I will make the introduction for mr and mrs gates and then of course I will try to do an email on her introduction for grandmaster tracy too

Jeremy Lesniak:

That'll be great



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Scott Bolon:

And wherever goes it goes you know absolutely

Jeremy Lesniak:

We've heard a lot about you know kind of your 2 principal instructors and a lot of these outside influences on your life in your martial arts and kids you know there's a lot in the mix but I'm wondering if we had to pick someone other than let's say the people you've identified as your primary instructors that were really influential on you and your martial arts who would that be?

Scott Bolon:

The first one I'd have to say is my wife because I am a gigantic martial arts nerd and probably a little crazy you know actively studying 3 separate styles at the same time. So my wife for being very supportive to me cause when we met I didn't do any martial arts and now I do a whole bunch. So definitely my wife and then I have to say my fight club which is, consists of the other adults at karate town and you know they, we all support each other we do our best to be there for each other when things get difficult or hard and so they've made me a better person which in turn I have tried to do my best to be there and be giving and generous to them whenever they've needed it whether it's martial arts specific or life in general and then Pete, grandmaster Tracy's other student. That being able to work with someone what wasn't necessary it's been so awesome and I know I've made a fantastic friend out of it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Martial arts is the place where you become great friends with people by bleeding and sweating on them as they beat you up.

Scott Bolon:

That is the absolute truth it's when you have traded bruises, there is a bond now, there is a friendship there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Some kind of bizarre mutual stockholm syndrome I think.

Scott Bolon:



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It very much is.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah that's those are some great answers and obviously it's clear that this gentleman pete is pretty pivotal in your training. If you could train with somebody else anybody excuse me that you haven't anywhere in the world any time in history who would that be?

I'm a huge fan of not just the movies but the history of Ip man and because of not just I mean I love the very inside style of wing chun very up close and personal which is similar to a lot of what kempo's about as getting inside but who he was. He a very generous person, a very calm, patient person which is what I strive to be and sometimes fail miserably but I do attempt to be very calm and very measured and so I just I really like the way he seem to approach a lot of things. And the other one I'd have to go with is more of a time frame but I love to have been in those old kempo dojos with ed parker and great grand master al tracy I would love to have been there and train with them. I'm sure I would get bruised, just terribly but that would be those are my two things if I had to put 2 things, those are the ones for sure.

Scott Bolon:

Yeah I mean the ability to train with someone like it you know I we, the piece I would like to dig in to with him and I don't even know if there's anybody alive that could really speak to this maybe, maybe [59:06](#) somebody out there has the answer but how much of what bruce lee became can be tracked back to it and I don't mean skill wise but I mean philosophy wise and clearly the fact that the man has been gone while within either you or I have been alive and he's still the most influential martial artist on the planet says a lot right?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah absolutely.

Scott Bolon:

So. Well you would think that you know I think what was it somewhat like 14-15 years of his that was like the first 14-15 years of his martial arts life that he trained with him, it's something like I maybe wrong. But like for me like everything I do I do Taekwondo and I do hapkido but a lot of it I roll into what I already have a foundation set in with kempo so I would have to imagine that not just the martial arts training but also the philosophical training has to be it has to be massively influential to who he became.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

That kind of, that's adjacent to the topic of movies and as a self proclaimed martial arts nerd I'm guessing movies fallen in to your [1:00:16](#)

Scott Bolon:

Absolutely, I mean come on that's just there's I mean when you are watching a martial arts movie and you know it's good when you're not laying back anymore now you're kind of up and you're at the edge and you're clenching your fist every time you see and it's totally dorky I'm fully willing to admit it but yes movies definitely

Jeremy Lesniak:

Before I do but before I don't know is I shared this on the show before but it reminded me and this is kind if the perfect opportunity in high school two of my best friends

Scott Bolon:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

We ended up at the premier of I want to say it was super cop jackie chan's super cop but it was a bad snow storm so no one else showed up to the theater. So we weren't just in the living room doing the moves, sparring with each other we were in the movie theater while the movie was going on, it was a trip. jumping off of chairs and that reminded me of that day and it's a great memory but

Scott Bolon:

Oh yeah, I'm 37 years old and here I am my heart's racing and I'm like you go get up get up get up you know, I'm a total dork.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Which movies get you doing that more than others? Is it a particular person, particular style?

Scott Bolon:



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Well, I have to say the first movie and this goes back to when I kind of got started. I was a big fan of Jet Lee but I didn't like the wire work as much because you know it's like okay it looks cool but nobody jumps 45 feet in the air, I'm just I'm sorry you just don't or you don't hang in the air for an extraordinary amount of time with nothing to push you back up you know you don't just hang there. But then I saw Kiss of the Dragon and I fell in love with that movie because it was like okay, this is kind of like Jet Lee raw. No wire work no unbelievable stuff and at that time I'd only seen like Romeo Must Die, Lethal Weapon 4, and I think the one so they were kind of fantastical martial arts movies at least a little bit. Lethal Weapon 4 was pretty tamed as far as the martial arts but he was definitely featured there but then I saw Kiss of the Dragon and I mean it was like just pure Jet Lee pure him just being the awesome certifiable bleep bleep that he is and so that was my first one that I can always go back and just watch that one and just enjoy it even if it is unrealistic to take out in a full room of karatekas with 2 sticks and then the recent one and I know I emailed you about it is The Raid, the 2 Raid movies. I don't know that I've seen other than maybe John Wick which is not strictly martial arts but there's a lot of martial arts in it and it is very much a martial arts movie but I mean the Raid movies are just absolutely ridiculous so violent and visceral I mean to the point where you, it makes you uncomfortable when you see you know someone's you know leg you know knee bend the wrong way or you know they land in a very uncomfortable position on their back on a door frame or something like that, absolutely fantastic.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And you mentioned Jet Lee would you call him your favorite actor or is there somebody else that holds that spot?

Scott Bolon:

Well it evolves, but I'd have to say right now Iko Uwais, I assume I'm pronouncing his name correctly from The Raid and then Donnie Yen I mean I'm the way he did the Ip Man movies and then not to mention other movies where it's like he blends, he's one of the few today that and I know this has been a topic before but he's not only a great martial artist but he's also a really good actor and that's not always the case. I'm being nice, yeah no there's quite frankly there's a lot of movies I you know I've heard you talk about I don't know how many times the bad martial arts movies just terrible but you watch it because it's like alright let's get past this plot point here just to get back to the real action please thank you very much and so no I'm a big fan of Donnie Yen, big fan of this young guy Iko Uwais I'm just blown away when I saw this.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How about books? Are you a nerd whose nerdiness extends in the martial arts books?



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Scott Bolon:

I, it does although they're not always specifically martial arts books but they philosophy as well actually listening to your show got me to read Zen in the martial arts which I didn't even know existed until I started listening to the show and I'm like I keep hearing it, keep hearing it I'm like alright I got the get this, loved it, it's fantastic so that's one of them and then the other one I was really kind of a big deal to me was the Dao De Jing by Laozi and I love the way that it, the way martial arts trains my body I guess if that's what you want to call it I love reading those kinds of books cause they train my mind, they train me how to, kind of how to see things more clearly how to step back you know, things like I love, so that's one of my favorites as well.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Good picks, like you're training, you've got a lot going on you know and clearly your

Scott Bolon:

Well yeah father of two.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You've made martial arts a priority in your life so that says something about how important it is to you, so I'm expecting there are goals. I'm guessing there are things you're working towards, I don't know if you can articulate those for us, but I'd love to hear them if you can

Scott Bolon:

Yeah, so obviously you know with my kids we're working on our blackbelt in Taekwondo more currently at a blue belt right now and so we've got a little while to go for that. I'm also working separately towards my black belt in combat hapkido which I haven;t if there's one martial art I had to kind of let slide a little bit, when the realities of fatherhood husband all that stuff work come into play so I'm not as far long in that I'm a green belt in combat hapkido but I enjoy the system very much so those personal blackbelts in both of those but then you know I've really enjoyed like I said being a supplemental instructor to Pete but also being the instructor for my wife which is going great and then also recently just starting my sister in law and you know I was able to put her at ease really easy she was nervous about it you know lot of people I always feel like a lot of people think and I;m pretty sure I did too when you have that first session or that first class, like oh my gosh I'm going to go in there and I am going to look terrible, I'm going to be just a miserable excuse for martial artist and of course the truth is well yeah you are but that's okay, looked the same way, I had no idea what I was doing cause I hadn't been there and so we



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were able to have a great session and really took, I really got her at ease really fast and so so I love to teach it; something that I've discovered very in the past year or 2 it's a passion for me and in whatever way and whatever form that takes down the road I have no idea but as long as I am teaching even if it's one or 2 students privately I'm happy, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's great stuff, you've listened to this show enough I appreciate your time here today, you know we're going to wind down but I always ask that one thing with everybody, what parting advice, words of wisdom, whatever you want to call it, what would you share with everyone listening?

Scott Bolon:

Absolutely, biggest thing and this might be a blending of 2 generally held concepts is you know it doesn't matter if you fail, failing is we never think of failure as a good thing it's a negative it has a negative connotation but failure is a good thing. Failure means you tried, failure means stuck it out there and yeah maybe you got slammed in the face and you know quote unquote got a cut off or whatever you know the sayings are. Failure's a good thing it teaches you and it teaches you better than any victory I've ever had in my life and you know so don't be afraid to fail and I say that because all that matters in my experiences and of course that's what I can speak to for me martial arts is about literally just doing your best to be better today than you were yesterday. Don't be afraid to fail, go out there if you see something and you think well that look interesting but I'm not going to be good at it go and find out it's okay, you won't be great at it that's why you go learn that's why you you know a phd doesn't come phd because he goes to one class because a phd over many many classes and many many years. So don't be afraid to fail and just be better than you were the day you were before or at least learn something that you didn't know the day before.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Its clear that Mr. Bolon is a resilient and hardworking martial artist. No matter how bad or how hard the situation seem to be, I really got the impression that you just always been focused on achieving whatever his goals are for himself, for his family, whatever is going on. Some of us might want to quit, things that weve got in order to have a fresh start, you know kind of hit that reset button. But I dont get that sense of that's Mr. Bolons MO, he gives us an example of how not to quit, however hard personal circumstances can get. I really like the messaging that he gave us about treating failure as an ultimate tool in order to be successful.

I want to thank you for joining us on today's show, remember you can check out the show notes whistlekickmartialartsradio.com this is episode 220, you can see everything weve got going on over



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there related to the show. Links and photos and all that. I want to encourage you to check out the other things that we've got going on and I'd love for you to share this episode or another episode with someone maybe is new to the show. We're growing, we're growing all the time and as we grow, we bring in new guests and bigger guests and different guests and it's all part of our mission here to bring martial artists together to show that we are so much more alike than we are different. I want to thank you for your time listening to me, listening to Mr. Bolon. And I want to thank you for being a martial artist. If you're not, well because I know there are some of you out there I get that feedback, what are you waiting for? Give it a try. The martial arts is for everybody. That's all for now until next time. Train hard, smile and have a great day.