



Episode 25 – Sifu Alan Goldberg | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey there, everyone! And thanks for listening to Episode 25 of whistlekick Martial Arts Radio, the only place to hear the most interesting stories from the best martial artists. I'm your host, Jeremy Lesniak, and I'm also the founder of whistlekick. Makers of the world's best sparring gear, as well as great apparel and accessories for traditional martial artists. You can learn more about our products, like our super comfortable sparring helmet, at whistlekick.com. And you can learn more about the podcast, including all of our past episodes, show notes for this one, and a whole lot more over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. While you're on the website, please sign up for our newsletter. It's full of information, discounts, and other useful martial arts content. If you're an Android user, you can check out our Android app on the Google Play Store. Just search for whistlekick. It's an easy way to stay connected with the show. And like everything else related to the show, it's completely free.

And now, to the episode. Today we are joined by Sifu Alan Goldberg. You may know Sifu Goldberg from a variety of ways. Maybe as the publisher of Action Martial Arts Magazine or his annual Hall of Honors gathering in New Jersey or even as a highly acclaimed Wing Chung instructor. As with all of the guests we've had here on Martial Arts Radio, Sifu Goldberg loves the martial arts. But unlike other guests, he's found numerous ways to make it part of his life. From teaching to his events to helping others build their businesses, Sifu Goldberg is the busiest man I've ever met. We had a great conversation, and I really enjoyed my time with him.

So with that, Sifu Goldberg, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

Sifu Goldberg:

Thank you. I mean, it is my pleasure and I've been looking forward to getting on the phone with you and speaking about this.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Of course, anybody listening picked up on the Sifu so that kind of narrows it down. We know you've got some Chinese arts background there. But why don't you tell us how you started in the martial arts? When, how, and all that good stuff?

Sifu Goldberg:

Okay. Well, the typical old story, I was mugged coming home from school and I met a gentleman and I did started off in the Japanese arts to show him I kinda know Karate. I started [02:15](#), hey, you know, you [02:16](#) mugged, beat up. Let's get you a little training under your belt. So I started with this gentleman entering the arena and, I hate to tell you it's 52 years ago. So I've been doing it for a little while.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure.

Sifu Goldberg:

That's my basic start of it. Years later, I kinda went into some of the arts of the Chinese Arts [02:36](#) Kung Fu. I studied that for a while. And another jump and went back in the early 70's named Jason Lau, who's actually one of the first instructors ever bring Wing Chung Kung Fu to United States. When I met Mr. Lau, we hit it off, became great friends right away. I was already an instructor so we kinda met eye to eye as being instructors. Him being a little older than me, of course, I gave him the [03:00](#) of being someone who was my elder, of course. And one day he was like, hey, you wanna learn Wing Chung Kung Fu? And I just looked at him like, what the heck is that? And he explained it to me that this was the art the Bruce Lee started with and it kinda intrigued me when he said the name Bruce Lee. And one thing led to another, and I'd say after about a year of being friends with him, he opened a school in my area, and I actually moved in. It wasn't a school base. It was two floors, it was a Chinese temple with a school base on the first floor, and I have moved in. I told my parents I'm moving in to a Chinese temple but I'm not shaving my head!

Jeremy Lesniak:

How old were you at that time?

Sifu Goldberg:

Oh, I must have been about 18 at that time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay.

Sifu Goldberg:

And I was still in college, I was driving everyday back and forth to college and work and everything else. That was probably one of the greatest experience I've ever had because I kinda lived and breathe, and everything I did was Kung Fu oriented. And I don't know, many people, you know, they go to a school, they train a couple of hours then go home. But you know, when I finish my training, we sat down, maybe took a shower when I've got some heat and came back and we train again! So it was like you're constant, it was great. We'd be up 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, training.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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That's fantastic. Was the training the type of training that most of us are used to today? Or was it a little more

Sifu Goldberg:

Well, it's sort of this way. My instructor was a no-nonsense guy. And I could always remember the bamboo stick hitting the back of the legs, and of course my knuckles, the bleeding. My knuckles [04:35](#) It was not friendly even one sec. At that time, it was just no-nonsense. And it didn't make us stop [04:45](#) but it made us kinda go back to the original way things we'd train then. If you weren't ready, you know, to be a martial artist, don't do it! And a lot of guys went to the [04:54](#) side but I stuck with a handful of guys. I'm probably one of the pioneers of doing American-based Wing Chung. To this day, like I said, 52 years later, I'm still doing martial arts. So, I kinda stuck with it a little bit.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's cored to who you are, absolutely.

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Of course, anybody who knows your name knows that you're involved in a few things and I'm sure we'll get into some of those later.

Sifu Goldberg:

Mm-hmm.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So that's a great foundation, certainly. I can imagine you in the temple and I gotta say I'm a little jealous of that kind of martial arts upbringing. Something I wish I had access to at 18. But why do you think for a moment, how was your best martial arts story, whether that was in the temple or later on?

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah. I can't even say my best. I had a load of them that were great. Again, just the training in the middle of the night. And that I can go to some of the stories that just probably [05:53](#) and back in the time, there were a lot of Chinese gangs in Chinatown. And we'd be in the middle of Chinatown, and we'll



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run into these guys and they were 06:02 so we didn't become associates but we became friendly with them. So we were always welcomed in the middle of the night in Chinatown, 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. And there were some 06:14 times. I can remember times we had what they called the Chinatown Death Matches, where they would have fights and lock the doors. And I was sometimes either a spectator or a couple of times I was a bodyguard to one of the fighters. And I'm telling you, it was no-nonsense. Not what you'd see today. And it was all over the place. At the end of the fights, they'd unlock the doors.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And when you look back on those times and those fights, you know, what kind of emotions come up?

Sifu Goldberg:

Well,

Jeremy Lesniak:

Was that a happy time or -

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah. I mean, it was different. It was an experience that I had that very few other people had. But I look at martial arts not that that being the whole of martial arts. I look at that as being part of it. I mean, you have the sports karate end of it which is great. I'm not involved with that but it's a great part of the industry. You have the children part where people teach the discipline and the physical fitness end and the emotional ends. Although all of those different things that get involved in when you're bringing a child up to martial arts. So you can't take martial arts and just 07:18, say, here it is. There are different entities, different parts of it. And then when you go add on your styles, it changes. It splits up even more so.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely. Sure. That was quick. How about a second story?

Sifu Goldberg:

Uh, second story. Let's see. When my Sifu was in the United States, we would go travelling around, doing movie promotions. And a lot of people would see me as a... If you remember the days when all the Kung Fu movies were coming from Hong Kong, we were the school they would call to do promotions in front of the movie theater. We'd travel up and down the East Coast, it was the greatest time. And we



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all thought we were movie stars, of course we weren't. It was just a great thing that we'd go off and be able to get involved with something that was... Before even the, you know, the Saturday afternoon Kung Fu Theater on TV. We were doing it in the theaters, you know, right in Chinatown, in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., all over the place. And that was some great times. You know, I just remember just loading up a car and taking our equipment and ask Sifu, where are we going? You know, the driver basically knew where we're going and none of us did.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So you were putting on demonstrations?

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah. Yeah, we put on demonstrations, promotions for the movies, and there were some great films that we got a chance to even watch at that time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool. Do you remember any of the films by name?

Sifu Goldberg:

Oh, one was really great that we did a lot of work for. It was a movie called Dynasty, and it was the first 3D Kung Fu movie.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Really?

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah and it was great. I remember, you know, you're standing, seeing the spears coming at your face and, you know. It was done very well. But, you know, after that there was maybe one or two other 3D movies and I don't know why, for what reason, they just stopped making them that way. But it was pretty exciting for, you know. The acting wasn't always the greatest so, you know, that, the 3D action was a little bit...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. So how was the martial arts made you a better person? It's a pretty broad question so I'll let you answer however you want to.



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Sifu Goldberg:

The truth of the matter, the martial arts made me a better person to a point. But I think me being a teacher is what made me the better person.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay.

Sifu Goldberg:

And that doesn't mean that just being a teacher within a school because when you study on the Chinese lineages, you realize that everyone that comes in after you, you're the teacher, too. Even though you may not be the Sifu of the school, but you're still a teacher. And it opens the compassion to the younger student that comes in, it opens your mind on top of everything else. Other people don't realize, you always become a better instructor when you become a teacher. So, you know, over the years of me teaching and realizing, wow. All the sons and the daughters that I've produced in my martial arts schools, you know, it's amazing. And I still speak to, I would say at least 50 or 60, of them on a regular basis. That are not still in the school, that are on different areas or different countries or different cities, states, and, you know, get on the phone and we'll just talk about anything. It kind of just built a relationship that, I don't know if you feel it if you get into another sports or other industries.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't think there are a lot of coaches, let's use that term mostly, that coach for, let's say, 30 years and talk with 50 or 60 of their athletes years later. You know, that says something about you and about your dedication to the arts, for sure.

Sifu Goldberg:

Well, there are people that take that upon themselves that want to do it. I kinda just felt that was something I had to do and by doing it, it opened up different doors for me. Cause you know, just being an instructor and sending all those people home all the time, there's [11:17](#) I mean, even to this day I still teach and I'm opening, there's a whole group of people I had during the summer and they can't come anymore cause of their school. So now we're opening a Sunday class.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, wow.

Sifu Goldberg:



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And all of these, I'm doing is cause I feel bad they're not training anymore. Do I need to put an extra day in? And that really is not about the money. But I realized I had, at least, a half dozen students that were learning. I just got a text this morning from someone that was begging me to have the Sunday classes. So it kinda opens up a different kind of end to you when you start to be a teacher. And, you know, being a promoter also, like, something I haven't told the audience, but I'm probably gonna premier Martial Art Promoters in the world. I run then called the Mega Weekend, The Actual Martial Art Mega in Atlantic City, and we have four large events. We have over 1200 people at our banquet, trade show, 5000 people. And what's happened is, all my students from all over the country, once a year, come in to that event. So it's a get together for our little family and they help me run the event on top of it. And it's a great feeling. One by one they start piling into a hotel from Tennessee or Virginia or California. And, again, I don't think you'd get that in a lot of other industries. It's always warmed my heart, you know, that they have people that care enough to wanna do that. Cause you could finish your training and go home and it's over and done with, otherwise.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So let's kinda switch gears here.

Sifu Goldberg:

Okay.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'd like you to think about maybe some of the rougher points that you've been through. Think about one of them in particular and how your martial arts experience or training helped you overcome it.

Sifu Goldberg:

Well, I'm a businessman by heart. I own a few businesses and of course, like any other business, you have those problems where the bills may not be getting paid. And I always go back to my martial art spirit and makes me work harder because I realized, I had to do it. And that martial arts kinda just thriving to always go forward, makes me do it. People say to me, well, you live well. You do this. Well again, it doesn't come easy. But the martial arts has always given me when I did the old [13:35](#) I'd pay them right away. I just sat down and make sure I did something else that turned my, you know, business around. So it definitely helped me, maybe not in the sense of fighting or anything, but you definitely get the spirit itself.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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So if there is someone listening to this podcast right now and they're at some early stage of a business or maybe not even early stage, they have a business, and the business is not cash flow positive, what would you say to them if they were right in front of you? How would you take what you just said and –

Sifu Goldberg:

It's fairly simple. You gotta always remember there's one way that you think it's gonna work and then one you find ten more that's not gonna work. So, you know, if you think you're at that road, that it's the end of the road, it's never true. You'll always find a way around it. And it's happened to me personally so I know. In my event, I give the audience a little background, I don't mind saying it. I run my event 16 years, it'll be this year, and for the first 11 years I actually lost my [14:41](#). And putting this in, people look at me and whatever, and I always say, Well, I've lived a fairly blessed life. So, you know, if I don't have [14:51](#) But now that [14:54](#), I'm making a profit off of what I do, and I guess it's perseverance, too. But if you don't have that, that kind of burning feeling to make it work, that aspiration to make yourself better than you were the day before, it's nothing. You gotta do it. You gotta push. And, you know, my [15:16](#) is I started my magazine, it's going on 24 years now. When I started it, no one thought I would be able to even get off the ground with it. And with 24 years later, we must have saw over a hundred guys who tried the same thing I did. And, we're the only one left. So, you know, pushing yourself, martial arts has helped that way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Think now through some of the people you've worked with. You certainly have some impressive people. You know everybody. I know that. You've met everybody. And I'm sure you've a chance to train with a lot of those people. So who, out of that group, other than the people you would've called your own instructors, would you say was most influential in your martial arts upbringing?

Sifu Goldberg:

I have a phony background. Because when I train with someone, I don't accept knowledge or ranks from other people when I'm under them. So when I wasn't with somebody, I did meet [16:16](#) but Ip Man was Bruce Lee's instructor. I did meet his sons and I was able to kind of get a little more of the history and background. So that always push you forward to wanna learn more. I've been, again, doing this 52 years and now you're thinking, hey, you know everything you gotta know, it's not true. Cause there's always history and, you know, other things that come along in your martial arts that are not just part of the fighting, So, I might have to say Ip Man family and, you know, it were great honor meeting them. The Ip Man himself may have passed but his son's work are still alive.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What kind of martial artist were they compared to, I mean, their father is certainly a legend.



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Sifu Goldberg:

Right. I have to be honest with you, not as good as I thought they would have been. But that didn't take anything away from them, who they were. You know, we, as Americans, have taken a lot of the Chinese Arts and Japanese [17:15](#) and we've made them better. Because maybe we're just bigger and stronger, whatever. So my Wing Chung is as [17:25](#) as anyone's gonna become out of Hong Kong, or come out of China. Because you hold the American spirit! You know, I haven't changed that much but again, I'm a 210 pound guy, fairly in good shape. And you run into someone who's, you know, half your size. And it's funny, I went to a meeting once, it's a good story. I had went to a meeting once and there was one I hadn't yet met, Ip Man's sons, and there were bunch of other instructors in the room. And everyone started working with each other and I got in the middle floor and I started trying to work with people and nobody would touch me. I felt like I [17:59](#), I don't know! And the room was filled with instructors. And finally, you know, I approached someone, I said, what the hell is going on here? And they said to me, in these words, Mr. Goldberg, you are a big American that knows the same thing we know so we didn't want to touch your hand. They possibly were afraid to be in embarrassment cause of my size and I was, you know, strong. I don't know. And I just laughed at it and said, well, then again, then I made my point without even having to touch anybody.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool.

Sifu Goldberg:

That had happened a few times. It's my life, though.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Isn't that the dream of a martial artist to never have to use it?

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah, yeah. That's one way and you know, I've gained a lot of notoriety in the industry, as you've mentioned. I know some of my best friends Cary Tagawa from Mortal Kombat, Chuck Zito, I've worked with Arnold Schwarzenegger, just about every celebrity. Michael Jai White, we're very dear friends, Bill Wallace. So, you know, I've had a blessed life in the martial arts world because it's not only that I meet these people, most of the time, even next week, I have Don "The Dragon" coming at the town. We're promoting his new movie which I'm Associate Producer, of. And I get hang out with Don and, you know, do things with Don. So it's not just a fan, not just someone you know, we're personal friends. And to me, that I'll call the blessed part of my life, that I'm able to call these people my friends and know something that I'm not star-struck at all. When I feel that they're not nice people, I walk away from them. There



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was gentleman. I won't even mention a name but he was from the TV show called The Sopranos, I'll leave it at that, that I took his number and I threw it in the garbage because I did not appreciate the person. I have also guys like Joe Piscopo as one of my students. Joe is one of the most wonderful people that you'll ever meet. This is a good person to me. It was like last year, in my event, he actually sang in my event. So, again, these are a bunch of friends that, they come from the martial arts world. And I consider myself blessed because of that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure. But you said you don't get star-struck?

Sifu Goldberg:

No.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Have you always been that way?

Sifu Goldberg:

Maybe not. Maybe at the beginning, you see someone and like, wow! Look who that is, you know. But I think after you get to realize that they're just like you, you kind of just shrug it away. I recently met Kevin Sorbo. And I see him standing there, he's coming to my event a couple of years ago, and he gets out of the limousine, and I start walking over. Now, you know, star-struck, I wasn't but I was definitely, you know, great to meet the guy. Cause, you know, I watch him on TV, he's Hercules all these years. And he comes running over to me, shaking my hand and, oh, Mr. Goldberg, how are you? On and on, and that kinda spun my head a little because I wasn't expecting those things. And it just, that showed me that he was a good person. That, you know, it was a matter of he was at the event and he just want to be part of it and he was excited. And hey, that's what this is all about, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, I gotta connect some dots here and ask you some questions that's not even on our list but, it sounds like you might ascribe some of your success to treating people the right way?

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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For all these years. And then it's coming back to you, what do you -

Sifu Goldberg:

I'm know for two things. I'm known for being the nicest guy in the world and I'm also being the biggest ass to be in the world.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay.

Sifu Goldberg:

Okay. And it's exactly what you say there. You know, color or [21:43](#) race, never touches me. And that one of my very dear friends, again, is Phil Morris. He's one of my associate students. And Phil's from the [21:53](#) Show. If you remember the lawyer?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Sifu Goldberg:

So he's one of my... Well, I wouldn't say my student but one of my associate students. And so, it's great. I treat him like a brother. I mean, one of my guys, actually it was someone in my apartments, my properties, is Dimitrius "Oaktree" Edwards. He's a heavyweight kickboxing champion like the guy that broke Mike Tyson's ribs in '91. He's still with me after 30 years, and I still take care of him. You know, there's a whole array of things that you have to know to be the person you want to be and not look anything for it. And I've take care of many people over my life, doing this. And they can [22:35](#), means nothing. But I'm the type of guy that if I don't like you, you'll know it. You'll definitely know it. They just gave me a name recently in the industry, they call me Chairman of the Board. So I look up at the guy and said, what the hell are you calling me that for? And he goes, well you're like Frank Sinatra, you're the Chairman of the Board. You're on top of the world. And I said, yeah, there's always someone trying to knock you off there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Sifu Goldberg:



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You know, I laughed at that but it was a great compliment.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. I mean, to be in the same nickname as Sinatra. As soon as you said it, I know where it was coming from.

Sifu Goldberg:

I don't sing either, so

Jeremy Lesniak:

That makes the two of us. If I'm singing then you should probably run the other way.

Sifu Goldberg:

The other way, right? But again, you know, it's about being nice to people, being back. And once I get that negativity, there are a handful of guys in this industry, I wouldn't give him the time of a day. And I just look at them like, you know, who the hell do you think you are? Really. And you're only as good as your last event or your last outing or anything you do. And I've kind of taken some advice from some celebrities I know. Cause they're more than limelight to anyone else and you kinda see the guy who's that get places. And I don't mean by even success in the industry but just places in their life. And again, a guy like Joe Piscopo, I mean he has a radio show now and I'll call up and he goes like, [24:03](#), you know? And I get in on phone him and one day we had Bernard Kerik, New York City Police Commissioner, on and I know Bernard well also. You know, the three of us. I actually couldn't stay on the phone running [24:14](#) with them cause I have lessons to hold and all. But you know, the two of them just being on the phone. You have to appreciate life and the martial arts world has brought me wonderful instances that I don't think I would've gotten in any other way. You know, why would they even want to stick to me if they weren't involved in something that would be interesting?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, I just want to go back to something you said. I'm not gonna ask you to name the names of the people that you won't give the time of day to but maybe you can give us an example of why certain people have -

Sifu Goldberg:

Well, I shouldn't say it, I shouldn't say it. There's one gentleman who had a movie out 30 years ago, that made one movie and he kinda flopped because of his attitude. It wasn't just with what I don't like him



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for but his attitude in the industry, no one deals with him. And everyone I spoke to told me, oh they've had their runs with him or whatever. And he had come to my event and I've given him an envelope which is, there were tickets in it and the package, free [25:17](#) coupons of so on and so on and so forth. And the only thing he was interested in was just getting his VIP pass out and he threw the other tickets away. So I didn't see him in my banquet and I'm wondering, what do I tell him? So he calls me up and goes, well, you didn't invite me to the banquet. I said, Excuse me, did you get an envelope? He goes, yeah. And I said, well, knucklehead, everything was inside that envelope. I just shook my head and after that, he didn't want to come to my event anymore cause he thought he was disrespected. And I said, listen, you're not invited anywhere else, it doesn't matter. No one else want you. And I just hung the phone up on the guy. It's just that, you know, they think of who they want to be more than who they are. And that's [26:03](#) of the problem. So I kinda just walk away from guys like that now. Actually there's one person which, again I won't mention a name, I tease the hell out of him every time I see him. I would look him in the eye and tell him things like, you know they sell those clothes at Baby Gap, they're still on sale. And people laugh, I'd tear him up, I just you know. And that's why I say I'm known either as the greatest guy in the world or biggest son of [26:28](#) in the world, so.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How about competition? Were you ever much of a competitor?

Sifu Goldberg:

Martial arts competition, I'd give all to school. So there was never really a tournament-based. And the reason why, cause we were full contact. I train some guys full contact kickboxing but I, myself, never went to it. But a lot of the things we did were just in school, full contact fighting. You know, I fought a little here and there. But I have to be honest with you and not to talk in a bad way, for most of us fighting was in the streets back in the old days. We lived in a very rough area and me and my instructor and a few other guys, we were constantly getting in arguments and fights in the streets. And there were a couple of local newspaper written up on us, calling us vigilantes and things like that. It was a fun run.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Were you going out seeking troubles?

Sifu Goldberg:

Well, I couldn't say that. Well let's just put it this way. We would finish class and occasionally we'd walk up to the local coffee shop, it would've been about five or six blocks away from school. And you know, 11, 12, 1 o'clock in the morning, we'll find someone doing something that was wrong. And it got to the point where the police just used to turn their head every time we did something. Because we were doing jobs that they couldn't do. Not to put me in any type of legal matters.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure. Well, you know, statute of limitations.

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah. You're right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm getting grasp most of that as probably past. Nothing can be held against you.

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Who would you love to have trained with or still train with? You know, alive or dead. I mean, you've mentioned Bruce Lee as an influence. Would it be him?

Sifu Goldberg:

Well Bruce Lee was an influence. I don't know if I'd want to train with him because I've trained with people that were his seniors here, actually. And Bruce Lee, I hate to tell the audience this, doesn't do as much people thought he was. He was an innovator on his own right. He was an entertainer on his own right. But as a martial artist, he was limited, believe it or not.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You're not the first person to say that on this show.

Sifu Goldberg:

Well I'm the one that knows to tell because my instructor was with him in Hong Kong. And they would tell me, you know, he was a great guy. He's flashy, the whole nine yards. And the stories about Bruce Lee, when he was still at the Ip Man School, he move in to, I think the name was Kwong Avenue, one of the streets that they had. He got an apartment there and he painted all the windows black. And this is scaring people out. And what Bruce did, he put a big light bulb up in the back of the room that gave reflections into the window so it would look, you could see his reflection slightly but you couldn't actually see who it was. And Bruce would turn his big bright light on and he'd workout in the room for



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hours until there would be people from all over the street just watch him. So Bruce built a reputation as, I say again, showman that other people never saw before in Hong Kong. And as a fighter, Bruce was not a fighter. Bruce never fought a day in his life. So, you know, even the movie you see where he's supposed to have fought, Bruce never fought.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. So who would it be if not Bruce?

Sifu Goldberg:

Well, probably a guy like maybe his partner, Daniel Inosanto. Daniel is actually not his student, he's his actually partner. And Daniel, as a man, had a lot of knowledge. Not so much Wing Chung or anything that I do but in another screen wherein, you know, stick fighting through and that I would love to have learned things like that. So Daniel would probably be one of them. Probably Wally Jay, for the Jujitsu. I'd never say I'd worked with Wally but I knew Wally when he was still alive. I actually had a thing called Action Martial Arts Trading Cards that I did probably 10 decks. I did over a million cards and Wally was in one of my cards at that time. So, you know, I did have some relation with him. But I do respect him a lot.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, certainly well respected and pioneering men in the arts.

Sifu Goldberg:

Other than that, there are not too many of them, very honestly. Again, when I say to you that I'm of the dinosaurs in the arts, I've [30:48](#) too many guys before me. There were some but not too many.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So movies. Are movies a big thing for you?

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah. Well I'm involved in a lot of movies right now. I'm Executive Producer of a movie called Beast which is filmed somewhere in Philadelphia. I'm Associate Producer of a movie called The Martial Arts Kid with Don Wilson and quite a few others, actually. There's about 10 movies under my belt. As a martial arts movie fan, I guess I gotta tell you what everyone else would say, it's Enter the Dragon. And one of the movies which I'd have to [31:25](#) Jason Statham is a very good friend of mine. Jason and his fight scene in his first movie, to me, was like the greatest fight scene ever. You know, The Transporter. That was, to me, the best fight scene ever put together in a martial arts movie.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

It's fantastic. It's been a while since I've that movie. But yeah, I have a distinct memory of watching that and thinking, what kind of martial arts has this guy done?

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And, you know, Jason Statham has come up as a favorite actor.

Sifu Goldberg:

Oh yeah!

Jeremy Lesniak:

[32:02](#) favorite martial arts actor. Several people that guested on the show said, I don't really know his martial arts background but, Jason Statham!

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah, I do. He actually studied some Wing Chung. And actually, when he comes to New York, he'll be studying with me. But Jason as done, you know, other styles of kickboxing, karate. But he does a lot of Wing Chung in his fighting. But Jason, believe it or not, is in such good shape, he was a diver and a swimmer. So his physique, his physical fitness, came from a lot of swimming.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Interesting.



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Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah. And he's one of the, I'd have to be honest with you, we hung out quite a few times. And me, him and Chuck Zito we went out one night and I have to be honest with you, what a night. And Jason, and Randy also but Jason turned out to be one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to hang out with. Just a great, great person. In fact, he's supposed to be at my event this year. He committed that he was coming this year to my event.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, wonderful.

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah. But I always see, with movie stars, it'll always have to do with their schedule. So that's what happened last year. He's supposed to come but he was stuck in I think Bangkok at that time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well, we're certainly gonna have links to your event in the show notes but this is a good time, maybe to tell people about it and then we'll come back with some other questions.

Sifu Goldberg:

Sure. Well again, I run 16 years of the largest martial event in the world called the Action Martial Arts Mega Weekend held in Atlantic City, Tropicana Hotel. You can check it out on my website. It's hohmega.com. You can always find me on Facebook, I always have things up on the Sifu Alan Goldberg. And we run an event that's nothing like anyone's ever seen. Our banquet alone has 1200 people. We have parties on Friday night, we have 600 people of the party which, believe it or not, is filled with celebrities. They just come in, hang out, drink, and dance. Last year, I had Ray Mercer, the boxing champion, on the floor dancing for like an hour a half. We gotta take him off the floor, he has gone crazy. And that's why I get a lot of people like that. I mean, you saw Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka just got locked up recently. And Jimmy, he was always at my event. There was a couple of times Dan Severn, Don "The Dragon", Cynthia Rothrock, Michael Jai White, Bill Wallace, the list is endless. We had Bai Ling last year, the Chinese actress was there. My event is weird cause all of a sudden people just show up at my event. Celebrities, cause they hear so much about it. And on [34:39](#) Show last year alone was over 5000 people. We had four tournaments, this year we have five tournaments going on, over 73 seminars. I mean it's like a Disney World for martial arts, let's just put it that way. And [34:56](#) showplace in Tropicana, Atlantic City, January 22nd, 23rd, 24th.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool. Well again for listeners we'll have the links to all that information that Sifu mentioned in the show notes at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com.

Sifu Goldberg:

Alright.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So let's pull it back in. So we've talked about movies. How about actors?

Sifu Goldberg:

I gotta say Jason. You know, when I look at the martial arts with actors, I know more. That's the truth about it. Well I met them, at least. I'll give you one who's a little underrated, Michael Jai White. Michael, as a martial artist, is so good that he kinda said to me two years ago, he goes, listen, cause I don't want to be known as the actor anymore at your event. I want to be known as the martial artist. Because we are dealing just martial arts people. And I say, you're right. And so last year, the first time ever, Michael came to the event and put a free seminar on. A martial arts seminar on how he fights. And he had to have a hundred people on the room with him. And it was something that he said, he appreciated that so much because now he was able to show he just wasn't just another pretty face on the screen. So, Michael is a little underrated at the point as a martial artist in the industry. Another guy like Cary Tagawa, old very dear friend of mine, also I'm kinda [36:30](#) with him helping business wise of things. And Cary's also a great martial artist. A little different than other ones in the fighting and he's more of a healer in the martial arts than he does as a fighter. But there's still such a different aspect to what he does. Got a guy right here in New York right now, my dear friend James Lew. He's working on the TV show Luke Cage which he has a role for me, supposedly. He's doing all the stunt coordination and changes, phenomenal martial artist. But people again, he's not rated like Jet Li and people like that. You got Don "The Dragon", Cynthia Rothrock, great people. I mean, two of the greatest people. We travel all the time together.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool. And I didn't realize that you were involved in The Martial Arts Kid. That's some film that, I don't know, that we've talked about on the show but it's certainly made it into the social media that we've done with [whistlekick](http://whistlekick.com). So that's cool.

Sifu Goldberg:



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I'm working with them actually on the 18th. We're having a showing on the 18th and the 20th in New York.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, that's great.

Sifu Goldberg:

So we're here in New York and people can come down and take a look. If you go to my Facebook, it's all up on my Facebook page.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, okay. Cool. So how about books? Are you a reader?

Sifu Goldberg:

You know, the truth? I don't have much time. I've read books, of course, in the past. Book of Five Rings, Beyond War, but as a reader, no. I'm more of a type of guy grabbing all the magazine and read it like that instead of picking a book up. Cause I never finish it, that's the real problem. Just don't have the time. So, you know, give me a couple page article, I'll read it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So how about what's keeping you going with your... I mean training, for you, might be a broader term because you're doing so much for the martial arts outside of a training space. But what's keeping you motivated to, you know, keep yourself going with that?

Sifu Goldberg:

Well you know, again, when people join in my school I tell them you're not joining a school, you're joining a family. And that's what I've built. I just got a woman, I won't mention a name on the phone, but one of my girls [38:50](#) is getting divorced. She came to the school, we sit and talk for an hour. I took her out to dinner, we talked. So what happened was, you know, I became her second father. Her second father in the world that, you know, sometimes you can't tell your father things and you need another person. And that's what's become of it. I love seeing people get it. Like a seed or a sponge, you give them a little bit and they start to grow or a sponge just absorbs so much. And that satisfaction to see that happen. I do martial arts, believe it or not, I'll tell the audience, I don't make money off my school. I'm lucky I can pay my rent in the school. We are great people, guys that can afford them. You know the dues, I let them go, cause I don't do it for the money. And I just feel if I turn someone down cause they



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can't pay the dues and they're heart's so much in it, well there's other ways they can earn their tuition, if you wanna say. And that's what keeps me going in the martial arts world. Again, I feel like I have a very blessed life than what I've done. I started off my magazine and it's become a vehicle for me. And I always say, without my magazine, I probably would have been Alan Goldberg who? And I know that. I'm a realist about that. But now when I go somewhere and I, you know, go to events, I'd hate to say people treat me differently but it's always you know, people always come and take photos of me and the whole mania. And I laugh at it because I'm still Alan Goldberg, the guy that walked in 25 years ago [40:25](#).

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. How do you feel when they do that? I mean does that make you feel -

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah, they make you feel good. It makes you feel good, of course. It doesn't blow my head up in the way that some people might think it does. Because they're like, I might have been 25 years ago when I ran into Don "The Dragon", I wanted to take this photo with him. And when you get to know guys like Don you know he's the person who wants to be involved with his fans. And I never say I have fans but maybe I do. I don't know. I never looked at it that way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well you certainly have people that admire you in what you've done for the community.

Sifu Goldberg:

Well I appreciate them as much as they appreciate me, too.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So why don't you tell us now, I mean you've told us a little bit of what's going on. We kinda danced around the magazine. Why don't you tell us about actual martial arts?

Sifu Goldberg:

Okay. Well, 1990, I met a [41:26](#) and we did a show called Masters in Action. We started the show because one of my Kung Fu brothers couldn't pay the rent of the school so I say, let's do a show. And I put us up at some of the greatest masses in the New York area. We put the show together and we turned away like 600 people at the front door. We just blew everyone away. And we put the show on and we'd pay his rent up for the year and it was all great. And a gentleman was there who worked for a local newspaper goes, Wow, you guys are really something. You know, I've been around in the martial



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arts and I've never seen anything like this locally. I said, you know, we put our hearts into it and it worked. He goes, how would you like to get into doing magazines? I looked at him like, what the hell I know about doing a magazine? We sat down, and I remember the first time we did it. We did a 16 page news print and we had no idea what the hell we were doing. I swear when I tell you, we were cutting and pasting. It was in the day when there weren't a computer, of course. I think it was more typewriters than anything else. And we would just cut and pasting things down. We found a local guy that did the Pennysaver. And we had somebody who printed for us. And he looked at us, he goes, yeah, alright. I can bind and print that for you but you only have 12 pages. And we go, well what do we need? He said, you need 16 pages, multiple. So we opened our wallets up and pulled out our business cards. We [42:50](#) on the last four pages in the magazine. And we put it to press and we printed out like four or five thousand copies and we started going out. And it looked like crap, very honestly. But there was nothing else out there. And after, I'll say, a couple of years, we kinda went to a colored cover and of course, computers coming along and we started using some, we weren't cutting and pasting everything. Remember the old [43:20](#) name maker?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Sifu Goldberg:

Well we were using that thing. I'm serious. [43:29](#) we had no idea. But it started to make a little bit of the noise. And people, next thing you know, everyone wanted to be in the magazine. And I had two partners that were with me and it wasn't even the guy from the newspaper. He actually was just our editor at that time. And I had two other guys that we had from the show we did, it was the three of us, and then I wind up, finding out that I was doing most of the work. Well I won't say most of the work, I was doing all of the work. And I also put up \$10,000 of my own money to produce the magazine, to print it. And we're getting advertising but it wasn't enough so it was again, a great way of being called to get to the next level. Eventually, I got rid of the two partners because they would come in and throw things at the desk, make sure it gets in the magazine. And finally, my editor said Screw you, and we changed everything around. Pulled it away from the federation we had and we started the magazine over under the same name, Action. And we went to full [44:31](#), we were printing in Canada, and we're printing in China, and actually now we print back in the United States. Digital printing has come a long way with the services that US printers can do and it was actually worth the while to come back to US and print. So we're actually on our 83rd issue right now. And sometimes, I was going through some archives the other day or night and I just looked at it and I saw some of the old copies. Unfortunately, every page I turned, it was someone that passed already, someone I knew. It was very melancholy. You know, I smile, thank God I'm still around but man, this is weird. I loved doing it. I actually didn't do one last year. I had some of my own physical problems, kidney stones and all that stuff. So I put the magazine to bed for one year. We'll be coming back to print this coming year now. And actually, if go to my website, there's one of our last issues are up there. You can actually [45:36](#). Now we're full color. It's all pdf files, download, [45:43](#). It's great. It's put me a long way. And one thing I learned at the very beginning though, when I did the



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magazine, and I think it was my two partners originally, I never put my picture in the magazine. I think I put together close to about 65 magazines and I'll be maybe in the group shot or maybe in passing a photo, you'll see me in the background but I never put my picture on it. And finally I went to an event one day which I was the guest of honor, this was down south. I was the guest of honor and everyone's waiting for me to come there, walking the room and like walking around the event and nobody knew who I was. And I'm sitting there going, wow something's, this is wrong. And finally, when they heard my name, Mr. Goldberg, such an honor to have you. And it was you know, of course, nice once they knew who I was but they realized they didn't know what I looked like. So now, from that issue, it's probably number 65, whatever issue, I started making little passport photos inside the first page, in the directory, Alan Goldberg, Action Martial Arts Magazine with my little photo. And that's it. I don't push myself as a ruler. I learned a long time ago when [46:58](#) and that's exactly what happened. So it wasn't that important that I had to put my station there, my name's enough. But then again when I went out, people didn't know what I looked like.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright. Anything else before we come to our last question that you the listeners to know? You know, about anything you've got going on?

Sifu Goldberg:

Yeah. Well, I'm involved. I think you said or you heard I was the busiest guy in the martial arts world. I'm always involved with something new. I just got a new energy drink called Jersey Pump, which will go hit your shelves soon. I'm involved in a lot of movies. I've got like six movies I've done in the last year that I'm involved with. I'm just, there's a million different things I'm involved with all the time. One guy said to me, all the roads lead down to Alan Goldberg and I laughed and said, it's not really true. I try to help everybody. There's a gentleman, just came out with the, you remember Black Belt Cologne from years ago? And he reproduced it, just came out last year. I'm involved now helping him put that out back on the market. I work with Arnold Schwarzenegger, The Arnold Classic, I'm on the Board of Directors of that. So that's a lot of fun, so anyone gets a chance to come enter the Arnold, I work with the tournament down there, and I work with Arnold directly. It's a [48:21](#) life. I have a very rich background of my martial arts world. And I am a martial artist so it's not about me being a promoter. I'll give you a quick one, Don "The Dragon", we were very good friends but Don picked me up at the airport probably, it's gotta be about eight years ago or nine years ago. Don picked me up at the airport and we went out to eat. He said, what are we doing? I said, I gotta do a seminar tomorrow night, come on over. [48:46](#) I said, my school, I have a school in California. And he was like, I didn't know you taught. I looked at him and said, what do you mean you didn't mean I taught? Cause I just thought you were just a martial arts promoter. Don came to the school, he sat there for four hours [49:01](#) he got up and he bowed to me. And he looked to me, he goes, Grand Master, he goes, thank you. Now I know I can bow to you and not just as a promoter. And I laughed and I told Don, Don, I'm still the same guy. And we just [49:17](#) each other. And his brother, I don't know if everyone knows James Wilson. James and Don are two of the best people you're gonna run into in the industry. Two great human beings, they really are.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Well you certainly have a lot of wonderful people and a lot of wonderful project around you, and you keep calling your life blessed and I think that's probably a pretty good description. Cause I'm listening to it and hoping I can someday construct a life similar, you know, with having such wonderful people around me. And I really thank you for being here and I'm just hoping you might let us end by offering some advice. Some parting advice for the people listening.

Sifu Goldberg:

Well, okay. It's simple but always think as if have [50:08](#) as big as your heart, you're on the right track. Always give your heart before you [50:14](#). And you know, martial arts world, there's so many different ends to what we do and we get to respect [50:22](#). In my event, everyone comes and we open doors for every style. And I wouldn't have it in any other way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wonderful.

Sifu Goldberg:

It's my pleasure. I really appreciate everything you've had me on here and talk about. You put out some old memories also.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Good. I loved it all.

Thank you for listening to episode 25 of whistlekick Martial Arts Radio and a huge thank you to Sifu Goldberg.

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Instagram, all with the user name [whistlekick](https://www.instagram.com/whistlekick). And check out the great stuff we have at whistlekick.com. Gears, shirts, pants, and a whole bunch more all made for martial artists by martial artists.

So until next time, train hard, smile, and have a great day!