



Episode 230 – Sensei Sascha Raeburn | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Welcome, welcome, welcome. This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 230. Today we're bringing you another wonderful guest from down under, Sensei Sascha Raeburn. I want to thank you for tuning in, my name is Jeremy Lesniak I'm your host on the show, I'm the founder at whistlekick and I'm the one that helps guide our company as we make all the wonderful sparring gear, apparel, services, web products, all the amazing things that we've got going on and you can find links to everything we at whistlekick.com. If you're looking for the show notes for this or any other episode, you can find those at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. If you're not on the newsletter, you should be. We send out one, maybe two newsletters a month, we just kinda hit you with the high points. You know, a podcast episode or two, maybe a new product, new color of gear, just something that we've got new rolling out. We've got new things coming all the time. If you guys could see my workspace, with all the new products that we've got going, ooh, it is crazy over here. The best way to find out when any of those things roll out, the newsletter list and we tend to offer some pretty big discounts, not just on the existing products but when stuff first hits because we want to get some feedback, we want to know what you all think. You can find the social media for everything we do @whistlekick where, everywhere you might imagine and we got this kinda super secret not really Facebook group whistlekick radio behind the scenes and that's where we have some great discussions about the episodes. If you're a certain age, it's almost a guarantee that you spent some hours, maybe a lot more, playing the video games mortal kombat and street fighter. Today's guest is no different, Sensei Sascha Raeburn was first exposed to martial arts through video games and it was those experiences that led her into the martial path. Today,



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she practices taekwondo as well as the art of capoeira. She's also an actress who started training as a child and recently received an award for one of her series. Sensei Raeburn has an interesting story on how she got to the martial arts so, without further ado, let's welcome her.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sensei Raeburn, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Sascha Raeburn:

Thank you very much. Thank you for having me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It is an honor to have you here. Try number two if we can call it that, we got bit by time zone math the first time.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah, we do. Oh, it happens.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Which anybody that... It does. Anybody that has friends or family overseas knows that time zone math can be quite a pain and then you get daylight savings time.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah. And were a day ahead here in Australia and that can just get confusing for the rest of the world, it's difficult.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Do you feel like you're ahead of the world in Australia, do you feel like you're watching everything go on and say, uh, they're just catching up to us.

Sascha Raeburn:

Not really, no. But sometime if you do have friends that are waking up from the other side of the world, sometimes the time difference like oh were a day ahead.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

That seem like a politically correct answer, I'll take it. Well done. Alright, we're not here to talk about Facebook or time zones or anything like that. We're here to talk about martial arts and specifically your journey through the martial arts which you know, I've been watching on the social media for a little while and you've got some cool stuffs going on.

Sascha Raeburn:

Oh, thank you so much. I'm a big fan of you, you know I've listened to some of your podcast and I think you're great and always learn so much whenever I listen to you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well. So, this is the end of the episode. We've reached the peak, I mean there's no reason to go forward. It's all downhill from here. Let's talk about how you get started. Everybody's journey has to start somewhere so, what about yours? How did you get started in martial arts?

Sascha Raeburn:

Okay. Well, firstly where I grew up as a child in Australia, it was a very small town in country new south wales, and I had two brothers and so we were really into playing video games. And some those video games were mortal kombat and street fighter. And we would play them all day long, my mom didn't really have that much of a limit. And so, I was actually exposed to martial arts through those video games and I just wanted to be like ken or ryu but it was just that these characters and being such a kid like I'm talking five or six years old and seeing these characters, just come from different martial art backgrounds like I would see e-honda from like a sumo background. Sagat from Muay Thai and you know being in a small town, there we're actually no karate or martial art classes or anything like that, I learned a lot from watching the movements of those video games. But my brothers they were a bit more stuck in the virtual world of it whereas I would take it outside and I would be on the trampoline and id be pretending like I'm chun li going pa pa pa pa, doing these movements. And yeah, I would get into fights with my brothers, I was a bit of a country kid and I didn't like dolls, I had a doll phobia. I was a bit of a tough girl, I wanted, I would much rather play someone around at street fighter or mortal kombat than be given a doll and my mom would have to sort of give me lectures before birthday parties like you know, you are a girl and people are gonna give you dolls and that kinda thing. That's the type of young girl I was and so like I said, there weren't really any martial arts classes in that town but when we moved to a bigger town, we moved up to the gold coast in Australia, I took my first taekwondo class when I was around thirteen years old. But before then I had done a lot of dance, there was dance in that small town and so I, that's where I learn a lot about flexibility, footwork, rhythm and I started gymnastic part on school and we would mock around doing cartwheels and splits and sort of push ourselves. Yeah



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but so, did my first taekwondo class for about thirteen, and then when I moved to... I loved that I was hooked in the first class, but when I started to want to take it seriously, and so when I moved to Sydney, I actually bumped into somebody who had, almost working as, I guess you guys would have it called macy's, we call it Myer here. And so, I had to pay for my martial arts training. You know, my parents didn't pay for it. For me, I had to, I had a part time job and pay for it for myself, but it was something that I really want to do and I bumped into a one on one personal coach who did taekwondo and I would spend my money that I earned from the macys, the retailer Myer store and pay for one on one classes and I felt that I could get a better training that way because in the group classes I would get a bit lost as a student and so that was really my journey then. One on one coaching with the taekwondo coach, yeah. But he had told me that he couldn't grade me so he would have to take me down to his master and so I had the best of two worlds then I had the group training and I had the one on one training and then I went up through the ranks through that master. Yeah, so that's kinda how I got into it but the style that I was doing was not ITF, was not WTF it was a sort of a hybrid style, like a sorta Australian taekwondo and they, it was a reputable club but it was not under those two bands. So later on, and just recently, I regraded for black belt under WTF.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. You're used to getting that question it seems. You know, which division of taekwondo

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah like, and uh, I was oblivious cause I was quite young and I was quite oblivious to what style I was doing. I was just happy to go through the ranks uhm but yeah, that particular club is Australian freestyle taekwondo was not ITF or WTF which later on has become important to me specially recently because I want to compete and so yeah just recently I switched to a different club with a master that could grade me under 08:54. But you know, I had such great time with those two masters and one of those masters is very good friends with benny the jet and so I actually get to train and still do when he comes to Australia once a year, get to train with benny the jet.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's awesome.

Yeah, yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Legend. For any of you out there that don't know Benny the Jet Urquidez, you should look him up. He's, I mean, just an absolute legend back in the kickboxing days.



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Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah and he's a legend too to train with as well he really takes his training to a spiritual, yeah, to a whole different spiritual dimension. He talks about a reconditioning of the mind and reconditioning your childhood beliefs and he kinda, he's subconsciously programs his students like while he's training like he, it's like he brainwashes but in such a positive way where he reconditions your mind that you really feel like you can do anything and a lot of martial art actors that have trained with him you know, would practice a few movement within a few days and they can do a spinning crescent or spinning back kick you know because he has that hypnotizing effect on you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah. But with those two masters and, that I trained with I was actually the first woman to receive a black belt in the club and so even when I go down to the club and revisit it now I'm like on the big, I'm outside on the big poster for when you come in like on the big sign up the top. Yeah, and that's like oh wow, you know, a big part of the club that I was always the first woman to go through because it was a really bloaky(?) bloke kinda guy sort of like lots of guys you know training that 10:48 van-Damme type of or inspired guys that beat each other up and you know I was inspiring with these guys and they taught a lot of me that I was the first woman that came in and I think changes things up and showed that you know women could do it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah. But I use to call the one on one coach that... There's a bit of a story there cause I actually kind of convinced him to train me. What happened was like I said, you know, coming from a small town not having martial arts classes doing it 11:21 in one town but then going to the big city and knowing I wanted to do one on one type of coaching and then when I met him in the retail store with his friend and his friend talked him up his coach he is hesitant about training because he didn't have any private students at that point it was something he wants to retire from. So, I just sort as a 11:42 I convinced him I was like, no, this is a sign, you have to train me, you don't understand. And he just from my will and my passion he actually said alright 11:53 took me under his wings and sort of slowly admitted that it was, cause he was sort of starting to not lose his passion but was weaning off a little bit martial arts and that



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he admitted that I did come in at a right time to just reinvigorate that passion. Uhm, yeah, so, and I used to call him in my mind, I used to call him Zangief. Because he was a big guy and he reminded me of zangief and I used to think to myself, don't be scared because the way we as kids used fight zangief was go to the corner and kick him in the head, that's a trick to the game and so I... Cause it's scary being such a lightweight, being a woman and going up against a really big guy, it is scary, so I used to sorta say to myself, it's just zangief there will be a trick to any big guy you know. So, I used to say that at the back of my mind but this is a great thing about this story is that he used to say to me like when I couldn't push him back and didn't have power he just say don't be scared like really push me back because the bigger they are, the heavier they'll go down so don't be threatened by size and I learned that very young too realized that a bigger opponent is heavier and they'll be heavier to go down. Not as quick to get up and that was always something to be encouraged by. But yeah, he was very... He used to give me homework and it was to watch Jean-Claude Van Damme movie cause he swore by Van Damme's technique even though he was a big guy and but he swore by his technique he said he had a... The way he raised his knees so high was what I should be aiming for in every kick and he said that, he used to play his 13:49 and slow mo the spinning back kicks and spinning hook kicks and say this is what you want to achieve like it must be in a middle of a training session like no, no, no and he'd go over to Van Damme and so and then you know, watch these movies and became a fan myself of Bloodsport and Kickboxer. Yeah so, the van Damme is a really big part of my training journey.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And you're not the only one. I mean, certainly not the first time van Damme has been mentioned on the show and we've had others talk about the influence that the movies of that era and if you were coming up in the eighties, van Damme was the guy. I mean those movies were a step beyond.

Sascha Raeburn:

And I feel very yeah, blessed fortunate that he introduced me to all of that, yeah. Because he also explained to me that flexibility like van Damme accentuated flexibility and he was, had a ballet background. My coach told me that he had a ballet background.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I've heard that.

Sascha Raeburn:

And said that, that's you know, he has grace to his kicks, very light on his feet and da, da, da, you know you wanna get that da, da, da, like, put your kicks out there and just be able to double kick, triple kick and so he used to give these really hard combos and with leg weights too and so he was quite, and then



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he had the zangief structure so, he was my first coach and I really did learn a lot from him. And then while I was on this black belt journey I in the back of my mind and I was kind of going out there and doing different martial arts while out cause I just like I said you know I was drawn to all of the different backgrounds of all you know martial arts like I wanted to learn everything so I did a bit of wing chun, I learned a little bit of Aikido and but I didn't wanna confuse myself too much, didn't wanted to go and get my black belt but in the back of my mind I as soon as I get to first dan I actually wanted to go white belt and something and that was a big part of my martial arts journey, I didn't want to, cause I mean I could walk in there and people would bash me cause I got my first dan and I was the only woman so you know I had a lot of the credibility in the club but actually I wanna, I just didn't want my ego, I want to restrict myself from all that. It's not the reason why I got into martial arts, I didn't want people to have that attitude towards me. I always wanted to be the hungry one and always wanted to go back to white belt and start fresh and be the fool all over again. So, I actually went to white belt in capoeira and then stock that up for 5 or 6 years, and still do capoeira and got my blue red belt in that martial art and that's a big part me now as a martial artist, is that I'm also a capoeirista and then when I went back to sparring then I went to revisit my club you know and now and then along the journey with the capoeira skills oh the sparring skills just went to a different level, knowing capoeira yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I did a few years of capoeira and my favorite thing that I pull out of that, the thing that most martial artists struggle with is staying is that linear that front back front back and they struggle

Sascha Raeburn:

Right exactly!

Jeremy Lesniak:

17:23 to the side and so I'll work ginger with folks to get them to see here's how you can start to move laterally and then seeing the opportunities there are, and of course it's just so much fun and the music and.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yes, the music getting the vibrations, but yeah, you're right the ginger and being able to yeah move get so much ground and move and when you look at people like martial arts like Bruce Lee. I almost think Bruce Lee was doing the ginger like you know and Mohamad Ali you know they I always feel like did they do the capoeira because they are just there moving a lot so much like the ginger.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Yeah cool stuff, we don't have, we've had a couple of people on the show that have done capoeira but they did it in Brazil or brought it from Brazil, so you are our first international capoeirista.

Sascha Raeburn:

Well yeah, the instructor that I learned under his like an authentic GM from Brazil is on, it was capoeira Brazil is the name of the group and they are yeah very well-known and so I did have that authentic Brazilian experience cause there's actually a lot of the capoeira clubs here in Sydney, there are Brazilian and they do teach that you know the authentic Brazilian style so we're very fortunate.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool, capoeira seems to be you know over the last probably 5,10 years where karate was in the 60s.

Sascha Raeburn:

Right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know that just kind of that first generation that first wave and it'll be interesting to see where it goes over the next 10, 20 years.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah hoping it's into the Olympics one day, that would be so cool.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That would be awesome, we just, we're just getting karate in there and I don't know if they're gonna give us another martial art.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah it will take a long time for capoeira I think to be in there yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I would be fine with an Olympics full of martial arts I mean let's get rid of I don't know of all the dumb ones that don't need to be there and I'm not gonna name them because I'll offend someone so.



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Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well that's an origin story I mean man we bounced, we saw a lot in there and you now hold the title of most street fighter references on the show of anybody.

Sascha Raeburn:

I know I was gonna say Christie from Tekken with the capoeira like cause she's my favorite character from Tekken

Jeremy Lesniak:

Like I could just.

Sascha Raeburn:

Actually, something blow in my Instagram whenever I do capoeira and they go ah Christie from Tekken and I'm like I must admit whenever I see that I'm like oh that's so cool.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I could just see you out in the backyard you know trying to figure out is this how I do the hundred-hand slap. Alright can I make my hands go that fast.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah but that's a great, sometimes like to imagine yourself as a video game character sometimes before training, it's just a great imaginative way to take yourself out of being human cause sometimes I think thinking of yourself as a human and you've got this certain amount of breath you are already talking yourself out of the possibility of being superhuman right like by just going oh you know I've gotta train and I've got you know I've got to have a certain amount of energy whereas you like well or just see myself as a video game character and you just visualize yourself like that you can get a lot of stamina just by doing that.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Yes, it's a wonderful visualization and it's actually one that I'll use when I'm teaching children.

Sascha Raeburn:

Oh wow

Jeremy Lesniak:

To get them to see themselves as superheroes or video game excuse me video game characters it can really help them dial into what's possible rather than what they know.

Sascha Raeburn:

Rather than you are, yeah rather cause we yeah, we tend to sort of like see ourselves in 21:13 way of just like oh ordinarily human at least your using your imagination you'll open yourself up to the possibility that you're extra you know you're superhuman.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right, let's move on

Sascha Raeburn:

And then you yeah, what was that?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Go ahead no finish it.

Sascha Raeburn:

And then yeah, the idea that you don't have breath you know that was brought up in the matrix as well I think when Morpheus just said to Neo is that air you're breathing you know and at least he had that moment where he's like hmm you know cause it just gave him something to think about like maybe it's an illusion maybe it isn't like the whole idea that you have a certain amount of breath, how much of that is psychological? How much of that is just you assuming that you only have a certain capacity and so yeah using sort of the virtual reality to maybe sort of put yourself outside, the yeah, the idea of just being human is at least helping that area of imagination.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Yeah, good stuff. Let's talk about stories, I mean you just told us a bunch I mean that's really, I love stories and really almost everything that happens on this show is just a sequence of stories, some are shorter, some are longer than others.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If I ask you for your favorite martial arts story, what would that one be?

Sascha Raeburn:

My favorite martial arts story, I have a lot, I think I definitely do value my travel time to training especially in the early days you know I had to catch a train for an hour and a half to get to my one on one coach and those early mornings and then having a run to get there and I think the time in the train I would just fall asleep and then miraculously just wake up a stop before I had to get off and know I had to train but I do value the and I say it to people starting at martial arts who go on you know I have so much time I live far away and I think that's something to be said in the travel time to get there to me what really was part of training is the part is the mental part to switch off and to go into dream world if you like and to just soak in the messages you might receive or the spirituality of your journey. It's not always about the outcome and getting a 6-pack you know I think sometimes people focus on that but just also allowing yourself to be on a meditative journey while you're training. So, I value the time that I've spent traveling to where I've got to get to training and also meeting Benny the Jet that's been a great story. I've really enjoyed and I still do and I have his books and that's still always in the back of my mind that Benny, he explains when he's teaching that if someone gives you a hit and you felt it you know, it's important at that moment to look at that your opponent in the eye and look at that person in the eye and say that was a good kick with a lot of genuine emotion about that and the reason why is because you're teaching yourself that you can handle it and I always thought that was a very special teaching that I've learned and a very special story that I always tell to this day. Put that ego aside if I've felt a really good hit where it did scare me a little bit, it's so important more than ever to really look at that person and say that was a good kick and that was a good hit cause each time you're doing that, your psychologically preprogramming yourself that you're stronger than you think you are and that you can handle it. So yeah that would be probably some stories that yeah that I can think of.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright, what are you doing when you're not doing martial arts? What else do you got going there?



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Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah well acting has been like my number one pursuit, even before martial arts came along like when I was 6 in my first school play I decided that I wanted to be an actor and I took up training very young and I moved to Sydney and even went to NIDA where a lot of the famous Aussie actors would go, it's a very famous school here. Cate Blanchett went there among other Australian actors and yeah I recently received my honors in acting at another University so that's been keeping me busy and in 2013 I actually moved to LA and I wrote, directed and started my own web series called Lost in LA which some people in social media are following me in that part of the journey and that one underwent like a string of awards at some festivals and that came as a surprise but I learned that I really like comedy out of all of that and now I'm still working on martial art projects where I can intertwine some of the things I learned about comedy and acting, that's where the direction I'd really like to go more than anything is to be able to incorporate comedy and martial arts, yeah. So yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

In what way, do you have any ideas that you're willing to share?

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah, like well I definitely envisioned myself as an actor being able to play those traditional karate kid kinda roles where there's a calling to do martial arts or there's something that propels the character to do martial arts and seek out the sort of training and 27:01 quirky and you know interesting master and there's some life lessons too along there or I have to go into competition you know the whole, that whole blood sport of kickboxing type of story or karate kid sort of story. But I would like to see it with a bit more of a Jackie Chan kind of spin or just a bit more of a humorous side and bridge across a bit more of a woman doing comedy in martial arts more than the serious type of, as much as I love films like Million Dollar Baby but yeah, I think that those there'd be room for a martial arts actors that would can take on that comedic side a bit more you know. I haven't seen that too much in the Western cinema or you know film projects, I think that would be really cool.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, it's something that I would love to see more of. Of course, I wanna see more martial arts in every stage of life, every representation in popular culture of course you know when people talk about martial arts in comedy we're generally talking about one thing you know it's Master Ken. And that pretty much the place and you know people will come through and work with him but he's kind of the guy and you know I can't speak to how well he does but he's well known.

Sascha Raeburn:



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Yeah, oh yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So certainly, that tells me there's probably room for more and.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah there's a lot of guys like him in martial arts and they can get status quickly in the martial art genre you know whether it's even you know there's like you've got even actors that 28:52 in martial arts like you're a Matt Damon's or Keanu Reeves, you know they've got their franchise films and but a woman who's an actress like for instance Uma Thurman might do one or two light martial arts films but you know they aren't really martial artists to begin with so they have a lot more interests in other avenues of course. Whereas I would really like to just focus on a career that would be martial art comedy. I'd be happy to do something like Jackie Chan like just I mean you know on the specialty and after doing lost in LA and discovering that I really like comedy that would be something that I would really like to focus on yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool, alright.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I'd like you to tell us about a difficult time you know, we all have them. We all have these challenges, rough stuff, but martial artists seem to have a unique ability to get through them either faster or with more grace or whatever it is. So, I'm hoping you might tell us about a tough spot in your life and how you we're able to use your martial arts in some way to get through.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah sure well just recently having I went out of my comfort zone and did my honors at university and that was something that I just thought oh that's what other people do you know other people go and work on their thesis and you know become professors or eventually you know do that type of thing that's not, that wasn't me and so I think I had this sort of limited view of myself that ohh I'm not gonna be able to get through this course or something, it did get tough there where I did almost have a



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meltdown halfway through doing this thesis I can't do this and I did draw up on in my martial arts background and always find that I do you're right and I did sort of see it as something where my training has taught me never to give in, never to give up but to something about pain you know, pain is martial arts has taught me that pain is temporary as well like it might last you know a minute, it might last a day, it might last a year but it is it will subside and something else I think starts to take its place and that's usually success and so I think that during that tough time I just, I drew up on that I went well at second training session you know, this is pain and now is the time where I really have to use my martial arts training because our training session might be over in two hours or something or long three hours but, you know this is a bit longer this is just when you really do need to draw up on that martial art training and I just sort of saw it that it was like a test, it's like a martial arts test and that, I started using some of the tactics that I would do in martial arts maybe hey maybe I'm putting too much pressure on myself, maybe I need to sort of take a break, or you know, relax like sometimes in your stance in martial arts. You realize you got too much tension and that's why you're burning out, you need to relax and so I would think to myself, okay it's time to relax, time to breathe in. But always just looking ahead and looking at my opponent or looking at the task in front of me and having the determination about succeeding. Sort of enjoying it and maybe not worrying about the outcome I think with good fights and what like we saw with Mayweather and McGregor just recently you know. I think after that fight, people start to realize, it's not really about winning or losing I mean, look at McGregor he went out of his comfort zone and did something that's an achievement already and Mayweather coming out and giving that 50 to nil a shot and you know, succeeding at that. That sort of what its more about us not about its pettiness of like you know, who had the hardest hit in that particular round like it was sort of in a way it was kind of like equal sort of like balanced you know, him being an MMA fighter and having those first rounds wish we're quite like you know, different and then Mayweather you know, having his limelight like it all sort of balanced out. And I think that we tend to focus so much on the outcome but I think my martial arts training has taught me that it's not about you know, winning or losing, it's about the character, it's about staying in the fight and doing the best you can and understanding that pain is your friend.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Certainly, can be and a wonderful instructor. I mean, really. I think, if you get right down to it you can break most of what we learn, what we learn by experience as avoiding pain whether its physical pain or emotional pain or, you know, we tend to learn those lessons hopefully. Some of us.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah. I do notice especially in stretching cause as I've said before, you know I came from that background where my coach really stressed the importance of stretching and the van Damme background and everything and I notice that when a lot of people that I, in the class in the classes that I'm doing at the moment will tend to drop off a little bit or people think, associate stretching with yoga



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and it should be, I don't know it's should be relaxing, people have this false idea that stretching should be relaxing, yes it can be but really effective stretching is you do feel the pain and you learn to enjoy the pain, you learn to see that pain is something that, is actually an inviting experience, its inviting you to understand that you're already making the experience more painful cause you're resisting the abundant feeling of being better. You know, that's where ironically is kinda coming from is because you know you're resisting what you could be and you're wanting to limit yourself here like I see when people stretching and I'm stretching people out they want it, they just limit themselves by seeing themselves here and that they're making the pain almost worse by sort of capping themselves right there and not seeing themselves expand, that makes it worse. So, pain is interesting cause I think that we had to it you know, whereas I think if we surrender, we relax, stretching is a perfect example to surrender just the more you relax, yeah you feel a bit of pain but just relax into it where you know, just invite it in and experience the pleasure of pain.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright. Yeah. Good stuff, I'm not even gonna try to summarize it or expand upon it because I would ruin it. So, we'll just move forward, let's talk about the people that you've worked with. You know, you've mentioned this first instructor several times, these private lessons this... You know, really seemingly ordained from beyond student meets master kind of moment, I don't know maybe that was uh, may that had to happen for you because of the influence of the movies and the video games and you needed to live your own. But if we take him out and I say, who's been the most influential person on your martial arts? Who would it be?

Sascha Raeburn:

Oh yeah. Uhm, well it's interesting like my, of course my loved ones, my family and those closest to me without a doubt but I, it's interesting I compile these mp3 tracks from my iPod which have been very influential and some of them I've been listening to for years and some of the speakers on this tracks include Eric Thomas and Liz brown which are two amazing motivational speakers. Uhm, and I dint now if you've heard of them or not...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah, they, especially Eric Thomas and I got to meet him is real life, I 37:20 crying, crying and crying cause like even when I made my web series and that move to LA, big steps in my life, um, a lot of it was due to listening to some of his motivation. And ah, thank god, its Monday and its uhm, something about



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him like I've listened to tony robins and people like that before but nothing really resonated but Eric Thomas something about his passion, I just watched the guy and something just triggers inside of me that I've, you know whether it's a purpose or you know, some passion. And then Liz brown as well and uhm but a long with those motivational speakers is Bruce lee of course I'm listening to him talk and be like water and the speech and that and got that on a loop and then Arnold Schwarzenegger on there, but my favorite though is Muhammad ail. I think because his amazing voice and uhm he has a rhythm and turning in his voice and he rhymes and listening to that like gets into my subconscious cause I really like, I'm interested in it as a martial artist to re... Like in the benny the jet training just reprogramming myself. So, I'll listen to like, "last week I murdered a rock, injured a stone, hospitalized a brick, I'm so mean I make medicine sick", "fast, fast last week I cut the light off in the bedroom, hit the switch, was in the bed before the room was dark." George foreman, I love these facts, he's like, "George foreman, I know you got him, I know you got him picked, but the man's in trouble, imma show you how great I am." but yeah, the reason why I love Muhammad ail because he had that like up and down in his pitch and you know he was the underdog with George foreman so he was just like "I know you got him, I know you got him picked, but the man's in trouble! Imma show you how great I am." I think just by his words just resonate with me and make like a ascend to me to a different level, you know Sam with Bruce lee and like other people I just mentioned, I think it's about getting out of here uhm surrounding, like we surround ourselves with just like people in everyday situations but we don't realize how much we are collecting in our auras and how much that affects us and we've got to as martial artists like clear ourselves almost like a yogi, you know and I find listening to these people and getting into their aura or getting into their orbit kinda like shifts me up at a different gear, different frequency, yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

One of my favorite sayings I, you know, different people say it in different ways but you are the average of the people that you spend your time with. So, if you're surrounding yourself with great people, oh yeah it will, there are plenty of people that I've shared that with and it rocked them back on their heels and they got super defensive because they recognize, I think we all recognize consciously so here you are, you're talking about these motivational, powerful, inspirational people and I'm very familiar with Eric Thomas. When I'm having a day, when I need to get stuff done, when you wanna breathe t-shirt comes out of the drawer and it goes on because that... The first hundred times I heard him give that, I probably had tears, it is incredibly powerful. And for anybody that doesn't know Eric Thomas, you should definitely check him out. He has nothing to do with martial arts other than he is incredibly passionate and motivated and...

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah, there's something I've, when I saw him live as well, and I was up so close like in the third row and I got to, as soon as he just came into the room and somebody who would see him before live, and we were just quickly talking before he came out, said you're gonna cry. And I said, no I will be alright. He's



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like 'No, you're gonna cry. As soon he came out I was just started crying cause just him being in the room and having heard all of those, thank god, it's Monday and it's a little podcast listening to him and he just... What I love about him I think cause he meditates and a big believer in god and talks to god, he has conversations to god and he ascends, he goes outside of this world, brings in the message for people. And then has the courage and feels the fire on his belly to just say it how it is like however in comes out and whichever ways it's gonna come across to you and I think that something about, yeah just stripping all of his masks and stripping all of his ego in order to reach the person. He doesn't care about anything else, and it's just more important you know, and I think that that's the reason why we train you know, because I remember where at the bank and the queue, like feeling frustrated, you can't let out the 42:15 or shout you know, like if we live in such a polite, we have to be so polite but really, we're primitive we see kids and babies, they scream and they let it out and like, we're no different but we've become very numb sometimes and like we collect everything that surrounds us for a day to day basis and so I think in the dojo or in the dojang in these sacred places, it's like an acting class as well, it's the same thing we get to strip off full of that polite garbage and just get down to train. Let it all out and the truth comes out.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well said.

Sascha Raeburn:

And I like Annie as well. Annie has got some great lines it like uhm, "you've got to get up and say I want to be a champion and I do whatever it takes the amount of hours it takes the posing the this, the that, the visualizing, looking at training footage, looking at motivational books, reading this, reading that, whatever it takes I will do. That's the answer I want to hear from you." I like that speech because it kinda gives me a kick up the butt. It's like its true you know, you've got to get up and just do whatever it takes. You know, we have that whining boys that's always complaining and I think sometimes you just got to knock it out and just it has a spirit inside of you that actually will do what it takes just gonna get to know it you know, and so it's why I think yeah, these people uhm they have been there and they understand that spirit that fire, they are the people I wanna listen to.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm gonna guess that if I was to take a look at your YouTube account and look at the watch again stuff on the personal side, it's probably a similar list of mine because you know, I have those days it's like, okay, I gotta get fired up or you know, something just happened and yeah, I mean, I know every speech I can't articulate it as eloquently I'm not gonna sound nearly as cool saying it as you just did but I know every speech that you just said because I've heard them



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Sascha Raeburn:

Oh, you know them?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, without a doubt. You're the actor here not me so, your delivery is far away better than mine. I love it.

Sascha Raeburn:

Funny.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If you could train with somebody you haven't yet. I mean, you liked about how influential Benny has been, and your instructors have been and your family, but if there is somebody else and we can say that it's somebody that's alive now or somebody that's passed away, who would you wanna train with?

Sascha Raeburn:

Definitely Bruce Lee. I mean 45:00 the reasons but, he has been a big influence in my life I mean, that whole wanting to change different martial arts and going to capoeira, one of his quotes is like a belt is just there to hold up your pants. That has been really influential quote in my life um and you know being like water, you know. These things that come from him again it's just that stripping away the ego and um... And also, he was an actor so he could show a lot of vulnerability and facial expression and physical presence. I'd love to hear his take on incorporating his acting training and experience into martial arts that would be something I would be interested in. Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool. Let's talk about competition. You and I talked little bit about competition before we started going so, have you competed?

Sascha Raeburn:

Well this is a great story and this is a story that I have been holding out. What happened was so I told how I recently took it upon myself to regrade right for a black belt to be on the WTF and um that came about after during the capoeira and after going to LA and coming back... When I was doing the comedy in Los Angeles, I wasn't really a lot of martial arts training, I decided just for that year just to focus more



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on acting. I was being me, I did fall into a group of martial artist and said no, just for this year like you know, I just wanted to just experience acting and the writing, directing. And so I would go hiking and did a bit of martial arts training just to learn but I wasn't as intense but when I came back, I was craving to get back into proper training, and this was like 2014 I think and so I found a club nearby and uhm it was WTF and I just only discovered that my certificate was not under WTF you know, I showed the masters like oh no I don't think this is 47:16 I didn't really know about the whole system or anything so uhm he took me under his wing and he's a great, great master and you know he did 47:26 forms and I was really enjoying it there and they invited me out to go on a training trip to south Korea and I was like oh, that sounds fabulous as a fully packed itinerary of events and things and we just got itinerary just a couple of days before we left and it was like four or five of us martial artists on the trip and one of the first event was when we arrived on the next day, we arrived was tournaments, I hadn't ever been like an official tournament before so I was just thinking you know, is this for real? Like you know, what is it about? And it was the air force championships in jinju and some people started like freaking out and I was not gonna freak out like the fact that I'm prepared to travel and get on a plane like I'm a pro anything like you know gonna travel, I'm just up for anything so I was keeping pretty cool about it and so it was like, four or five o'clock in the morning the next day we arrive we get into a minibus, four hours from Seoul to jinju, these air force championships and you know, it was, I was posting on my social media I was like a full blown, like professional event and we we're in a match like the weight division we're in and I had one fight and if I won it, I won that division and I won, I really could not believe it. I was, it was a life-changing experience for me that like started to make me see competition as maybe not such a scary thing cause I had always sort of written it off as maybe all that would be you know, either be scary for me to do or I didn't like I said, I didn't really come from a competition background you know with my martial art they weren't going into competitions or anything like that so uhm, but I was addicted like when I was out there on the mat and I was in the fight, there is a moment there that was like I'm hooked I've got to do this again and uhm I just knew then and there that this is something I wanna do and so when they came back and I've been training under that club for a while there weren't enough people like the other people that I went training with, I mean they loved the experience and we had a great time with so many other things on the training 49:53 we went to a temple and studied Buddhism and meditation with Buddhist nuns and that was you know, that was a fantastic experience and I just felt like something from it move me. And these are all things that I was documenting and filming and people that have seen ninja girl payback, my first five episodes of that web series, I have intertwined a lot of those experiences into that show. But yeah, when I came back and just found enough people in the club that want to register and do the competitions here so, I have found a club at the moment that is a competition club and I've just been training every single day and ready to do the competition thing next year. So, it's really exciting.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool. Well, you have to let me know. I'll have to see how you're doing with that we let all the listeners know how your competition immersion goes.



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Sascha Raeburn:

Yey, yeah, yeah. But I think if anything so far like now and the training that I've been doing the last couple of month has gone through different level you know, the one I've had to prove myself in this new club where there are competitors and that have got titles so, you know, I've been doing doubles sessions and there's one session already in ten so you know, sticking and doing the, I've been compounding my training like just doing more and more 51:22 and pushing myself because one thing I did notice when in that particular tournament is the stamina is different. I just thought if I was with a competitor perhaps that had better stamina how could the fight have gone so, I'm very aware of having good stamina or and so just being for myself just training harder that I have ever trained before to the point where I just and it's not you know, anyone can just put in a training session you know, once or twice, three times a week. You're doing it every day in the double sessions and like backing up the next day and you're tight you know. It's different, different you know? And so I'm actually enjoying that side of it of just and this is where all the Eric Thomas is coming in now because yeah, like it's just you know, learning ways in proving ways to recover my body and to go back and to do it again and yeah just, I think where I'm going now with my training is a bit different before is I think like now I'm to the point where it's gonna be blood, sweat and tears you know, you got to, when your training there's a point where you will feel like crying then you just shed that tear cause that's something that could, could hold you back you know, that's the moment where [00:52:54.433] want people to see me you know, cry over [00:52:58.067]. Well you know, how will you know how far you can go if you don't let out that emotion, you don't let out that you know, that experience you know. Yeah, so, that's what I'm really enjoying about the idea of competition it's just, it's pushing me now to go to different levels. Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And that's one of my favorite things about competitions, certainly it's not for everyone. We've had a number of discussions on the show about the pros and cons about competition but for some of us, maybe not all of us but for at least a good chunk of us and I put myself on this boat, I'm better when I have a reason to get better. You know that's something I can't take away.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah, that's what I'm enjoying now. Yeah, like I wouldn't be doing these double sessions if it wasn't for these ideas. You know, and I just went out to the [00:53:49.130] one night, uhm my coach said I'm too new to go in to it so I didn't go into it but I went and spectated the whole event and just, I really enjoyed actually watching and seeing how the different athletes prepare some listening to music all day, some are freaking out, some we're you know, just seeing all the vibes and feeling all the nervousness and watching was actually a really good experience and just thinking to myself, this is important for me and I was videoing you know with my phone and everything uhm, some competitors that may or may not be competing against but just the whole experience of visualizing, just that I'll learn I was like, this is



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enjoyable experience you know, putting myself outside my comfort zone and you know, seeing myself maybe doing this six months' time. Giving myself that goal and really enjoying each step now of like observing other martial artist how they are preparing and gaining a lot of valuable tips than I would have before really. You know, I'm broadening my horizons and opening my eyes up to see, yeah, just various preparations, various styles and uhm yeah, it's just seeing it from a different perspective and I think you're more honest with yourself as well like before when I was sparring I might have thought that was oh definitely, thought that I was better than what I was but when you did, I thinking that that you going into competition there's no room for cockiness. You know, there's no room, you've got to always, I think uhm be a little, you know trainers if you want the best you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now this next question, I'm always intrigued by the guest that we have that are actors and the way they answer it versus the rest of us that aren't... Do you have a favorite martial arts movie?

Sascha Raeburn:

Uhm yeah, I do. I love like Bruce lee movies so, my favorite one is enter the dragon. I don't know, if that's what you're expecting and I also like I said before van damme's blood sport and kickboxer and karate kid's a classic film. But I also there's you know, a soft spot with me is uhm, million-dollar baby. So, obviously for martial arts spectacle but you know I think that there's something inscript in Hillary swank's character that it was a real heartbeat there that's quite memorable and Clint eastwood and Morgan freeman and the way it was narrated and there's something... This is some lines in that film that I really related to you know and she's on the bus and she's on the way to training and there's a dream that no one else can see, I think that film definitely like resonated with me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's a powerful film and it hasn't seen it you know, it's not a martial arts movie in a traditional sense...

Sascha Raeburn:

No, it's not, is it? Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But there's certainly, there's some martial spirit to it. It follows some similar story archs that you know, we're used to in a lot of those films but it's certainly doesn't have the outcome without giving anything away. The outcome that you typically see in a martial arts film.



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Sascha Raeburn:

You're right, cause I think when I do look back fondly on it in my memory, I'm mainly thinking of those earlier scenes yeah. And I think the way, I think her journey of just especially on the bus and being alone at night, I just saw myself you know, in that cause I just really related to that like I said before about the travel and on the way there cause you know, and I think a lot of people can relate to that you know, travelling to where you've got to go whether it's the gym for some people but there is, there's always gonna be or you know even when you leave home there's always that voices trying to talk yourself out of it all the time you know. And I think than in some of those monologues than you know, Hillary swank had and those, it was really addressing some of that confrontation of like you know, whether she was too old to train or whether she was uhm you know, she came from poor background or she didn't have the right family there was all of that going on at the back of her mind and I think that, that was very martial art-y like uhm plot driven in that sense that you know the character, the protagonist had. You know, certain draw backs, you know, she was the underdog and I think that, that resonated.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How about actors? You mentioned your love for Bruce lee, I'm gonna guess he would be your favorite yeah, who else is on the list?

Sascha Raeburn:

I love Donnie yen, I think he's fantastic. Uhm, and I like Jackie Chan, I think that the way makes us all laugh with some slapstick and makes it fun and you know he has that the Chinese opera background, love that. And I love jet li, I'd like seeing Cynthia rothrock and her fight scenes and some of my favorite girl-girl fight scenes are yukari oshima and moon lee. I think they're extraordinary, yeah. But I think that I also like Uma Thurman in kill bill you know. I think that she shared a physical presence in that film that I think was you know, carried it all the way through. Even though she is not a martial artist, uhm, I think the way it was filmed and obviously with Quentin tarantino is all of his mixed styles and mixing all the different genres. To think that, that you know, for a western woman and martial arts cinema was, it was exciting you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely an amazing performance. How about books? We often have some good conversation about martial arts books on this show.

Sascha Raeburn:



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Yeah. Uhm well, I went to Benny the Jet so I like the Jet, his book and uhm Ronda Rousey's book I really enjoyed it. I thought that was really motivating and just some book I'm reading now, uhm cause I met 1:00:05 champion in when I was training with Benny and she's just recently got out with a book called ten seconds of courage so I'm reading that now and that's really inspirational. But yeah, I think I'm a bit more to the acting books side of things, I mentioned a lot about you know, ego cause ego in acting is so important like as an actor in the acting training. Uhm you want to get rid of your own ego as much as possible so that way you can relate to like a variety of different characters so I have a lot of books um Kurtovskiy(?) And uhm and stripping and being able to stripping away masks and social daily masks and being able to be neutral and feel the actors calling and apply that also to like killing the martial art calling you know is Kurtovskiy(?) 1:00:56 talks about feeling the calling and when you're feeling the calling you're actually in a neutral state you know, your ego's not involved and you can have direct communication in channeling that character and also I feel that way in martial arts. I feel like if my heart is open and I'm like, feel like, feel the calling to be a martial artist, I feel more genuine, I feel more, a lot more safer like safe as well like cause it's always a risky venture in martial arts but I feel like you'd be tapped in to that, that calling of being a martial artist and you're, in alignment with your heart and being open, you have better balance, you know you have a better, your senses are much more open to hearing, into sensing the other person reading your opponent so I think that like uhm... Yeah a lot of my books are about acting you know, about spirituality and connecting with your truth and feeling called in your purpose and that sort of thing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's tough. And what's the future hold for you? What do you got going on? You talked about competition next year but, what else you looking up to?

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah so, I am 1:02:15 focused on that Australian state championships next year and but I'm also focused on my own web series, Ninja girl Payback, which is about a rejected superhero from the superhero factory for being too angry, too violent and too stressed, and now very bitter, she seeks for revenge and that's been a web series which is like uhm it's been one YouTube and I have five episodes of that and then, I have had a bit of a hiatus but I plan on kinda getting back to that and making more episodes and bringing more people in to coordinate some fight scenes and uhm yeah. So, I've got that coming on too.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. And of course, we'll link to that and everything else you've got going on social media and everything at the show notes which we'll have at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com for anybody that might be new to the show.



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Sascha Raeburn:

Cool.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And if people want to follow you, if they want to get in touch with you, how do they do that?

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah, I post regularly on Instagram, I check direct messages on their all the time and so my handle's my name sascharaeburn and yeah, I'm on Facebook and Twitter so people can contact me on those two social media sites as well, yeah. And email of course.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, awesome. Well this has been a lot of fun. I thank you for coming on, thanks for sharing everything and I'm hoping... Oh yeah. You're welcome thank you. Hoping you might send us out with some great parting words, some advice for the listeners.

Sascha Raeburn:

Yeah, sure. I would say to well, think about getting out of your comfort zone and not necessarily like putting more armor on as a martial artist, I think like taking the armor off and feeling exposed is actually more strength than having to shut yourself off cause I think if you truly can be aware of your own emotions and know your own emotions, then you're able to quickly handle and deal with those emotions but if you're not willing to strip off your own armor and to get to know yourself then uhm you're more in the control of the other person, of the other opponent of what coming at you all the time not a 1:04:50 life as well but if you take more the spiritual attitude of stripping off your armor off and being okay with things like, being okay with vulnerability, and being okay with uhm crying and bleeding and sweating in class and not caring about anybody things cause its you're journey. You know, this is where you're getting the most out of it and you're getting to learn about who you are while training, it's your time and so don't hold back, let yourself, let that guard just go. Loud 1:05:24 help as well.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sensei Raeburn is truly a multi-talented woman who puts her all into everything she does. She has an unrelenting passion for performing which I find inspiring, I really enjoyed our conversation because of her colorful and dynamic personality. Thank your sensei Raeburn for coming one the show. Don't forget,



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you can find the links to everything than sensei Raeburn has going on, her web series as well as photos, links, social media, you name it. It's all over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. You can find our social media @whistlekick, everywhere you might imagine, and you can check out everything that we make at whistlekick.com hope you do. Don't forget to sign up for the newsletter, you can do that at whistlekick.com or whistlekickmartialartsradio.com because we like to give you choices. Thanks for spending some time with me today, I appreciate that. Hope the rest of your day, the rest of your week goes amazingly. Until next time. Train hard, smile and have a great day.