



Episode 47 – Master Ken & Mr. Matt Paige | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hello there everyone it's episode 47 of whistlekick martial arts radio, the only place to hear the best stories from the best martial artists like today's guest Master Ken. I'm the founder here at whistlekick but here on the show I'm your host Jeremy Lesniak. Whistlekick in case you didn't know makes the world's best sparring gear and some great apparel and accessories all of it for traditional martial artists. I'd like to welcome our new listeners and thank all of you returning fans, if you're not familiar with our products you should check out everything we offer like our amazing sweat pants now available in black. These are probably the most comfortable sweat pants you'll ever wear, we've had people buying second pairs just so they can take one off to wash them. You can learn more about our sweat pants and all of our other gear and apparel at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com). All of our past show notes, over at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). While you're on our website, why don't you sign up for our newsletter we offer exclusive content to subscribers and it's the only place to find out about upcoming guests. Now let's move on to the episode. On episode 47 we're joined by Master Ken the legendary founder of Ameridote and star of the hit show Enter the Dojo. there's little that I can do to prepare you for this wonderful interview so I'm just gonna step back and let you listen.

Master Ken welcome to [whistlekickmartialartsradio](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com).

**Matt Paige:**

Thank you for having me.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's an absolute honor to have you here on the show and I'm sure most of our listeners know who you are as the founder of Ameridote but I'm sure there's a lot more to you than just what we get to see from your videos so perhaps you could indulge us and tell us how you got started in the martial arts.

**Matt Paige:**

Ah well depends on your definition of when that starts I mean technically I did my first groin grab on the doctor that took me out of the womb I just remember feeling someone grabbed my ankle and pulled me into this world and looked up, thought he was threatening grabbed his groin and then tried to choke him with the umbilical cord until some other nurses pulled me off of him. So I've been fighting and doing you know martial defense in some forms since the day I was born.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Wow that's pretty incredible certainly you're started, you're starting a lot earlier than most of us we've had quite a few guests on the show that start at 3 or 4 or 8 or 9 but here you are at seconds old, do you think that set the path for you into the world getting started in the martial realm so early.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah I think it did I think that was why it was necessary for me to get into martial arts was to contain the power and effectiveness that I have obviously already had and so you know then it went to studying various martial arts you know Ameridote is the best of all and the worst of none. We take the best parts of every other martial art in the world with none of the weaknesses and so obviously I had to study those other things, that's what people don't get you know they don't understand why I think every other style was bulls it's because I've studied it. I have taken Shotokan you know I have taken kenpo I have taken Brazilian Jujitsu, it just took me less and less time with each style to figure out that it was a bunch of crap. Shotokan I made it to orange belt before I realized that was bulls, Brazilian Jujitsu got to about a purple belt before I realized that was a joke, got tired on rolling around on the ground with people you know I mean there's more inappropriate touching in one class of Brazilian Jujitsu than there is at a slumber party at Bill Cosby's house and I get I got tired of all that. There was the, the only style I didn't officially got a rank in is Kung Fu I could tell that was bulls from the parking lot so I just I drove up I saw the sign and then I drove away.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So you're meter for detecting BS must be pretty good how would you say you've been able to do that?

**Matt Paige:**

Ah well you know it's comparing martial arts training with real life situations you know being out in the street, I worked as a conflict resoluter for various establishments, bars you know I've been what other people call a bouncer. I worked security jobs, you know I've been an exotic dancer so I understand what it's like to be in a violent environments where people are slapping and pulling at you and what you got to do to really get away versus what all these people teach you which is a bunch of unrealistic scenarios.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Sure sure and certainly you've had the opportunity to 05:17 all of those together and create the world's how is it you referred to it the most effective.

**Matt Paige:**



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It's the most dangerous 05:27 because it's not a sport, a lot of other styles in order to teach them you gotta turn them into sports. But this is not a sport this is street lethal martial arts. Virtually every move that we have in Ameridote can lead to death and or dismemberment.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's impressive.

**Matt Paige:**

05:48 that's why we have to have a release form for everybody who signs in that if they do get death or dismembered that they knew that coming.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Are you willing to share with us how frequently that happens?

**Matt Paige:**

I'm not in a liberty to say I had a sign up thing I have a couple of lawyers that keep me from discussing such things.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Fair enough and that's exactly what I would have expected. Now of course that's a great origin story you took it back farther than anyone that's ever been on the show and honestly as the host that's exactly what I would have expected from you so thank you for honoring us with that but here on martial arts radio we're all about stories and I'm sure you have a thousand stories that would put our other guests to shame but I'd like you to pick one and tell us your best martial arts story.

**Matt Paige:**

Oh gosh there's so many. Best martial arts story let's see I remember the first time that I ever, I'll tell you what, I remember the first time that I ever advanced a student he wasn't ready you know

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Okay

**Matt Paige:**



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A lot of that happens in the martial arts world you know there is selling belts selling rank all the time.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Sure

**Matt Paige:**

And the student came in I think he was testing for purple belt or something and you know he didn't know it was tough but he was close, only screwed up on a couple of things. His mother was very insistent that I pass him so I did and next day he wears his purple belt to school showing it off to everybody and the block up in next to homeless guys 07:40 it turned out they beat the crap out of him you know took his belt away and just foot stopped him put cigarettes on him threw him in the dumpster and so I felt responsible because I had given him the confidence too early so I went to see him in the hospital and I saw him laying there all beat up and broken and that's when I demoted him.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Really

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah I took him back down to orange belt to teach him a lesson. So that he understood the value of the rank and you know a year later once he got done with the physical therapy and the surgery and everything he came back you know and he worked really hard and he tested again for that purple belt.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

And how did it go that time?

**Matt Paige:**

Oh he failed

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Really

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah he couldn't do the moves



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Better or worse than the first time.

**Matt Paige:**

Oh way worse, cause the guys that would stomped he had his arms were all misshaped and then his fingers didn't work anymore but he put a lot effort in and actually he still currently works for me in the dojo he's the janitor so I still let him mop the floors and what not he's just not allowed to train so he doesn't embarrass me.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

very noble of you quite the honor I'm sure for him.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah well should be

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

And I think this is a good time for us to transition out for of course any of our listeners that may not be familiar with Master Ken and the enter the dojo show, you were probably listening to that first portion of the episode wondering what was actually going on but now I'd like to welcome Mr. Matt Page to the show. How are you doing?

**Matt Paige:**

I'm doing great sir how are you?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'm doing great, that was a lot of fun and something I've been looking forward to from a while ago when we started talking about doing this.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah I'm glad we finally been able to line up the schedules, that's good.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Yeah that was a good time and of course I had to mute my microphone so I wasn't laughing over your story but you do a fantastic job of course on the spot and holding in character and is that the hardest part of your job?

**Matt Paige:**

You know let's see I would say it depends on the situation when I'm doing stuff live it's easier actually when I'm improvising or doing stuff live it's when we shoot the show the enter the dojo YouTube show that I have a hard time. Partially because the other actors whether it's Joe Conway who plays Todd Woodland my assistant he's say some say or do some stuff sometimes that cracks me up or when we film a season of the show the other just kill me they're so funny and so that's the time when I have a hardest time staying in character.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It must be a lot of fun even those moments when you got so many breaks

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

And you gotta reshoot I mean just the environment there I'm sure must be a lot of fun for everyone.

**Matt Paige:**

Oh yeah and that's what works about the show I mean the fact that we do all find a lot of the same things funny is what works about the show, if we're not cracking each other up then we know something's wrong so we spend you know whenever we shoot and we shoot the seasons very very fast over just a few days but whenever we do it it's just laughing all day it's great.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What's better in your job than that certainly.

**Matt Paige:**

Oh yeah it's awesome.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Great, so for anyone that has watched the show they've got a quite a good idea of what you find funny and but have probably very little idea about who you are as the actor behind Master Ken so I'd like to take it back and reask you those first 2 questions. How did you get started in the martial arts?

**Matt Paige:**

You know I was a pretty undisciplined teenager and kinda you know acting out of it got in trouble and in school here and there and just being a pain I had a smart mouth and then sooner or later my smart mouth got me in trouble, I got into a couple of fight lost those fights very badly cause I had no I have never been in a fight you know and so I told my mother I wanted to take boxing and I knew there was a boxing gym in Lewiston about 20minutes from Ternera where I grew up and she said she couldn't find it now that I look back on it I think that she didn't want me to box I think that she was worried that I would get my head beaten so she found a martial arts school it was a traditional Okinawan kempo school.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You just mentioned 2 towns that I'm kinda are you from Maine sir?

**Matt Paige:**

I am. I'm from Casco

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

No kidding

**Matt Paige:**

That's awesome I didn't even know that that's wild.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Oh

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah I grew up in Ternera Maine but you know outside of Lewiston Auburn I train my very first instructor was a gentleman named Rick Pelletier, Rick Pelletier's karate do and he had 13:12 he started in Lewiston and then he built a school in Greene Maine which is still there today.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**





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Sensei Pelletier was one of my favorites to watch as a teenager growing up on a tournament circuit.

**Matt Paige:**

Oh that's so awesome that's great, that's so funny, that is so funny.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah I'm he's passed away now I'm not sure if you know it.

**Matt Paige:**

Oh I do know that yeah I was very very sad to hear about that and I'm still in contact with with some of the students who took over and yeah we were all really sad about that cause he was such a wonderful instructor a wonderful man and really I credit him with setting the foundation and setting a very high standard for martial arts against which I would and would compare and continue to compare any of my experiences in martial arts he's such a high standard for respect for traditionalism for for just doing good karate good martial arts you know focusing on the basic and the fundamentals and the integrity of it all it was he set the bar really high.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah yeah without a doubt and all of his students were always very good so I'm sure..

**Matt Paige:**

Oh yeah

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You came away with that as well

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah yeah I actually for a few years was dating 14:40 who was one of his prized students who she had just like I think I remember they in their house they had to start putting their 14:53 trophies in boxes cause they could find any more room for all the trophies she would 14:59 and win like her and her and Ferdie and all those guys would go out and just and they really loved performing at tournaments they did a great job but then at the same time they were also very very focused on what made a traditional karate school traditional in terms of being connected to the lineage you know cause they only have 3 degrees of separation there was Sensei Pelletier and then Marcus Devalentino and Sensei Odo in





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Okinawa and so there was always a very direct lineage to the origin of the art and they were always very very strict on terminology on etiquette and that was stuff I took with me and something I really needed as a teenager I actually really needed that cause I think that I was I think I could've gone down a different path if that hadn't become part of my life.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Absolutely and you know it's funny Sadie is a name that I haven't heard in white a few years but she and I came up to the tournament circuit together so it would not surprise me if you and I were in the same place at the same time.

**Matt Paige:**

That is blowing

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Years ago

**Matt Paige:**

blowing my mind

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah at some point you know 16:11 we'll have to compare notes

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah we should

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I bet there's quite a few people that we know in common.

**Matt Paige:**

That's cool.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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See I told you the stories bring out the best stuff on this show.

**Matt Paige:**

That is true who would've thought like I really the people listening we didn't plan this

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It is not not a bit. You said Lewiston my ears perked up and then you said Ternera and I said nah wait a second. So there's a fun story we got a great story from Master Ken and thank God I would never have to train under him and demoted but I'd love to hear a story from you.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah you know since we're on that topic of what you know what my initial experiences were, the story that I have told here and there and 17:02 that I have told the story before so maybe I can think of another one but one of the things that's most relevant to the show is my some of my first experience is leaving the dojo cause I only knew a traditional Okinawan school and so then I moved to California to try to be in the entertainment business and we figured out we just find a dojo and so I went to one in Orange County that had a name it was like it wasn't a style I had ever heard of cause it was one of those ones that the instructor basically kinda just made up from their own experiences and then you know made up a style and they have they really did have something that we spoofed on the show called groin sparring where they said they genuinely with no sense of irony said that the only target that mattered in a street fight was the groin and so that was the only target they were interested in, they weren't encouraging you to kick and punch unless it was just a fake so they go for the groin and the they honest to God my first fight they made me fight a woman and I remember thinking well this doesn't really seem that fair, like hey why would I be fighting her B she's like the only person in the room who doesn't have the target that I'm supposed to go for.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right.

**Matt Paige:**

And it was so bizarre and they did a bunch of things they made me stand on a balance beam they had a little just like a foot off the ground then they made stand on a balance beam and read from like some martial arts book it was like it was Zen in the martial arts or it was Tao of Jeet Kune Do something like that I had to stand there and balance on a balance beam and read that book while the whole class sat around and watch me and I was like I'm sure there's a lesson here but I don't really get what it is. It was such a bizarre experience that was where the very very beginning and this was a long time it was like



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you know like 15 years before I came up with the official idea for the show but I went around to these other dojos over the years and everytime I ended up in a very Americanized school a franchised school what a lot of people call McDojos that I didn't even know existed I would have these bizarre experiences and kinda just file them away in my mind thinking someday I'm gonna do something about this, someday I'm gonna do a story that references this in some way.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Wow that's fanta, my mind is blown that Ameridote actually has some real roots in life 19:51 there's a school now

**Matt Paige:**

That's the thing some of the weirdest stuff we do on the show is totally from real life either something that I have personally experienced or something that other people have told me a story of a real life experience and I've been like that's going in the show, that's gotta be and it makes sense too when you think about it because unlike a lot of other professions there isn't really a lot of standardization in the world of martial arts like you can just you can get training anywhere or even not be trained and put on a black belt and say that you're a karate master and you can open up a school and there's really not a lot of ways to limit or challenge or test that and so there's all these like bizarre versions of schools out there that people study and think oh well this is martial arts this must be what it is and so it leads to all these incredible experiences that people can totally relate to.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Can I put you on the spot for another great example like that?

**Matt Paige:**

Sure.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That came in to the show.

**Matt Paige:**

Let's see, what am I thinking let me think about another one. I'm trying to think of like what I haven't told before. Well there's the invention of the kill phase that came from a real pep talk and this is the other thing that I tell people you know when I tell these stories is that like some of these really bizarre stories come from people who are martial artists that I genuinely respect, it's just the longer you're in



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this world, the better the more sense there is of like there'd there are ironic and bizarre things that happen even if you run a good school, even if you're like you know the real thing

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah.

**Matt Paige:**

So anyway this guy that I know, was telling you that your face was the most important part of a fight cause it was about your attitude he was talking about the way your opponent perceives you and he said you gotta get you a face he said get you a face that when you put on that face people don't wanna fight you anymore, they're like you make this face that's so scary that you psyche them out before you even end up with a fight and I totally and it's legitimate thing like I mean I could see that I can this guy in particular his name is Kevin 22:20 he's a good friend of mine and he's trained me before in jujitsu and kickboxing he's a great martial artist but when he told me that and he gave me that face I got a little scary, he's a scary dude but I thought what if it went one step further and the face itself was like a lethal weapon and so that was where the idea for the kill face came about. The idea that there was just a face you could make that could kill somebody without even getting in a fight so you know that's the kind of stuff that we came up with.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah and you know you bring up a good point that for a lot of us who've been in the martial arts for a long time that we sometimes have a hard time stepping out of it and realizing that what 23:02 we do even the effective legitimate stuff is kinda silly at times

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah and we don't mean for it to be but the trickiness of it again you know it's stuff that A it's not standardized like most martial arts don't have a lot of, like in kenpo world where I spent most of my life in the kenpo world and in the kenpo world there is a lot of discussion going on right now that in American kenpo there are an insane number or 10th degree black belts there's like hundreds of them all over the world and some of the lineages are unclear and they're very young 10th degree blackbelts they're not like they're in their 60s or 70s they're like 30 some of them 23:41 like in their late 30s and they're already at 10th degree and it's again because of lack of standardization but even just trying to do this martial arts as a sport or trying to make it more realistic for the street which is also a really funny conversation to have cause there's so many problems with that yeah you end up doing these bizarre things that are unintentionally funny so we just keep and every time we do a season we think okay that's probably we're probably out of ideas now and then I'll go train and I'll meet some other martial



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artists or I'll go to a seminar I'll be like nope, there's so much more material, there are so many things we haven't even touched on yet.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Do you ever find yourself seeking out sources of material in let me ask in a different way, do you ever find yourself going to train with people that you are pretty sure will give you ridiculous things?

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah and I feel a little guilty about that.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Okay

**Matt Paige:**

I do go because I do like legitimately training but then there are other times when I go to a seminar and think this is gonna be good, that there's gonna be something here that is gonna be wild that I'm totally gonna be able to use and the people who know me and know the show, they'll say something accidentally ridiculous and then they'll look over at me and they'll be like don't use that don't do that and I'm like I just can't help it yeah I can't you know the deal if I'm in the room and you say something wild it may end up on the show.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You're possibly the first hipster martial artist training ironically at times.

**Matt Paige:**

Well and that and you know that's another thing that's that we tend to that Joe and I tend to talk about a lot is the fact that part of the importance in the season of the character Anthony who's the orange belt is he's really the Matt Page character like he's the guy that I'm the most like I personally am not very much like Master Ken I'm more the skeptical lower belt who's kind of watching things and being like why'd he say that that's kinda weird or looking at a move and being like 25:56 work you know like I'm like that kind of pain in the ass student that like it is kind of annoying to guys like Master Ken and but that character is so important to the show because he is really he is the one that can look into the camera and he's looking right at the audience saying this is weird I'm with you I get what you're you know he's the only he's like one of the only characters on the show that's self-aware, self-aware enough to look at the audience and be like no no you're I'm with you guys this is totally weird.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Cool so one of the things that we talk about on the show is competition and how that's a thread for a lot of the martial artists that we talked to, did you 26:41 spend any time in competition possibly side by side with me?

**Matt Paige:**

Right you know very limited, I tried a few tournaments and I think I picked up I think I did okay in kata I think I usually managed to like play somewhere in the top 3 or 4 for kata but I was never I don't know I think that my motivation for so long with the martial arts was always that I was fascinated with martial arts movies so I just wanted to learn how to do the stuff I saw in the movies and everything else was kind of secondary you know that and I wanted you know I have to being beat up a few times in high school I didn't want that to happen anymore so I was like well at least I wanna know the basics on how to defend myself but outside of that it was more about how can I do when I see Jean Claude Van Damme and Steven Seagal and Jeff Speakman and those guy how can I move like them I wanna move like those guys so that was my and then when the UFC came out it became how can I do when I see Royce Gracie and so that always sort of motivated my relationship with it and very seldom did that lead me to tournaments, it just was never my thing.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

And you're not the first person to say that you know it certainly takes a certain approach to the martial arts to find competition enjoyable.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah immense respect for people who measure themselves that way, constantly you know I think that that's one of the best way because it's put you under a lot of pressure you know it's scary to have people watching you it's scary to test yourself whether it's being on the floor doing a form or whether it's going out and fighting in competition to test yourself against somebody you don't know I have immense respect 28:38

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Now I do have to say I find it a little bit ironic that you're you weren't gravitating towards being out in front of everyone performing which is how some people look at a competition and then you pursued a career in entertainment and ultimately you are performing in front of a much bigger audience.

**Matt Paige:**



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Right I guess I always felt more comfortable performing as a character you know like I if I have a if I'm playing somebody else then I get a lot of satisfaction out of it if I'm in a play to if I'm up pretending to be to you know up being Master Ken or acting in a film or a television show then I can I feel I like I can sort of separate myself and say well this is something different this isn't me you know this is and I also quite honestly I think I'm from my experience I am an incredibly average martial artist like perhaps even perhaps you know a little below average and yet I was always drawn to the arts and always getting really great response to my writing my sketching my acting as an artist I always got a lot of positive feedback as a martial artist particularly when I would spar and kinda get beat around like I could survive but I was never an exceptional martial artist so I think that I kinda just gravitated towards what it seemed I was I had some talent for.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's pretty profound statement I mean we don't have a lot of people in our world that are that aware of their skill and that open with their own self-assessment, I mean would you be willing to talk about that for a minute.

### **Matt Paige:**

Yeah yeah no sure I just you know I really I from you know I feel like it's easy to fantasize for quite a long time about being good at martial arts in a competitive situation and also in quote the street you know like some scenario where you execute all the perfect moves and protect your loved ones and you know knock some bad guys down or whatever that it which I think just about anybody who studied martial arts has that fantasy in their mind right

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah

### **Matt Paige:**

But then the longer you lived life and the longer you see how real violence happens and you know I became more and more skeptical of that scenario even just the fact that human beings are a lot more complicated than being the good guy and the bad guy and the real violence is very very sloppy and very unpredictable I do think it is good to have some basic training so that you're not a victim. I definitely think that training is good but I just I also looked at myself in competitive situations and I would you know I jujitsu was the only thing that I was ever decent enough at where I could really survive against somebody who was maybe a little bigger faster stronger than me. Striking I was always I was kind of a mess I was never a physically talented striker I'm always getting hit a lot and never really figuring out why and so I think that was I eventually did gravitate toward the ground fighting stuff cause I thought well at least I'll be able to stop them punching me in the face and that was the fascination over the years





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with arts like that but yeah being self-aware like that over time life starting to figure out also where I wanted to put my effort you know I found myself putting a ton of time in to being a martial artist then I definitely think that's great but in my 30s I had to start to say gosh you know it seems like I don't seem like I'm not reaching a lot of my goals and I had to look at how I was spending my time and say if what do I wanna succeed at the most, do I want martial arts to be a way of life or does it have to start being a hobby so that I can succeed in other areas you know.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well for sure and I think that's an important part of maturity I mean of course through whistlekick there are 10 million things that I should want to be doing every day that aren't gonna happen you know so it's about prioritization and you've certainly done that and you know I'm gonna guess that as you did that you saw increased success with the show and with what you're doing with the other entertainment side of your life.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah I mean it acting and filmmaking has always been my highest that's been my highest priority and once I really started to say okay well more than anything else I want to succeed as an actor and as a filmmaker that's my number 1 thing and then martial arts can be the third thing but it can't be I can't have them all on the same level and once I started doing that at the same time I have the idea of well but I have a background in this so there's a level of authenticity that when we do episodes of the show people who study martial arts are like oh that's a real thing that's really the way the martial arts world works and so it did help it did help that I had a background in it. It does help that Joe Conway owns a working dojo where we film and that he and I do train and that he teaches every day and that we're still connected to that world it's just that you know it is to answer your question yes I absolutely saw a dramatic increase over a few a few years of once I was really focused on entertaining people with martial arts as a from a comical point of view that 34:37 I don't think that me being a straight up if I had tried to approach it as me being a straight up action star like Steven Seagal or Jean Claude Van Damme I don't think any of that would've worked that I think it always gonna have to be a comedy.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Fair enough and it's not my acronym but I'll share it with you and with the listeners. I really like this FOCUS, follow one course until successful.

**Matt Paige:**

Absolutely that's a great that holds more and more true I'm actually typing that down now.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Good good don't give me credit for it I didn't come up with it just I heard it on another podcast.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah no and it's very true it's very true and it's something that I think that in my 20s I wanted to succeed at absolutely everything and I would find that you know I wasn't really making as much headway as I wanted to in a particular area and then once I was able to streamline it and say okay what are the most important things to me that the more I reduce that number of things I'm focused on the happier I am and the more successful those things are and so martial arts is still a third it's still the third thing but it had to take a back seat to the creative aspect because that's my number one focus.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well I know there are quite a few people out there that are maybe would be a little sad to hear that that's what it took but are quite pleased with the results, selfishly I can say I certainly am.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I get to watch the show and see Master Ken and all the wonderful things that you put out that maybe wouldn't have happened.

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah well I loved you know and Loved the fact that people do, I am still flattered by the fact that people do really people want Ken to be a real guy. They want Ken to be 100% real and that's both troubling and very flattering because ultimately Ken does still represent kind of what's wrong with American martial arts but because he's fun to watch people just wanna know what he's gonna say next so yeah I do and again you know I mean the good thing about having that character is that does keep me connected to martial arts every day you know I have to be reading about it. I have to be training, I have to be doing things so that I'm still plugged in so that we can come up with content for the show.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Sure so you've mentioned a couple actors as we've gone on Van Damme Seagal Jeff Speakman, is one of those your favorite or maybe somebody else.

**Matt Paige:**



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You know Jean Claude Van Damme is probably well he is Jean Claude Van Damme is I'm a huge fan of his I grew up on his movies, I grew up on all those guys movies but Van Damme was the guy that I emulated the most you know I would like be in the basement in front of a mirror trying to kick like him trying to figure out how to you know get the like I got that like that stretching machine that real that will like spread your legs apart that torture device you know because I had to be able to get as close to a split as possible and yeah I just I was a huge fan I own and watched all of his movies that I was also a Steven Seagal fan of his early stuff I like the perfect weapon and was excited when I finally got to meet and train with Jeff Speakman and yeah I followed all that stuff it was and it was hugely inspiring to me I wanted to be able to move like those guys I wanted to be in movies like those guys and they sort of you know and it was weird actually going to film school and like not knowing a lot of the filmmakers that I should've known by then like Orson Welles and those guys but I knew every word and every shot and every frame of every Jean Claude Van Damme movie because I had watched them until the VHS 38:31 the VHS tapes would actually start to get so worn that the auto tracking couldn't even fix 38:39 get those weird lines all over the tape because you've watched it so many times and I would actually have the tapes queued up to my favorite fight scenes so that if I just wanted to watch like just the fight scene before I went to school in the morning I could just pop in the VHS and it was queued right to that scene and so I would wear out the middle of the tape by watching the same fight scene like 200 times.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Do you have a favorite fight scene from one of those movies that we can plug in the show notes.

**Matt Paige:**

You know one of the things let's see I would say let's see it depends on the movie so for Jean Claude Van Damme my favorite one my favorite movie still that I would love we keep talking about spoofing this Master Ken but like double impact where he played twins.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah I remember that

**Matt Paige:**

Even though he's played twins 3 times he played twins briefly in maximum risk and then he played them again in the replicant I mean a clone but a twin 39:36

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right



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**Matt Paige:**

But double impact was the best of the twin movies that I think he did and when he fights 39:42 you know I mean he did a great the second favorite is the fight in blood sport and it's still that a really much more elaborate fight but the way that 39:53 directed that one the way that was shot and lit and everything and all the action like I used to keep that fight specifically queued up because that one was one of my favorites but every scene every one of those movies I had that queued up you know for hard to kill it was when Steven Seagal goes in to the convenience store in like the first 10 minutes of the movie and those guys came in to rob the place and he beats them all to death.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah

**Matt Paige:**

You know which looking back it's like it's pretty extreme he really he's so brutal in those movies you know he's like kind of a bad guy himself almost and how brutally violent he is in all those movies but that was what was fun about and now for justice it was the bar scene you know when he goes back looking for Richie and he ends up beating everybody to death with a queue ball and a hanker chief you know all those movies I can think of each one of those movies I can be like yeah it's that scene you know 40:59 it's the big fight at the end and I would just keep all those queued and watch just watch them over and over and over again just studying how they moved how they shot it I was just fascinated with it and I still really like going back and watching those movies now it always fills me with so much nostalgia because it was such a particular time they don't make action movies like that anymore because what they used to do like they don't really do this now they used to cast people based on their martial arts ability not on their acting ability and now they put movie stars who may have a little bit of experience or none at all they train them for a few months put them in harnesses and now they're super-duper martial artists and a lot of what they do and it's great and some of them do great work but a lot of it is has to do with the editing and has to do with the special effects and what not whereas before I mean Van Damme you know he's there doing that helicopter kick as many takes as they need and he's doing it for real and jumping up and doing a helicopter kick and like just you know grazing the face of a stunt actor and you know when Steven Seagal was 42:12 his peak was doing aikido his aikido was amazing you know I mean you know people have a lot of debate about his skill level now but like in his prime he was so fast and his technique was so great and then they would just build the whole movie around it's like those dancing movies right it's like those movies that like featured really great dancers not great actors and they're just like okay we just gotta get through like this next 7 minutes of plot and then there's another dance number and it's like it's the same thing with martial arts movies it's like okay we 42:47 through some pretty bad dialogue and pretty rough acting but the cool chasing is coming up in like 7 minutes so I'm gonna go to the kitchen and I'll just let the movie run and I'll go to the kitchen I'll make myself a sandwich and by the time I come back it's time for the chase scene and that's the scene I really love or whatever you know so yeah all of this my whole relationship with martial arts as a martial artist and



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creating the show all comes from just being totally inspired by those guys I'm really living that particular that very odd period where American martial arts action movies were so peculiar because they don't make those movies anymore.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

No and I don't know if they how well they would do if they were made I would certainly watch the movie

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah yeah and that's the thing you couldn't get away with it because the thing the beauty of the 80s or early 90s was the sincerity like you could say really bad dialogue and you could have bad guys getting killed in certain ways and you could have the macho relationship you know with saving the damsel that lead to the love scene and everything with no sense of irony, you could be totally sincere you could have the really what's that really bad you know in bloodspot when Van Damme is running away from forest Whittaker and the other guy cause they are trying to take them back before he finishes fighting in the kumite

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right

**Matt Paige:**

There's that horrible 80s theme song that's really playful and it like doesn't fit the movie at all 44:17 and it doesn't make you watch it now and it's the same thing as the opening credit sequence of kickboxer 44:23 it's like the music montage is so homoerotic and it's unintentionally hilarious you know I actually showed some of my film friends showdown in little Tokyo a few years ago you know Brandon Lee and 44:41 and that opening credit sequence I had forgotten the opening credit sequence is just like a dude's arms and chest with like tattoos and it's supposed to be all ominous cause he's got Yakuza tattoos but they're watching the opening credit sequence of this dude like flexing in the dark it's just the shadowy shot of like his pecs and his biceps and they're like what are we watching again I'm like no you don't understand like in the 90s this was like this was really tough this was like really cool and manly now 45:20 you could not do it sincerely without people laughing at you.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

But perhaps Master Ken could is there I mean I have no idea and hopefully I'm not spilling the beans on something and putting you on the spot but is there talk of a something longer more 45:35



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**Matt Paige:**

Yeah you know it's something we would absolutely love to do it's something that is we keep talking about it and you know to be honest it's actually where some of the seasons come from cause we've been flirting with Hollywood for a few years now I've gone out and done meetings and pitched meetings and I pitched as a show to comedy central I pitched it as a movie to paramount I pitched it all over the place and people really like it but then they don't really know what to do with it because it's such an odd type of thing you know what I mean it's again it's like spoofing a type of movie they don't make anymore and so I end up writing these pilot scripts and these movies scripts and then it comes time to do another season of the web series and I just end up stealing the material that I've written for the movie or the material that I've written for the pilot and be like okay well let's just use that for a season and so then we shoot it all and then I have to rewrite it again and be like okay I've used all that now I gotta come up with another version of what Ken's life is like and what this story is but I would love to do a movie I would really really love to do a Master Ken movie and initially we were thinking like that it would be about enter the dojo about the show but I kind of a more and more think like it would be way more fun to put Master Ken in like an 80s action movie like put him in a double impact kind of twins kind of martial arts thing like put him in some just put him in those scenarios to see what he does cause I think that would be so fun.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'm almost thinking you've seen the movie Joe Dirt with David Spade

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah yeah

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Like a martial arts Joe Dirt opening with you know what Ken told us about his origin story that trying to choke the doctor out with the umbilical cord like I could totally see a movie starting with that scene and I would be hooked.

**Matt Paige:**

Absolutely it would have and what we joked about what some of us joked about is been the idea of like bit of Ken did if he did an autobiographical film but he insisted in starring in it at every age. He's like playing his 6 year old self. Like in totally implausible situations and like beating up little kids showing how tough he was back then you know like all these and all these things that could not have possibly happened yeah I think it will eventually happen because every year awareness of the character grows, every year exposure on YouTube and on Facebook and people discovering the show in the live shows





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and everything it gets bigger and better every year and so I think the character's gonna be around for a while.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Ok I hope so, so if people wanna follow you if they wanna watch the show learn more, where do we send them?

**Matt Paige:**

Let's see well I mean the easiest thing is to Google Enter the Dojo or Master Ken and that will sort some stuff will pop up I mean there's an official channel obviously [youtube.com/enterthedojoshow](https://youtube.com/enterthedojoshow) there is the Facebook page which is I believe it's [facebook.com/masterameriken](https://facebook.com/masterameriken), K E N we technically have a twitter page but I suck at twitter I mentioned it cause I like Facebook because I can type really long updates, I post too much content, I'm gonna we keep saying we're gonna get the hang at twitter we've been saying that for 3 years so we probably won't but those are the primary places and then if anybody's interested in we also sell t-shirts and DVDs and stuff like that and that's just at our regular website [enterthedojoshow.com](http://enterthedojoshow.com)

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Great and we'll have all of that stuff available on the show notes [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) so people can go check that out and we'll make sure we get all that spread out and any parting advice for everyone listening?

**Matt Paige:**

Gosh what kind of advice do people give on the show like what's?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Usually deep and heartfelt and poignant

**Matt Paige:**

Yeah that's not our 49:57

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Taking the complete opposite direction if you're so inclined what would Master Ken offer 50:04 advice.





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**Matt Paige:**

Oh man Ken would have something to say about making sure that you're you know super dangerous and you only train for real and everything I think that my personal advice would be that what I have the most respect for our people who train to be you know martial artists who train as a way of life you know not just as a fighter but people who use martial arts for self-improvement I think that there's a lot of focus today I think that there are great athletes in MMA and I think that all that stuff is great but I think that the point of good martial arts training is still to develop you y as a human being, develop you intellectually, develop you emotionally and I think if you're getting something out of that then it's okay that you're not you know the toughest kid on the block as long as it improves you as a human being.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Thanks for listening to episode 47 of whistlekick martial arts radio and thank you to Mr. Matt Paige for his time. Head on over to [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) for the show notes with links to everything we talked about today, including links to all the social media from Master Ken links to where you can watch enter the dojo, and a few other places to check out. We're also including my favorite enter the dojo clip titled 100 ways to attack the groin. If you want to be a guest on the show or you know someone that would be a great interview please fill out the form on the website and don't forget to subscribe to our newsletter so you can stay up on everything we do. If you liked the show please subscribe or download one of the apps so you never miss out in the future and if we could trouble you to leave us a kind review wherever you download your podcasts we'd really appreciate it. Remember if we read your review on the air just contact us and we'll get you a free pack of whistlekick stuff. If you want to follow us on social media, we're on Facebook twitter Pinterest and Instagram all with the username whistlekick. Remember the great stuff we make at whistlekick like our comfortable sweat pants over at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com). So until next time train hard smile and have a great day.