



Episode 43: Chuck Norris (Profile) | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey everybody what's going on its episode 43 of whistlekick martial arts radio, and today we're going to talk all about Chuck Norris. I'm your host Jeremy Lesniak and I'm also whistlekick's founder. Here at whistlekick we make the world's best sparring gear and some great apparel and accessories for traditional martial artists. Thanks to everyone tuning in again and thank you to any of the new folks checking us out for the first time. Don't forget you can find all of our past podcast episodes show notes for this one and a lot more at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and while you're on our website go ahead and sign up for our newsletter we offer exclusive content and discount to subscribers it's also the only place to find out about upcoming guests on the show. We make a lot of different things here at whistlekick and one of our most popular items is our polyester t-shirts our no sweat line. They're really light weight and they fit great under a uniform you can get them in 6 different colors and they're really just great I love mine. Mine I have more than one but the red ones is the one I wear the most and even if you don't like to wear anything under your martial arts uniform they're a great shirt to work out in or just hang out so check out our no sweat shirts and the rest of what we offer at whistlekick.com.

So let's talk about Chuck Norris, everyone knows who Chuck Norris is mostly because of his acting with 38 different acting credits to his name it's a good bet that he's the most prolific American martial arts actor of all time. I mentioned in the Bruce Lee episode that we did a couple of weeks ago that Chuck Norris's first role was actually a minor one in the 1960th film the wrecking crew which starred Dean Martin, there's a lot more to Chuck Norris than his acting though. It seems that these days he's really known more for the memes that go around the internet and his political views and still his acting but not a lot of people know his martial arts history and to me that's the more fascinating part about Chuck Norris. Born in 1940 in the Midwest, his actual name is Carlos Ray Norris and not Charles like most people assume and he got that Chuck name when he went in to the service but he had a pretty rough childhood, his family was poor his father was an alcoholic and he actually described himself as non-athletic and shy which is pretty amazing when you look at who he is now and what he's known for and even further the irony of coupling that with all of these supposed Chuck Norris facts on how strong and everything he has but I also find it interesting that there's a lot of martial artists who described themselves as being shy and non-athletic as children I'm certainly in that group and if you listen to the episode with John Graden a few weeks ago he was actually pretty adamant that there was a maybe adamant's a wrong word, he was pretty direct that he felt there was a profile that

Most martial artist fit from their childhood and he was in that group as well. But at 18 Chuck Norris joined the air force and he was sent over to Korea and that's the martial arts origin story for a lot of the American martial artist that are now in their 70s they went over in the 50s in the 60s they were in martial arts on our near military base but he actually started out training in judo and really quickly I think it was within a couple of weeks he broke his shoulder so he went and he asked his instructor hey I saw these guy's doing this other thing would you mind if I go do that until I heal up and his instructor said yeah that's find and that's when he started training in Tang soo do but the original intention was



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that he was going to drop tang su do go back to judo once he healed up and even though he did go back and trained some judo you know once a week or so once he was healed tang su do was really where his love for the martial arts was so it took him just over a year to earn his blackbelt it was actually his second attempt he failed his first try passing the test and then 4 years after moving to Korea he comes back to the United States and started opening up martial arts schools and open well over 30 schools and he referred to them as karate which was pretty common from what I've read back in that time people knew the martial arts as karate it was kind of an equivalent term back then and he had quite a few famous students, Donny and Marie Osmond, Pricilla Presley and Steve McQueen and Steve McQueen becoming his student is pretty significant because it was McQueen who really pushed him to start acting but before any of that happened he started competing in his first 2 tournaments he lost but he didn't lose to just anybody he lost to Joe Lewis and Allen Steen so no not really a big blight on your record to start doing something and lose to two other greats of all time but he trained hard got better and in 1967 by 1967 he earned victories over Joe Lewis Skipper Mullins Victor Moore Ron Marchini and Steve Sanders so we can certainly say that he went you know about as far as he really could in a pretty short period of time and in early 1968 he suffered what looks to be the last loss he ever suffered in competition it was the 10th time he ever lost and it was to a gentleman named Lewis Delgado who he actually came back later that year and won against and in winning that victory he took the professional middleweight karate championship title from Delgado and actually held and defended it for 6 years in 1990 who was the first westerner to be awarded and 8th degree blackbelt in Taekwondo, and if you look around the internet there's a lot of people who make a really big deal about this and it is and I think that when we talked a couple weeks ago about Bruce Lee as an emissary of the martial arts Chuck Norris has been almost as influential but in a different way and so for him to be kind of the first American the first Westerner to come in and represent Korean martial arts in this country and really to the world that's pretty significant. Now it was in 1974 Chuck Norris's role in Return of the Dragon that really kicked off his acting career even though he's done some stuff before it and actually you know a lot of the role it's the role that he's best known for and in doing research for this episode I found something that I'm gonna guess a lot of people haven't seen before and it's a 5 part cartoon mini-series from 1986 called Chuck Norris' Karate Commandoes, we've got a link to the trailer over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and I don't know if it still is but apparently at one point it was in minor rotation late at night on the adult swim stuff on TV so maybe you've seen it maybe not. Now supposedly he's not quite done with acting he's say he retired but I found a few references to this film called the finisher that was supposed to start filming in March of this year. I can't find anything about it nothing current but we'll see if it ever pops up personally I'm gonna hope it does because I think the last thing he was in was the Expendables 2 3 2 and that was a lot of fun just to see him on screen again and still having such a commanding presence now one of the things I didn't know until I did this research was that Chuck Norris actually has a black belt in Brazilian Jujitsu and it doesn't look like it's any kind of honorary title it's a legitimate blackbelt and it was awarded under Carlos Machado who was actually in quite a few episodes of Walker Texas ranger and they look like they've had a lot of time to train together so while we all know Chuck Norris for his kicks apparently he's got a pretty good ground game too. He's



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received a lot of honorary titles and I'm sure plenty of honorary black belts from martial arts schools but the funniest honorary title that I found back in 2010 then governor Rick Perry of Texas gave him the title the honorary title of Texas Ranger now how funny is that you know who is more Texas Ranger than Walker Texas Ranger Chuck Norris so I got a kick out of that and we're all really familiar with those Chuck Norris facts the funny ones Chuck Norris doesn't do push ups he pushes the world down you know stuff like that but I didn't realize those are about 10 years old I don't remember the first time I heard about them but I certainly don't remember having an aha moment of oh wow this is a thing now but yep started in 2005 and they actually kinda pinpoint where they where it started I forget the gentleman's name there was a book written Chuck Norris sued the guy dropped the lawsuit and he's kind of embraced it now which I think was a good move and his favorite one he's in record the saying is that they wanted to add his face to Mount Rushmore but the granite isn't hard enough for his beard and finally in 1990 he co-founded a charity called kickstart kids and the mission was to in their words quote build strong moral character in our youth through martial arts and of course that's still active though unfortunately it's only in Texas. So that's it hopefully you learned a bit about Chuck Norris.

If you're new to the Thursday shows yes we're intentionally keeping these short just quick hits, they're easy for us to record in between the lengthy shows that we're doing. We've got some great stuff coming up, recorded an amazing episode on Monday it will be a couple of weeks before that's out and you'll know it when you see it. So head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com for all the show notes links to the stuff that we talked about that video clip from Chuck Norris karate commandos that you wanna check out remember this is episode 43 so leave us some comments about what you thought on social media or on the website and that's really about it so if you wanna follow us we're on social media we're whistlekick pretty much everywhere and that's really about it. So until next time train hard smile and have a great day.