



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, everyone. Thanks for coming bye. Welcome. This is whistlekick Martial Arts Radio episode 362. Today, I'm joined by me guest, Shihan Bas Rutten. If you're new to the show, my name is Jeremy Lesniak. I'm the founder here at whistlekick. I'm your host for the show and I love martial arts. So, I turned it into my job. And I appreciate you coming by twice a week to check out these episodes, to listen to everything that we've got going on, listen to the wonderful stories from the guests. And of course, check out the things that we offer. You can visit whistlekick.com for our products and whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. We'll get you show notes for this episode and all of the other episodes including photos, videos, links, transcripts, a ton of stuff to give you more context, more enjoyment, more benefit from each of these episodes that we do.

This is not a MMA show. We make no confusion about that. But there are times when the mixed martial arts becomes part of the conversation and that's okay. In fact, that is a good thing. And then we also get people who have a foot in more than one world. And that's today's guest. Shihan Bas Rutten is best known for his time as a competitor, as a mixed martial arts competitor. And he also holds the distinction being one of the few people in the world who is known simply by his first name. In preparing for this show and even after, I commented to a few friends, a few people that I know that say hey, I just talked to Bas. And I did it as much of as a test as anything else. And guess what? Every single one of them knew who I was talking about. Now of course here, he's Shihan Rutten. Because he does have deep substantial significant and as we're going to hear important traditional martial arts roots. And that was why we



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

brought him on the show. Because we wanted to talk about traditional martial arts and mixed martial arts. And I really couldn't think of a single better person that had the credibility, the lineage and the accomplishments to speak on the subjects as they relate to one another. So, here we are. I hope you enjoy this conversation as much as I did. Let me step out of the way and welcome today's guest. Shihan Rutten, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

Bas Rutten:

Thank you very much for having me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It is a pleasure to have you. Now, of course, we're going to have some folks out here who will know you by name, who know different things about you. And my hope today is that we're going to go in some different directions. Give people some insight into who you are, into your traditional martial arts background and all the things that give you the foundation to move into all the things that you did later on.

Bas Rutten:

All right. Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, let's start with a pretty boring question that always leads to some great stuff. How did you first find martial arts?

Bas Rutten:

Oh, yeah. There's a long answer with. So, what happened was I was very sick as a kid. I had a really bad skin disease, ekzema, over my hands and my arms and in my neck and in parts of my face. All over my body but my arms and my hands and neck were the worst. On my ears; I had it everywhere. It was really disgusting. So, I was pretty... Kids don't understand. That's all. So, I got bullied a lot. I also had severe asthma. So, I think, I believe, I took 45 pills a day. Then of course inhales precariously there. And then, of course, every six weeks or so, on top of having my regular asthma, I have an asthma attack. Which would mean a week in bed, not able to eat at times because I simply couldn't breathe. So, I need to stay. I was very skinny. And because of the skin disease, I was bullied a lot. And that made me... I was always at the forest. In front of our home, actually, we had a small forest. And I could climb the trees there and I could go really from treetop to treetop. And I could pretty much go through the forest. There were three or four spots where I have to climb down because it was too far away at the other tree. But for the rest, it came very in handy. If the kids were bullying me, because they would come after me, then I



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

simply climb to the tree and then I would wait till they start to climb the tree. When they almost reach the top, I started swinging from left to right, moving the tree. And then of course, that went wrong one time for one of the kids who was following me. And from that moment on, I was completely in the clear. Nobody had the cojones, so-to-say, to climb after me in the tree. So, that was my safe spot. That was the only I did. And then when I was 12 years old, we saw the movie Enter the Dragon from Bruce Lee in France. We sneaked in because it was a movie for 17 years and older. I was 12 years old. And that's where my eyes opened because I realized wait a minute, if I become a little bit like that guy, Bruce, over there, then I can deal with my bullies. So, I came home. I asked my mom and dad if I could do martial arts. They stopped me for two years. They didn't want it. They thought it was violence and aggression. But after three years, they finally allowed it. Taekwondo, that was my first sports. And I was very fortunate to be taken under the wing by this tough guy who was dating my neighbor girl. He was the tough guy in town and he was training there with the adults. So, I was 14-year old kid at adults' classes. And from then on, everything went on super-fast. I mean, I think within months, I was beating up the brown belts there and the adults. And so, you hear them talk about you in the dressing room. The go, oh my god, did you see the kid dropped Jack today with a back kick to the body? And everybody's is like damn, that kid is really good. And so, once you start listening to that and you hear them talk, you become more confident. And around that time, I got into a fight with the biggest bully in my school. Schucky was his name. I was riding my bicycle on the street. And then he came with a group of 6 or 7 guys on his bicycle towards me. And of course, he was shouting something. It was always something like hey, leper. Watch out what you eat so your ears don't fall off or your hand doesn't fall off. Something with leprosy, they always talk about that. And this time, I shouted something back. And I heard him laugh and I'm looking backwards and I see them all make a U-turn and they started to chase me. So, I said no, I'm not going to run anymore. I parked my car, put it on the stand on the pavement. And then I was just waiting for them. And they surrounded me with their bikes. I always have a laugh about this. Because in these badass movies, you see guys at night and they're surrounded by cars and the headlights of the cars are the lighting for the fight. These illegal fights that they do. Well, this was the same situation. Only this was during the day and there was bicycles. I got surrounded by bicycles. It was pretty funny. And then Schucky, the big guy, he came and he started pumping his chest into my chest. Then asking me if I wanted to hit him. So, come on, Rutten. Hey, leper. Hit me if you want. I go, okay. And then that was it. I gave him one punch. One punch and knocked him out. It 07:05 broke his nose to the side of his face. So, that was a problem for me. Because now, he had to go to the hospital that day. The police was called, of course. And they showed up at mom and dad's doorstep. And that was it for me. Of course, they took me off Taekwondo right away. I confirmed right there that it was violence. But I have to say also, I never told them about my troubles in school, that I got bullied so much. Because my mother had so much work with me. Every night, she had to mummify me. I was 07:34 My family members would send all bed sheets and she would rip those off into bandages. And then every night, my whole arms would be... I would create corners 07:45 on my arms and I would be bandaged in, so to say. And then in the middle of the night, I would scratch it off from itching and then she had to do it again. So, she was with me a long time in a lot when I was a kid. So, I never really told them that I was bullied at school. I wanted to keep that a secret. Otherwise, I think they would have allowed me to stay in Taekwondo. But anyway, long story short is that at 20, I moved out of the house. And I already actually also started training but just watching books and go to the library and looking at the pictures



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

and watching Bruce Lee movies and watching. Everything I could find on martial arts, I would just practice it by myself. And I always were very... What I can see, I can do. I am very... I've been gifted with it. I've got great athletic abilities, thankfully, for my dad's side. They're all athletes there. But that's how I started to train. At 20, I moved out of the house and I started doing Taekwondo right away again in the form of Karate. It's called the Shintai Karate. That went really fast. I mean, I got my black belt in both. Then I started to also... I think even when I was already an orange belt or a green belt, I wanted to compete. And I wanted to compete Thai boxing. So, Thai boxing on the side. [08:56](#) it by everything else. And then I started competing in Thai boxing. And that's how it all began. That's a long way back. I think Thai boxing was in the '86 or so.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. Now, there's something in the way that you're talking about this violence as a child. The way that the other kids are treating you. That is a little bit different than the way most of our guests have talked about. A lot of our guests have had these experiences. You know what I mean, getting into scraps, into fights as a kid. That's certainly not unique. It's something most of us go through at one point or another. But the way you're talking about it, I suspect that even back then, you had a... Is comfort the right word?

Bas Rutten:

For what?

Jeremy Lesniak:

For being around what other people would look at as violence.

Bas Rutten:

Yeah. For me, it was a way out of my crisis. I mean, getting bullied. And I didn't get beat up a lot because... And I couldn't. I was always physically strong. I was very skinny but it was very hard to beat me anyway. But the words, it was always the worst. As a kid, when they say that the most horrible things, they stay with you. Listen. I went after all these bullies. I have only two of them. I made a list to get it with two of my friends because they had bullies as well. One was overweight and the other guy had a big head. But we all became good because the guy who was overweight started boxing, started losing weight. The guy with a big head got [10:32](#) He became 6'4". So now, proportion-wise, everything was okay. But there was such, such horrible things that have been said to us that we didn't forget. And we would realize that if we went after these bullies... And we would never do it with the 3 of us. We'll see a guy that bullied me or 2 guys, I would walk over and say, call him. Let's go now. And of course, they didn't want to do it anymore. I said, no. That ship has sailed. We've got to do this now. What you said to me was insane. And I would repeat to them what they said to me. And none of them were remembered or they were acting. But I truly believe it is because they're kids, they didn't even



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

remember that they said it. And those words that were such hard words for me and for us. And I said, no, I'm sorry. You did it at that time. You're going to have to pay for this right now. We got off and then we solved all the problems. Thankfully, a lot of these bullies were not good guys as well. So, it's not like... We had guys that that said, oh, please. I don't want to do it. Of course, then we're not going to do it. I kind of enjoyed that more if they give up than still trying to fight. Yeah. It brought me comfort because now I finally was able to stop them talking about me and behind my back. And you're walking past them and a group of boys or girls start laughing. And they're looking and laughing and they're looking back. All that stuff as a kid, it's very hard.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, we've got another tier... What was it? Early 20s, maybe the mid-20s and you're training and you said you were taking Muay Thai.

Bas Rutten:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How did things progress from there?

Bas Rutten:

Well, it went really fast. Once I started competing, I realized that I [12:08](#) So, I knocked everybody out. It's all first round knockout. I believe I had 11 first round and 1 in the second. And then I stopped Thai boxing because it's very hard for me to find opponents at the time. It wasn't like nowadays where you can simply Google or YouTube somebody. And boom, you got him. So now, when I would train 8 or 10 weeks and I will go to the fight, the people there would realize it was me. And then they simply wouldn't fight. So, I would train for nothing. And that happened two or three times in a row. I got like you know what, I'm not going to do this anymore because I'm wasting my energy. I might as well do something else - make some money. So, I made a really not so smart decision to become a bouncer to make money. So, I did that. But of course, bouncer lifestyle is not the healthiest lifestyle.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.

Bas Rutten:



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Because our bars and all of this stop at 5 a.m. That's when we close the nightclubs. So, you've got to be awake all night lying. And of course, there's got to be after parties where all the bouncers and other people who work there go to. So, it's not the healthiest lifestyle. And then I made a mistake one time. Three years after not training, this guy comes to me and I had too much to drink. So, I don't remember this conversation. And he asked me if I was interested to face Frank Lotman. He was a really great Thai boxer, undefeated with like 49 in all with 43 knockouts. And he was training in jail, actually. It was jail something. I don't know what it was. But he was training in jail that makes the whole thing about him because he wants to come back out of jail and then he would restart his Thai boxing career and that's how he would start making money. So, having knocking everybody out, thought I could fight that guy who was way better than me. Because at that time, I fought not even in an A-class fight. So, that was [13:46](#) a real professional. And they called me in February and they asked me where to send the posters to? And I asked them, what posters are they talking about? And they said, for the fight. I said, who's fighting? He says, you're fighting. I said, who am I fighting? And they go, Frank Lotman. I said, the animal? That was his nickname. And they go, yeah. And I said, when did I say that? He said, New Year's eve. And I started to think and I realized, oh man, yeah. I did talk to that producer. Oh, man. I said, yes. So now, with my ego, of course. I thought, when is the fight? They said, three weeks. And I didn't train for three years.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow.

Bas Rutten:

So, still, having knocked out everybody, I thought, well, this is going to be easy for me. So I said, okay, I will fight. And of course, that was not a very smart decision. I simply couldn't fight anymore. After the first round, that was it. Bas was over. So, now and then I get so much backlash above that from all the people that said, now you see. I always told you that he couldn't fight. They forgot all the knockouts that I had. Suddenly, I was the worst fighter than I was. So now, I want to fight again. So, then I fought again. That broke out into a big riot because the guy bit a hole in ear. And I gave him a knee [15:00](#) And he went down. And then the whole audience started to fight. Until of course, the referee, when he saw my ear, I was cleaned through my ear, he grabbed the microphone. And he shouted whoa, it's not his fault, actually. I'm looking at his ear. He bit all through his ear. So then everybody thankfully calmed down. And I fought another fight which I lost. I couldn't come out of the second round because there the whole night in there. There's always excuses. I had a big infection, there was a whole thing going on. Anyway, he audience... When you win, you're great. When you lose, you're not as great. Well, nobody likes you. So, that's when I said, I don't want to do this anymore. I don't want to Thai box anymore. I'm not going do it in front of these people who are not... They're not behind me anyway. As soon as I lose a fight, suddenly I'm the worst fighter than the rest. So, I started doing these martial arts shows with my Karate teacher. And we would do shows like we go to a nightclub. And at midnight, the lights will go down and then suddenly a laser started blinking and the music start pumping. And then we came up with only shorts like these school clothing that you could show off a little bit. And we did this choreographed



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

fighters on music. And with long sticks, with short sticks, with Nunchucks, with break tests. We would break 10 concrete blocks. We would do these crazy athletic things. I would take him in the belly, he would throw me away like Bruce Lee did in Enter the Dragon. And I would make a somersault backwards. So, it was a lot like acrobatics way of [16:28](#) And then somebody caught on. People started asking us if we could do it on these big Thai boxing shows in the break. And then somebody in TV discovered us. Then we started doing Dutch TV. And then suddenly on European TV. We started travelling throughout Europe doing these shows like in France and then Germany. And then in one these shows, we would come out... For instance, if there was a ring, I would not walk to the ring. I would come out with backflips. And then just before I was at the ring, I'm going to make a somersault. And then I would jump into the ring. A guy was sitting there, [17:01](#) is the guy we just talked about. He passed away yesterday, unfortunately. But this was Chris Dolman. They are two very close friends, these guys, that's why I mix them up. That's why we met each other, both as well. Chris Dolman was a guy who fought for Rings. The Rings in Japan. It was a free-fighting organization. That's what they called it at the time. Not mixed martial arts but free-fighting. And he stopped me and he said, Bas, I remember you from Thai boxing. You were such an animal. And now I see you making these backflips and do all these acrobatic things. I think that free-fighting would be really good for you. And I go, what is it? And he said well, you can pretty much do anything. You can punch, you can take people down, you can choke them, you can leg lock them, armbars them. I didn't even know who chokes, I don't know. But armbars, leg locks, I had no clue what that was. But I said, cool. I'd do it. I would love to try that. So, I went to work out with them. I get completely destroyed by everybody, much lighter guys than me. I thought I could hold chokes, not blood chokes because of course you'd pass out, but just on your throat where you had the windpipe. So, I was just forcing and not tapping. But that was all onto me not be able to eat food for three days. I had to drink liquid food because my throat was so messed up. I was so tired that I had to park my car next to the road, because it was in Amsterdam, and I'm coming from the completely other side. It's like a 1.5 hours, 2-hour drive minimum to go to Amsterdam from where I live in Holland. And I called my girlfriend. I said, listen, I'm in the car right now. I'm going to sleep. I'm going to park here next to the road somewhere. I'm completely crushed. I can't move anymore. I came home the next day and she was laughing. She said, so that's it? Your free-fighting experience? I said, no, that's not it. I said, within six months, I'm going to tap everybody in that place. You watch. And I started training here and there. And it came to it as well. But I had an injury; an injury there, an injury here. I was there once every three weeks. It didn't really work. It was like I constantly had injuries. And then, one day, he called me. This is because I would never pick up my phone and my voice machine was broken at that time. But somehow, I picked up the phone. And he says, Bas, it's Chris. You've got to come to the gym right now. I said, what's going on? He says, well, there's scouts from Japan from a new organization called [19:16](#) It's a free-fight organization, a shoot-fighting organization from Japan. And they're scouting for new fighters. And he said, if you come and you try out, they might take you. And it's a really nice... You're going to have a nice job [19:30](#) So, I went to Amsterdam. I got into the scaffolds, so to say, with the... Because they wanted us to punch and kick on video just to show technique. But the guy I was dealing with, he was the champion from Rings at that time and he wants to show off. So, he went really hard against me. So, I stopped them. I said, dude, we don't have to go hard. They're just looking at technique. So, don't worry about it. Just keep it down. And then he turned it up. So, I think that he thought I was afraid. So, I stopped him again. And I said, it's okay. But you have to understand, I will do the same thing



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

back. This is not a one-way trap. You understand that, right? And now, of course, it was on. Because now he wanted to knock me out. Which, thankfully, didn't happen. But I know [20:11](#) right away when I kick which looks very spectacular, I guess. And he needed to go to the hospital for a bunch of stitches. I kind of [20:17](#) the eyebrow. And I remember the Japanese people, they were pointing at me. And they said, we want him. And I was in. I think 2.5 months later, I was fighting in Japan. That was September 21st '93. Making it my mixed martial arts debut so to say.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. Now, you were there early. I mean, when we... This is a traditional martial arts show. Okay? We might get some newer folks coming in because of you and because of what you've done in the competitive space. But primarily, we're talking to people who are exclusively in the traditional martial arts world. And one of the things I was excited about in having you on was that we get to talk about your traditional roots and I know we're going to circle back to them. But we can't deny the impact that mixed martial arts has had on the world, on the way that the world views martial arts, views traditional martial arts. And so, I think it's important that we spend a little bit of time talking about what it was like for you as someone who had grown up as a traditional martial artist? Stepping into what we are now in hindsight calling MMA, what was that like for you?

Bas Rutten:

It already started with Thai boxing, mate. Because I came from Karate and Taekwondo and there's certain things that you can't do - can't hit the head, can't... You know, just bunch of stuff that you can't do. So, when I went to Thai boxing, that was a whole new world of offered to me. Because I was the toughest guy in my gym all the time. Always. But when I went to Thai boxing, they dropped me at the very first class with a body shot. That was because I never sparred Thai boxing, like full-contact fighting. And when your hands are low, not up, and suddenly they hit you in the face, what you do, you bring your... You over commit. You go too fast up with your defense, of course, exposing the body. And I was sparring with an A-class Thai boxer. He figured me out in a second. He gave me two shots on the head and he gave me a body shot, left hook to the body. And I went down. And that's where my love... Like if you read it online, I have a lot of winds by body shots. Because that's where my love for the body shot came from. So, that was the first thing for me. From Karate and Taekwondo going to full-contact Thai boxing, that was already completely different for all [22:35](#) So, I was used to the full-contact competing. At least, I was used to that when I started doing mixed martial arts. But if you do mixed martial arts, and you're a striker going into mixed martial arts, you'll really think that a lot of these people out there now still think that striking is the tough man's sport. If you're a good striker, you can win every fight. Then Royce Gracie, Rhonda Rousey, and all these people, they showed us that that's not true. Because if I don't know how to defend myself on the ground from a choke or a triangle choke, a leg lock, an armbar or whatever they throw at me, well, they're going to catch me. Which I experienced in my first MMA class that I had. So, that was the biggest thing for me. But since I was used at full-contact fighting, I was not afraid to go over that hurdle. Many, many traditional martial arts is great. It's great as self-defense. But you know what? If you fight a good boxer on the street, you're going to have a problem. And I'm



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

talking just about the boxer. And I'm talking about pure doing Karate or Taekwondo. I'm not talking about guys who go full-contact Kyokushinkai or Seidokaikan. They go to do that. That's already different because they used to full-contact. But if you're not used to that and suddenly they come with you without the power that you have, it's a whole different view of martial arts that you have. So, I overcame that because I was a full-contact Thai boxer. But then of course, I had problems with the ground. So, I knocked my 1st guy out at 43 seconds. Then I knocked out my 2nd guy with a knee to the body, he had body shot, left leg to the knee to the liver. And then from that moment on, everybody knew that I was a striker. So, my 3rd fight, I lost immediately because they took me to the ground, of course. And since I was not very well-versed on the ground, they caught me. He got me in a toe hold. And if I say a toe hold, for somebody who does not know what is, it's not what you think if I say toe hold. Because people are going to laugh and they say, what does a toe hold do? I say well, I saw a guy break a shin bone with a toe hold; snapped the shin bone in half. So, it's a pretty gnarly move that you put on the ankle of a person. And normally, the ankle will blow up. But if your ankle is stronger than your shin bone and your shin bone is weaker, then your shin bone's going to give up. And that's what happened to that guy. He broke his shin bone. Then I won a couple more fights. Then I lost again by way of submission. And then I got very angry. I lost one more fight and not by submission... Well, by laws, I lost by submission. But I lost two in total by submission, I believe. And then that's the moment that I said, if I want to continue in this and I want to become a known person, I'm going to have learn the ground game. This is important. Because now, I have three losses and just due to not knowing the ground game. So, that's when I became completely different. I started asking everybody in Holland, hey who wants to train with me? Because not a lot of people wanted to train with me because we go hard. And I found this one guy. He was 19 or 20 years old, Leon Vandyke. And he's extremely a great striker already. He's a really great athlete. And he picked up things truly fast. We just both started going crazy on the ground. We would fight. We watch tapes, video cassette instructional. And we would realize that wait a minute, if you put me in a leg lock, I can actually escape. Look, this is how we can escape. Oh, wow. I can make this better. And then we start working with it. And we start some submissions. We made it better; at least making it better for use to fit our body type easier. And it was as if I've never lost a fight anymore. I started doing that two or three times a day, only that. Only three times a week I would do conditioning on the Thai [26:13](#) That was the only thing I would do. I wouldn't even spar anymore in striking. I would only ground fight two or three times a day. And my whole house is full with little post-its of combinations on there. I would wake up my wife in the middle of the night if, I would dream a submission, I would put her in that submission. I would ask her where it hurts. It's your shoulder, right? Yeah. Okay. See, it's a shoulder lock. Okay. I would write it down. Next day, I would try it in gym. And boy, like anything else, I always tell people, what you work hard, it will pay off. And like I said, I haven't had a single loss in my last 22 fights. So, I wrapped my career up with a really, really nice winning streak. But it was all due to learning the game that I was lacking. And just going insane. Once I realized that ground fighting was way more powerful than a striker, then you go, whoa. I mean, think about this. With ground fighting, I can break every single bone in your body and I could dislocate pretty much any joint; everything I want to do. If I want to break your leg, I'll break your leg. If I want to twist your knees out, I'll twist your knees out... Or your ankle, here's an ankle lock. I mean, it's a big power to have as a martial artist. But in the beginning, we never saw that. We thought, there's 2 guys on the ground rolling around. We thought it was funny. And now, you realize, wait a minute. It's extremely powerful. So, the sports



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

like Judo and Jiu Jitsu suddenly, of course, they rise to the top. They rose to the top because everybody wanted to learn that game now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. When you think about your upbringing, the Taekwondo, the Kyokushin, the Thai boxing, do you think that those... Well, let's take Thai boxing out because plenty of people who are competing on a high level in MMA now have Thai boxing as roots. When we talk about the Karate and the Taekwondo, how do you think those gave you an advantage? Do you think they gave you an advantage?

Bas Rutten:

No.

Jeremy Lesniak:

No?

Bas Rutten:

If I would have gone in there with just that, with those skills, no. They would have given me this advice. Because if you don't spar full-contact, you don't know how to fight full-contact. And it's just... Listen. I'm the commentator for Karate combat. So, it's a full-contact Karate league that just started. And they already had five shows now. And you could tell. The first few shows, these guys, the distance was wrong. Because they were not used to hitting each other with full-contact. So, you saw them grow. And suddenly, the next time when they came back and I interviewed these fighters again. I said, what did you do different? He says, well I went to Thai boxing clubs and I started Thai boxing there. And they all did that. And then you suddenly saw that of course, because they were very skilled Karate guys, it was much easier for them to pick up Thai boxing. But they did need to pick it up. Because before, they would lose. If you would fight against a Thai boxer and you're a Taekwondo guy, yeah, you might get lucky with a kick in the face when you're really fast kicks and with a Karate guy may also be something. But to save bet, of course, is going to a Thai boxer who's not doing anything else than fighting full-contact. And the other ones don't do that. So, that's why it gives you an advantage if you already know how to fight full-contact. Thankfully, I was already Thai boxing. And when you hear fighters... Because people come right away. They say yeah, but... What's his name? Machida, the guy from Brazil. Lyoto Machida and Chinzo Machida, they're both Karate guys. And they're doing really well in mixed martial arts. How do you explain that? I said, how do you explain that? I mean, they're also boxing, they're also kickboxing, they're also doing Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. And he's wrestling. So yes, he comes out and he says my style is Karate. But he didn't mention all the other fight sport that he's doing and that's why he's excelling. If you would just use just Karate, if it goes to the ground, that's it. The fight's going to be over. Yes, so you can be a [30:01](#) It's like me fighting Mike Tyson, boxing Mike Tyson. If I'm a mixed martial artist, mixed



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

martial artists fight against them, you think I'm going to box with him? I know I'm a great striker but dude. I'm nothing like Mike Tyson, right? He would annihilate me. So, I'm not going to strike with the guy. I might strike with legs. I might use my legs, front kicks and suddenly throw a high kick, maybe try a right straight because that upper movement is the same movement that you have with a high kick. Maybe you can trick him. But no, I would try to take the fight as fast as possible. Because I would never want to get hit by Mike Tyson. So, yeah. I think, if you go through mixed martial arts, you need at least full-contact experience.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, as you went through your competitive career... From what I understand and correct me if I'm wrong, your traditional training while maybe not a focal point but it's still something that was important to you.

Bas Rutten:

Yeah, very important.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay.

Bas Rutten:

I always thought, that's what we do now with this whole new system. I'll go about it. We can talk about it in a bit. But yeah. Because I like the respect. I like their being on time. I like the rules that the traditional martial arts had. I always tell people. They say, what do you suggest our kids do? They said, MMA? I said, no, don't put him in MMA. They could take traditional martial arts but find a good place. Don't find a place where they're handing out belts. Every two weeks, they're having a belt test and everybody's passing. That's actually how I got my kids off of Karate. Because we signed them up for a gym. I didn't see them practice one time. They were super bad with what they were doing and they still pass the yellow belt. And I told the guy, I said I'm sorry I'm not going to come back. He says, why not? I say, it was horrible. They don't deserve the yellow belt. Why are you giving the yellow belt? But the problem is, with a lot of these schools, they understand that if they don't give them a belt... The parents always blame it on the school. They're never going to blame it on the kids. Because if they blame it on the kids, well, that's genetics. They say that, right? They go, because if the kid is bad, well then there's... And I'm not saying that the kid is bad. I'm saying teach him real martial arts. Teach him the real katas in a good way. Because once you do that and he doesn't make the yellow belt, at least you don't let him pass. Now, he has to work harder in order to come back. This actually will help him in his future in everything in life. But unfortunately, there's a bunch of gyms out there that's just handing them out as candy. It's money-making thing. So, if you go for traditional martial arts, make sure that you sign up and



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

that you're ready to not pass a test. How many times did you have a parent come to you and say hey, did you see my little son there? He's 12 years old and he's the 3rd to be black belt. And she say, Johnny, come over here. Come here. Show Mr. Bas your high kick. And the kid kicks. It's a horrible kick. But first, I'm not going to say anything. But I go like this, 3rd degree black belt? He would lose against the white or an orange belt in Holland. Because there, if you don't know it, you're not going to pass. It's very simple. You cannot at pass six or eight times. But fortunately for us also, we have a whole bunch of good gyms here as well. So, that's the only thing I'm saying. Just google about it. And say hey, Bas. The testing is a little hard. I would go to that place and attest that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. One of the things that comes up in conversation a lot whenever we talk about traditional versus mixed martial arts, and I don't even like using that term in the middle - versus. Traditional compared to mixed martial arts. Everybody's got their opinions, everyone has thoughts. But you, more so than most people, are in a position to really understand and talk about both.

Bas Rutten:

Yeah. Because I've been doing it both.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.

Bas Rutten:

Yup. And that's the only reason. I took Aikido. It's a beautiful sports. It's a beautiful martial art. It's a very difficult martial art. Is it going to work in MMA? It's not going to work. We don't punch like that. We don't give you your eye. I don't fall and swing my arm at you so you can grab it. I'll jab a punch on your face. You can't grab my punch. It's impossible, you see? Now, are there aspects of that sport, of Aikido, that really work in mixed martial arts? Oh, yes. There's a lot of these things that have worked. We have Jason Delucia, a guy that I fought three times. He also did Aikido. And he would do certain things which we didn't know in mixed martial arts. And he could be successful with that because they're great techniques. So, I'm not saying that nothing works. I'm not saying that. I'm saying, if you never spar full-contact, you have no clue what's happening. That's the only thing I'm saying. I talk about experience. My experience is my first time at Thai boxing fight. I was the toughest guy in town, in my gym. And then in my first Thai boxing fight, I don't personally don't remember anything. I remember throwing a spinning back kick to the body at him which landed and he dropped. And that's how I won the fight. Everything else that I did before, it was chaos in my mind. It's like teaching you how to shoot really well. You go to the shooting range, you've been shooting for six months. You go in two times a week. I mean, that's a lot of times you've been shooting. And now, suddenly, a guy on the street, you have a gun, and the guy



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

starts firing at you. You're really think that's going to be easy now to pull that gun and aim at the guy? You're going to be in a cold 35:13 stress. There's a moment that now, you can die as well. So, if you've never been in that position, you never know how you're going to react. It's flight or fight, right? It's one of the two things. A lot of people freeze. Yeah, they trained two years Karate. Yeah, but if they never did that. I have fighters in my gym... No. I used to have. Because right now, I'm more focused on more people on training the general audience and I just teach thrice a week. And that's why I don't have a lot of professionals because I simply don't have the tie for them. But we used to have guys that work circles around the world champions in the gym. The royal champion mixed martial artist would have trouble with these guys. So we would think, oh my god. This is going to be the next champions. But somehow, once you put a person like that under pressure in front of his friends and family members and an audience and cameras in your face, suddenly they lock up. They freeze. You never know how you're going to respond. And some one of them can never get rid of that. Some of them takes a while but they get over it. Some of them, they have it right away; it clicks right away. Although I have to say, that's very rare. I might have maybe 3 guys like that that I know, not even my students, that went really fast. But otherwise, no. If you're not used to it. Even if you spar full-contact and you go to a fight, it's a complete different experience. An old friend of mine explained it like this and it's a really good explanation. Imagine you have a plank. And the plank is about a foot wide and 20 foot long. And you put that plank on the ground and you ask a person, can you walk over this plank? You put it on the grass. Yeah. Okay, can you do a little turn in the middle? Yeah. She'll probably do a somersault on it. Okay, good. Now, you only have to walk straight to the other side. That's the only thing you have to do. Good. That was easy, right? Let's put it in between 2 buildings now, 15 storeys up. Now, do it again. And now, it's suddenly whoa, what are you talking about? I go well, do it again. But now you start overthinking things. Wait. If something happens, I'm dead. And that's in fighting as well. You're not going to be dead, of course. But if fighting is... The moment you're open, is the moment you're attacked. I was always a counter fighter. I was just waiting for my opponent to attack. I trigger them in attacking me. And then as soon as the opponent. For instance, give me a right straight to the face, I would kick underneath them with a liver kick. This like that, I would really enjoy to do. But if you never did that before, then you never know how you're going to do it once you're under pressure. So, everybody wants to do a street martial arts, whatever it is. I would always say, start competing. Even if it's amateur level Thai boxing, it doesn't matter - whatever boxing, also. But it's still full-contact. And it will help you a lot especially if you later want to fight or in self-defense as well.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Good stuff. Now, you've talked about the vast number of martial arts and the schools that you've trained in over the years. When you think back to all those different people that you trained with and trained under, when you think of all those different styles, who are you now most like? Who did you draw the most influence from out of all those instructors?

Bas Rutten:



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I'm a self-taught guy. I was very fortunate to have a guy Roland Johnson. He was a Taekwondo teacher. But he was a guy who would get constantly disqualified because he would knock people out. Because he was way too powerful and he wanted to fight full-contact which wasn't allowed of course, at that time in Taekwondo. But since he was full-contact, he taught me really great kicking technique and explosive kicking technique and how to do a choke. He was a big influence. But for the rest, I've been looking... I've been training myself. My submission game, I taught myself. The whole Thai boxing, my stance, everything comes from two best strikers on the planet. I would say Mike Tyson and Ramon Dekker. Ramon Dekker was a 39:04 couple of years ago. He became a good friend of mine. But he was the guy I looked up to the most. He was a guy who'd go to Thailand and just destroy the Thais in their own backyard as a Thai boxer. And his stance was also a little wider. I'm a wide stance. I don't blade like a lot of people do because you shut down the half of your body. If you stand wide like the way Mike Tyson would stand, I have all 39:23 equal power in my left and right hand but also my left and right legs. Because now, I can use hip and upper body movement. I'm not standing in one line anymore. So, I blend Mike Tyson and Ramon Dekker, those two styles together. And that became my fighting style. And it's been very successful, I have to say. And that's a nice little pat on my shoulder. And I never knew this but when I got inducted into the U of C Hall of Fame, and that was in 2015, they gave me a list of stats about me. And the cool thing that I heard was that till this day, I have the highest striking accuracy in mixed martial arts. From all the fights that have been there, I still hold the highest percentage. But it's because of that's style. I never threw jabs. I never threw 40:05 I just wait for an opponent to make a mistake and that's where I capitalize then I go in. That's why I land so many punches. So, almost all people I say hey, listen. If you fight like that, you can do the same thing. You'll probably surpass the percentage that I have. 70.6% it was, I think. But somehow, other people don't fight like that. I don't know why because it's a very effective fighting style.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well, maybe I'm connecting dots that I have a right to connect. But from what I know of traditional Karate, from what I know of Kyokushin, it's very heavy on counter reverse punch.

Bas Rutten:

Yup.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And maybe there was something from that. Maybe it's something, if not in technique, in principle that you took forward.

Bas Rutten:



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Oh, for sure. My straight punches. Listen. I've been teaching a private class this morning. I talk again. Muhammad Ali started this. He said, as a boxer, you have to twist your head at the end of the punch, right? And it's funny because I think Muhammad Ali just said that to get inside the head of a lot of people and let them do it. Because what you're doing is you're telegraphing if you do that. And because when you watch Muhammad Ali punch, he doesn't turn it over. He keeps his head straight. And started to realize that wait a minute. If you turn your hands, that means you're bringing your right elbow up. You punch with the right and you start twisting your hand. Your right elbow is coming up. Once your right elbow is up, it's very easy to deflect that punch. I literally have to tap it only on the outside and it's already ricocheting because the elbow is up. It ricochets next to my face. It's hard to explain like this. It's better to say on video. But Karate does, they keep their elbow low as long as you can and you strike through the defense and to the body. And I did that in my striking style as well. I don't twist my hand. If it comes naturally at the end, yes. But if you tell somebody to twist your hand, you will immediately start seeing his elbow leaving his body. It goes up. So, as soon as... I just have to look at your chest. If I see your elbow move, I know that's a punch coming. I mean, you're telegraphing me that you're hitting me. If you keep that elbow low and you just go straight forward and you don't twist your hand, that's a Karate punch. And that's how I punch in mixed martial arts and then Thai boxing as well. Because I believe it's a much more effective punch.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. I'm sure the traditional folks out there are listening, nodding their head, yeah.

Bas Rutten:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

As you were talking, I was doing it myself. Yeah.

Bas Rutten:

But still, with knees, with kicks - everything is great. I'm just saying to people... For instance, Taekwondo, right? Taekwondo, it's all about speed. It's like double kicks, triple kicks. And you simply cannot do a double or triple kick with three times throwing your hips in. It's not going to... Well, it works. But it will slow down so much that it's going to be easier for the opponent to detect. So, if they kick a front kick and then a high kick, most of the time, those kicks are down with power - leg power. I like to do from the front kick only using leg power, and then as soon as I make the roundhouse kick, I like to throw my whole upper body to the side. But I drag my entire weight in that kick as well. It makes it more powerful. So, that's why I always say to traditional martial artists, I say once a week, minimum, I would get... Kick a



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

bag and kick it as hard you can. Don't hold back. Just kick it as hard as you can because it's a different feeling than tapping it and being ready for a same leg attack somewhere else. You see what I mean?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I do. Absolutely. One of the things that's a hallmark of this show are the stories that our guests tell. Even our slogan, what's your story? So, if I was to ask you for your favorite story from your time as a martial artist, what would that be?

Bas Rutten:

I have some cool stories. First of all, when I saw Benny "The Jet" long time ago... I was a big, huge fan of Benny "The Jet". It was this documentary called Kings of the Square Ring. And he's very prominent in that documentary. And man, what an amazing athlete. I just saw him in Vegas again two days ago. This guy is so powerful. I think he's 60 fights, 2 decision losses. And I think the rest is all wins with 53 knockouts. Just a guy; he's an insane guy. And then I was watching the documentary Kings of the Square Ring. And in the documentary, there's a fight between Muhammad Ali and Antonio Inoki. And that's coined very first mixed fight. Because Muhammad Ali came in as a boxer and Antonio Inoki was wrestler and he was allowed to kick and punch and do all that stuff. Now, when Ali came to Japan, they suddenly started changing the rules. Suddenly, he was not allowed to kick above the waist anymore, he was not allowed to punch anymore. He couldn't hold him in, grappling most. So, they took everything away from Antonio Inoki. And that became his fight. It was a draw at the end of the fight. It was not the most exciting fight but I was watching that fight and it was in Nippon Budokan. That's a very famous place for big fights in Japan. And I was 16, I think, when I watched that documentary. If somebody at that time would have said to me hey Bas, that place where they're fighting right now, you're going to defend your world title in that place. You're going to beat them. I would have never believed that because I was that sick kid with asthma and with the skin disease. So, to see that, that was a cool story. Not a cool story that I have is when Lucia Rijker. I don't know if you know Lucia Rijker.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't.

Bas Rutten:

Lucia Rijker is probably the best female boxer ever lived. She was the best female Thai boxer ever lived. And the only fight she lost was against a Thai world champion guy. Because she couldn't find any more opponents in the women division. She was just destroying everybody. Anyways, she was 17 years old and she beat Benny Urquidez's sister and I was there at the fight in Thai boxing. It was a devastating knockout. I've never seen any power. She was just like 16 or 17 years old. She was young but so powerful. And two or three weeks later, we're in Spain with my friends. And my buddy says hey, who's



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

that there? Because it was a whole big group of people on the street but one stood out. And I'm looking like oh no, man. That is Lucia Rijker. So, we called Lucia Rijker and we're like oh man, this is so awesome. It's so unbelievable. And we start talking. We said we're Thai boxers as well and we did Karate. We did Taekwondo and we love this and competing. And I remember telling her - and she heard that story a thousand times because I hear their stories now, too, a thousand times - people come to you and they say, hey remember my name. I'm going to be the next world champion. And that's what I said also. The cocky little guy there saying hey, remember my name. I also want to become a world champion. And then I started competing mixed martial arts. And many years later, I was the world champion in Japan already and I was in a big event in Holland. And suddenly I got a tap on my shoulder and I turn around, it's Lucia Rijker. And she looks at me. She started laughing. She says, I remember exactly what you told me, Bas. And now you're standing and now you have your world titles. You see, stuff like that, it still gets me, at this moment, get goosebumps. Because that's cool stuff. You project something, you say it and it will happen. And then if you work hard enough for it, you'll eventually going to get it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Couldn't agree more. So, what is it you're out to get now? You mentioned Karate Combat. You mentioned a number of things that you're working on. And honestly, if anyone goes to your website, they might be a little overwhelmed with all of the things that you've got going. I don't know how you're keeping it all straight. But you're clearly really active. So, tell us what you've got going on. And more importantly, tell us why.

Bas Rutten:

Okay. First of all, thing is I'm... And it's not a plug although it's going to sound like a plug. So, when I had that severe asthma as a kid, I would also do track and field. Because from my dad side, like I already mentioned, they're all athletes and everybody do track and field. So, I started doing track and field and I was really good at it. I was always... My high jump, long jump... I actually wanted to become the next Bruce Jenner. It was decathlon. He was the 1976 gold-medalist decathlon.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Bas Rutten:

And I really wanted to become that as well because I had very good sharp wood javelin throw, my high jump was high and long jump. I mean, I did everything right except of course, for the running and especially for the... What I mean is, that was a hard one for me. Because as an asthma patient, that was trouble. But I realized that every time, when I had an asthma attack and I was weakened and not able to breathe, I would resume my track and field and then I would break my running times. Every time. And I



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

go, man, what's going on? So, I went to the doctor about every two weeks. I had to go to the doctor to take breathing classes. And one time, I was at the doctor and it was the first I paid attention to the poster that was on his wall, and it was a framed poster. And there was a drawing of a pair of lungs. And the lung pipes, the airways that go to the lungs, they explained how asthma works. Now as a kid, you think that asthma is in the lungs - the actual lungs - but it's not. It's in the air pipe that go to the lungs. They're infected so they clog up, so to say. So, it's much harder for your lungs to pull air in through that infected area. So, while I'm looking at the poster, a light bulb goes off in my head. I go, oh man. I've been working out my lung in the last seven or eight days. I've been pulling air in through an infected area, making my respiratory, my breathing [49:21](#) system much stronger. So now, when suddenly the infection is gone, it's much easier for me to breathe, then I can get more air. And I normally would get... Unknowingly, I have been training my lungs. That's what I thought. So, I started training with these little coins with holes in them, putting them in front of my teeth. Try to breathe through there with resistance to see if I could mimic an asthma attack, so to say, and train my lungs with it. Anyway, it didn't work. It was very dangerous as well because if you open you open your mouth, you should see [49:50](#) You should do these things. But it was always in my head. And then many years later, I was still thinking about it. Why don't I make an invention where I can control the air intake? And I made it seven years ago. Now, you have to understand that my entire life until that moment, I've been carrying an inhaler with me. So, wherever I go... Because if I'm sitting somewhere and I sneeze really violently two or three times, my lungs will close and I have to open them up. Now, a lot of other asthma patients will tell you the same thing. Or if I take a sprint, a 50-meter sprint, and I stop, I'll be good for about 1.5 minutes and then my lungs will close. It's called exercise-induced asthma. And a lot of asthma patients have the same as I have. I started training with a prototype and in three weeks, I've never used my inhaler again. Then, I said it to a friend of my mine who has asthma in Holland. And within two weeks, she calls me. She said, I want to sell it in Europe because my asthma is gone. Until now, we have 100% success rates from all the fighters who buy it. I made an invention that came out of my disease and I finally made it. And now, it's training people to getting rid of asthma and you can only do... Imagine what it does for healthy people. So, it's always something that happens in the past. It might help you in the future and this one was one of those big things with me. I had severe asthma but that made me realize how I was able to make a long training device where I can pretty much mimic asthma, almost, and then make your whole respiratory system stronger. And now, people like Usain Bolt is doing it, [a51:18](#) gold medalist. I already hooked up with their scientist who trains them with it. So now, it's become for me because now I made an invention that I came up with when I was 14 years old.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's really cool. Nice. Now, you mentioned Karate Combat and that's something that's come up on the show a couple of times. So, how did you get involved with them?

Bas Rutten:

Well, they called me. They knew of course of my Kyokushin background, my Karate background and they asked if I wanted to be an ambassador for their sport. And I said I love it. I mean, I was waiting for



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

somebody doing a full-contact Karate league. And what they did was very smart because in 2020, the Olympics in Tokyo, Karate is back in the Olympics since it's from Japan. It's not going to be full-contact but it has the exact same rules as we have in Karate Combat. So, a lot of these people now in Karate Combat, they want to on the show and fight because they want to prepare themselves for the Tokyo games in 2020. So, yeah. They called me, want to be an ambassador? I said, sure, I would love to. And would you like to act as the commentator? Why not. And then I just started doing it. Now, I'm meeting all these great Karate guys from around the world. Which is so cool because I never... It's always been mixed martial arts and Thai boxing. Yeah, here and there, I enter a few like Adolf Lundgren or something. I was also a Kyokushin guy. Because I had a show on TV for nine years, a weekly live show. So, I interviewed a lot of these people. But they have to be famous like Adolf Lundger who also does movies and then we invite him on the show, we would interview him. But it's great now to interact again with those Karate guys and to see these guys being very angry at each other at the weigh-in but then as soon, if they get in their face, they stop and then they step two steps back and they both bow out of respect to each other. That I like. I get goosebumps again because you wouldn't see that in boxing or in Thai boxing or in kickboxing. You won't see that, and also in MMA. That respect is almost out there. And those guys have it. They're in each other's face, they really don't like each other. But just before they break, they bow out of respect, both looked to each other again, and that's what I love about the traditional martial arts.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. Never thought about getting back in the ring?

Bas Rutten:

Oh, no. I can't anymore. If I... I think God closed that door for me. But otherwise, me and my stupid things in a fight scene, never something happened with me in training. But in a fight scene for TV show, I dropped upside down, with the top of my head. And I crushed the nerves in my neck and I completely lost the use of my right arm, almost. It's been seven years ago and it starts coming back now. For instance, snapping my fingers. I couldn't do that for four years straight. I couldn't hold a glass. I couldn't hold a phone. I had four neck surgeries. So, yeah. I have whole bunch of plates - at the front of throat, at the back of my neck - I got it everywhere. So, yeah. No. Those days are unfortunately over for me. But on the other side, I'm very happy that it happened. Then people go, why, are you very happy? Yeah. Because I know myself. I'm this guy who thinks constantly can beat everybody. It's kind of an ego thing that you develop as a fighter and you have to. Because there cannot be a flaw in your mind. You can never walk to the ring thinking, I'm going to lose this one. That's unacceptable. You always have to go in 100% confident you're going to beat everybody. Because it will help you and your performance as well. So, I think I would have been the guy, if I wouldn't have injuries, who would have kept on fighting. Because I would think that I could still be the... Which is stupid, of course. Because once you starts comparing with the guys half your age who's been doing it longer than you maybe already because they started when they were 8 or 10 years old. Yeah, you're going to lose, boss. You're not going to win that



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

fight. So, thankfully, when the injuries came, I had to retire but they gave me a really great winning streak at the end of my career.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely. Now, if you could go back and talk to your 20-year old self, what advice would you give?

Bas Rutten:

Don't part as hard as you always did. Don't care about those tattoos that you put on. Don't put it; you don't need it. And [55:17](#) If you look at me, you can't tell I have them. I have one on my shin but that's it. Even if I have no shirt on, you almost can't tell. Because they're all basically hidden. They're like in the palms of my hand. They're like inside of my wrist. So, they're not spots that are very prominent that everybody can see them. But I would say stay away from that. Do better with school. Instead of climbing through the trees everyday, maybe learn how to play another instrument other than drums. Maybe the piano; my dad was really good, my brother was really good. My brother graduated Cum Laude with three majors at the conservatory. And also, guitar. So, it's always good to do more work. Because as a kid, you don't want to do it. But now you realize man, it would have been great. Like for instance, history. I really enjoy history now. I never enjoyed it when I was a kid. But now I go mad. So, when I became a citizen, when my family became a citizen here in America, we had to learn the history. Man, that was awesome to learn the history about America. But as a kid, you don't want to. You want to play, you want to do a lot of things. But yeah, probably be a little bit more in school. Don't use the katas. Don't try to be a tough guy. If you're a good fighter, you are a tough guy. So that means, you don't have to screw, you don't have to act. How cool would it be if you're totally this guy with no tattoos, very professional, doesn't use profanity, who's a perfect guy and then you become a world champion in mixed martial arts? I think that's way cooler than the guy who's full of tattoo, shouting, dropping air bombs with every sentence, than the guy who doesn't do that. So, yeah. Profanity, I already didn't do that for five years. I stepped away from that. Also, I saw it as a weakness because it stuck to people. To all the tough guys, the more they say it, the more insecure they are, man. All the time. You can live without it. Especially when we have fighters come on the show. And I would see when they would get nervous, they would start dropping air bombs in every sentence. Don't do that. It looks so stupid of you do that. So, yeah. That I would say. Clean up your act a little bit, be a less crazy with partying after the fight. Because we would go crazy for three days. Do one day. What about one day, go back into training, you know? Things like that. That's what I would tell myself.

Jeremy Lesniak:

This is great stuff and I appreciate everything that you've shared today. I appreciate your time. And I'd love to ask you for one more thing. What parting advice would you give to everyone listening today?

Bas Rutten:



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

What parting advice? Well, I always say... There's two I want to [57:51](#) One I would say, read the book *The Alchemist* from Paulo Coelho. Read that book. It's a book that will help in every profession, in everything. It's a book about a sheep herder who goes onto a journey. And you think, why does Bas letting me read now? And once you're reading it, you'll realize what this book is doing to you. It's transforming your mind to start paying attention to certain things that are important; omens, they'd call it. It changes your life. This is the book that's the second most translated book next to the bible. So, it's the first in the world. It's sold over 75 million copies. There's a reason for that. Every big actor, I heard Will Smith even saying it. Will Smith, I'm a big fan of his. When I heard him say it, I looked at my wife and I said, see what I say in every interview? Read *The Alchemist*. He's saying it, too. So, for me, that was really cool. And then, I had a quote on Forbes. And Forbes quoted, the quote that I have I say, the best life hack of all is just to put in the work and never give up. And it's really like that. Every single reason I said that thing is because every single famous person I interviewed - and it doesn't matter if it's an actor or musician, a regular guy or a lawyer or whatever, or a fighter - they all say, just stay on it. If this is what you want, do not steer away from it. Stay on that path. And then you will eventually get it. That's how it works with the universe. If you show that you want it, you will get it. But a lot of people, the hook off at the critical moment. I did a movie with Kevin James and Winkler, [59:25](#) And I was one of the 4 leads in the movie, together with them. And Henry Winkler the story [59:31](#) For the people who don't know [59:32](#) the coolest guy ever. The movie, if you want to watch it, *Here Comes the Boom*, you'll be very happily surprised. It's a comedy with Kevin James and all these other people. It's a very fun movie. But what he told me, he said that he moved to New York for his acting but he hated New York. He wanted to go back to California. He did all these auditions, nothing worked. And then, he was driving back to the airport and he gets a phone call from his agent. And the agent says, you've got to do one more audition. And he says, I can't. I'm driving to the airport. He says, this is an important one. You've got to this submission. Postpone your flight. He postpones his flight and then he nailed *Happy Days*. That's how he became famous. From that one thing. Now, he was almost steered away from it. And I think the universe was calling him in the form of his agent saying, hey come here. The universe was also letting me pick up my phone. And I never pick up, and the voice machine was broken. Those things, you have to start paying attention. That book, when you read the book *The Alchemist*, the omens that you need people for certain reasons. Nothing is a coincidence. Pretty much everything is for a reason. Start paying attention to those things. You trip a certain way, make sure that never happens again. Because the next time, it might be much bigger and you might really hurt yourself, maybe even die. Just pay attention to certain signs. And that's what the book teaches you and it's incredible. I think I read it over 5 or 6 times now. And every single person that I know does the same thing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

When we talk about mastery and passion, it's pretty easy to find examples around the world from multiple disciplines of people who are passionate and masterful in their craft. But when we talk about mastery of the application of martial arts, that gets a little more subjective. Now here, we have a man who defined what masterful meant to him and he went headlong into it. And it showed that yes, he is a master of his craft. And I think that that's why so many people resonate so strongly with Shihan Rutten. Whether they're MMA fans or traditional martial artists, this is someone who transcends and that's why



Episode 362 – Shihan Bas Rutten | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I was so honored to have the opportunity to speak with him. Shihan, thank you for coming on the show. Thank you for sharing your time and your stories with us today.

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