



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, everyone! It's episode 80 of whistlekick Martial Arts Radio, the only place to hear the best stories from the best martial artists like today's guest, Mr. Taimak Guarriello. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, and I founded whistlekick. I'm also your host for Martial Arts Radio. whistlekick, as so many of you know already, makes the world's best sparring gear as well as really great apparel and accessories, all for practitioners and fans of traditional martial arts. I'd like to welcome our new listeners and thank those of you checking us out again. If you're not familiar with our products, head on over to whistlekick.com and take a look at what we make. Our sweatpants are probably the most comfortable thing you'll ever wear. So, definitely, have a look at those. Now, if you want to see the show notes, those are on a whole different website and that's whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. While you're over there, go ahead and sign up for the newsletter. We offer special content to subscribers, and it's the only place to find out about upcoming guest for the show. We only email a few times a month. We never sell your information. And sometimes, we even throw in a coupon code.

Now, let's talk about the episode. Our guest today is the star of one of the most beloved martial arts films of all time, Mr. Taimak Guarriello. The Last Dragon is one of those rare martial arts films that had an impact that transcended martial arts culture and can be felt in general society. Here we are, 80 episodes in, and the news of Mr. Guarriello's appearance created more buzz than any other guest we've had. While even his first name is synonymous with his role in the 1985 movie, there's a lot more to him than his time as Leroy Green, both as a man and as a martial artist. We get to know a lot about both of those sides, and I hope you enjoy your time with him as much as I did. Mr. Guarriello, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

Taimak Guarriello:

Thanks for having me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey, it's an honor to have you here. And of course, for anyone that stumbled onto this that doesn't know who you are, you're our first, I would say, martial arts movie celebrity that we've had on the show. So, that's kinda fun. And anyone that does recognize your name knows that you are, were - depending on how you want to look at it - the star of The Last Dragon. Great movie, cult movie, has a quite a strong place in the martial arts community, and it's really an honor to have you on here.

Taimak Guarriello:



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And of course, you've spent plenty of time, I'm sure, over the last 30 years talking about the movie, but we want to get to know you a little bit more. So, why don't you tell us how you got started in the martial arts?

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah. My father was a good-looking kid and [03:00](#) He would get picked on in his neighborhood. So, he made a commitment to himself that when he had children and got married and everything, that he would make sure his children knew how to protect himself. So, ever since I was like five or six years old, my father had me training with his good friend, Gerald Orange who was a Karate expert. So, that's how I got started in martial arts. It was due to my father not wanting me to go through what he went through.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. So, is that... I'm guessing you've had the opportunity to train in some other things with some other people?

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah, yeah. Sure, sure. That was the beginning, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. Alright.

Taimak Guarriello:

The... I stopped training when I was in Europe and there was something I was engulfed in, what we call football not soccer. And that, like, consumed my every being from when I was, like, 8 to 12 or 13. And then I came back to the States, I was fanatic about Bruce Lee at that time, at the end of my stay in Europe, and I started training martial arts again. But with Aikido, at a place called The Door in New York City, was a community center for young kids to have, you know... They're privately funded and stuff. But even though that was a great, the teacher was great, [04:32](#) I wanted to be like Bruce Lee, and Bruce Lee did all these great movements and



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

especially kicks. So, I was about 14 to 15 when I was walking around, looking for Taekwondo schools all over the place. My father was pretty independent with me and my brother with letting us roam anywhere we wanted to. It's a different world now but ever since I was a little kid, we would be everywhere. So, me and my brother, he's a year and half, two years older. And I ended up studying Taekwondo at the Richard Chun School in Eastside Manhattan on 86th St. and I stayed there for a while. Then I started competing in Taekwondo and getting out on the tournament scene - Karate tournaments and Taekwondo tournaments. And I did very well. I was a little heavy with the kicking and they would get disqualified, and I think that had a lot to do with growing up, learning to kick a ball really hard.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Taimak Guarriello:

So, then I saw the movie *The Black Dragon*, and I wanted to meet Ron van Clief. And my father said, oh, we know Ronnie. And he took me to a basement in Lower Eastside and Ron von Clief had me doing push-ups and deep knee bends and squats and punches and hitting everything in the Dojo. It was very intense and crazy. I stayed with him for a while as his top student then I started kickboxing. There was only one kickboxing studio. Even though Ron van Clief did full-contact, I wanted some place that was more oriented towards kickboxing. And I found the one kickboxing studio in New York. There weren't very many at that time. It was 1983 or '84, and I ended up at City Star Boxing-Kickboxing Gym. Before that, I was doing a little boxing with my stepfather. He ran a famous boxing gym. He was a boxing coach. His name was Donald Hayes. And he taught boxing at Time Square Boxing but I wanted to kickbox. I don't want to box. So, I met people like Yoel Judah at City Star Boxing Gym in Queens who was a kickboxing champion and boxer, and he's Zab Judah's father. And we would spar and other people. There was **07:00** There was a... It was a very, very cold gym with no heating. So, the bags were like ice. So, today, I train with... I do my own thing, you know, when it comes to like Karate and boxing and all those things. But I wanted to earn grapple from Marcelo Garcia - grappling, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Years back, about five years ago, I started with him on a purple belt. I really love the academy and everybody there. It's a wonderful place here in Manhattan.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, here we have, you know, quite a diverse upbringing but it seems like we've got a common thread of basements and the cold. You know, it's funny. We have a lot of people on this show



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

that say that same thing - that a lot of their early introductions to the martial arts were almost as dungeon atmosphere.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I wonder if some of the early movies, we're kinda pushing that on everyone... Because we think about early martial arts movies where everybody was training in this rough conditions and, you know, maybe that's what people were expecting of martial arts in the US at that time. I don't know.

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, a lot of the martial artists, they came from the military like my instructor at that time, you know? So, they grew up as military men. They brought Karate over and Judo and all that over to the States from Japan.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Cool. So, that gives us a little bit of context about who you are and how you got started. And I'm sure that throughout your career - both of your martial arts career and you movie career - you've had the chance to see and do and experience quite a few things, and I know you got a lot of stories in there. But if you could take a second and give us the best one you got.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah, I'm looking for an inspirational one rather than... Because there was some ones that were violent that I don't like to remember. You know, over the years, I was seeing some of the young people develop their athletic talents, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Taimak Guarriello:



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

One of the first was Ernie Reyes Sr. with his team that would travel around the country doing amazing demonstrations. And then obviously, his son, his first film, Ernie Reyes Jr.'s first film was The Last Dragon. He was one of the kids that was the top kata competitor in the country. And I think, for me, it was always inspirational to watch these kids - from the smallest kids to, like, 14 or 15 - get better and better and better. They may lack some of the traditional aspects of it but just to see that, that was the most inspirational to me. I can't think of one specific story. I mean, I remember that when I did The Last Dragon, I would go to tournaments and these young people would just go crazy. And I remember Demetrius Angelo who runs the Urban Action Showcase and Expo. It's an independent film festival that takes place in New York every fall in November, and it's really going into something huge. He became friends with me later and had me inducted into his... He was honoring me and Michael Jai White and other people, you know, Fred Williamson, Ron van Clief at his event. And he reminded me where I met him and it was when I was appearing in Washington at... Oh, man. [11:22](#) top of my head, his name. But he has a huge martial arts tournament and I was visiting the tournament and he said, man, I never forget what you told me. When you showed up, you were my hero. I was about 15 and he said that, you smiled to me and said you're great now but keep training. And he said, and I never forgot that. I kept training and here I am today, getting able to come and work with you on some things. So.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How old were you, do you think, before you realized that you had that kind of influence on the youth?

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, soon as I did the movie. I mean...

Jeremy Lesniak:

You recognized it right off.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah. I mean, because that movie, even though adults love it, smallest kids love it equally or more. You know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Taimak Guarriello:

That was a smart move on their part not to have it be bloody and violent over [12:20](#) and sexual gratuitous and all that stuff, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Did you... Was there ever a point where, you know, that... I don't know if I want to say power but that level of influence, did it feel heavy to you?

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah, because when I was younger, I was insecure with so many things, you know? Around who I was and where I came from and, you know, I didn't... To hit all corners of your identity, being a young person is very difficult.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely.

Taimak Guarriello:

You need support, and you need to be able to have someone that's got great integrity and honor, and someone that is generous and courageous that can help guide you. And I didn't really have that person, you know? So, I learnt mostly on my own, you know? Which was fine. It's fine for me. I'm sure I was told many things that I didn't listen to. Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. So, imagine if we were to roll back and, you know, your father didn't have that desire for you to learn how to defend yourself, you never found a Taekwondo school, you never became inspired by Bruce Lee - martial arts never became part of your life. What do you think your life would look like now? What do you think you'd be doing?

Taimak Guarriello:

That's like... Martial arts is such an integral part of my life since I was a kid. It's hard to really envision life that's not like that. But I probably be singing opera at the Met.



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Really?

Taimak Guarriello:

No, I'm just joking.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, okay.

Taimak Guarriello:

I wanted to make you laugh. I would love to have been a soccer player. You know, if martial arts wasn't... I'd love maybe an architect building. You know, I love design. I love teaching. I work with young people. Yeah. I can't think of... It's hard to think that one, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. It is, you know. And, honestly, that's the question that most of our guests, I don't want to say struggle with, but it's hard to conceptualize. People have turned it back around on me. You know, what would I do? And I have the same challenge that you do. And I think that's because, for some of us, martial arts is really part of our destiny. And we leave that question in just to show that it doesn't matter who you are, where you're coming from, what style you studied. There are some people that really belong in the martial arts and it becomes such a core part of who they are.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah. I think another way to pose it could be if you weren't doing martial arts, or not even... If you don't even address that side of it, you just say what other things you think you could really be passionate about as a career? You know, maybe that. Because when I think about martial arts and not doing it is very foreign to me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Yeah, I can relate.



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, you might have hinted it at some of these and I don't want to press you for details that you're not willing to share. But you mentioned some of the less than positive stories that came with your career and maybe this is part of them, but I'd like you to think about a low point. Something tough, challenging that popped up in your life and how your martial arts training or experience helped you move through it.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah. Well, you know, I write about a lot of that in my autobiography, obviously. I get into details. But there has been many moments - romantic breakups with women, when I was younger, and things like career, the misunderstanding between Berry Gordy and I about what my role was going forward after Last Dragon and how best for us to do a follow up to The Last Dragon. There's been plenty of things, and most of the time, I go within myself and look to just learn. And for me, the martial arts... I learned a lot about the how to do some things from growing up watching these Shore Brothers movies when I was a kid. All the Shaolin instructors and the stories that they were told really influenced a lot to me. And having heroes that were so bold and courageous like Muhammad Ali and Bruce Lee, I didn't see how I could ever give up on anything, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, sure.

Taimak Guarriello:

So, for me, that's what part of the martial arts is, like, the courage and, you know, to keep going. That's been the most important thing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, you mentioned some pretty big names and people that have really had quite a profound impact on the martial arts, be it through their instruction or through movies, that have been part of your life. But if there was someone that you would single out and say, this person was really



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

the most influential in my martial arts upbringing outside of your direct instructors, who would you say that was?

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, I'd say, obviously, Bruce Lee because he had such an impact. He had the strongest impact in my life as a person. As a kid, Muhammad Ali and Bruce Lee were the most influential in my life.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. So, Bruce Lee is certainly an answer that we've heard in the show before, but Muhammad Ali hasn't had a lot of mention. So, what was it about him and his career that you found influential?

Taimak Guarriello:

He had respect for himself and a lot of courage to do the things that weren't... I think people like David Bowie and Prince. Excuse me one second. Yeah, David Bowie and Prince. I have these ambiguous artists that have the courage to just be who they're gonna be, and Muhammad Ali was that kind of guy, you know? He was faced with a lot of racists that didn't want him to succeed, and it was a very bad time to be black in America during his career. And he made bold, courageous choices outside of the ring as well as inside the ring. And that was very impressive.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Certainly not someone when you think of him and what he's known for - he didn't back down from anything, whether it was a verbal challenge or a physical one.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah, he was amazing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. So, you mentioned earlier that you mentioned that you participated in some competition, maybe you were a little heavy with your feet. Tell us a little bit more about your time in the ring and what you learned and what you enjoyed.

Taimak Guarriello:



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Yeah. You know, it's funny because when I was going to these kickboxing events and there was no money, really. It's like, alright, you'd fight this guy. I didn't like it. I was like, I need to make some money. And I was doing... I didn't really see myself as a brute like a lot of bouncers but I was hired. I had to do some bouncing as well. So, I fought a guy in Jerome Boxing Gym for a New York kickboxing title. I write about all this in my book, but it was funny because I wasn't... I didn't feel, even though the trainer was good, it was always edgy. Like, you never feel like you're, at least for me, I didn't feel like... I felt I was good but I felt I had a lot more to do before I got in the ring, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Taimak Guarriello:

I had a lot of talent but I was wild, you know? And I would just fight. I think until you have maybe 30 fights or 20-something fights, you start to hone in and get ore crafty. But I was successful and I did pretty well. I mean, even the Karate tournaments, even though they're not full-contact, I think you get an opportunity to work on craftiness and your timing and your distance, speed and relaxation - that helped when it came to full-contact.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure. What was it about the competition side, the pitting yourself against somebody else, what did you enjoy about that?

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, I was a kid that was bullied a lot and I went through some abusive things. It was kinda... I was introverted even though it wasn't really the way I think I would have been naturally. So, there was a lot of fire in me to express myself that I couldn't express myself outside of getting in a fight and Karate. I wasn't a guy that liked fighting in the street. I didn't like violence but I did love hitting another guy. It was more like I was fighting back for my life, and just getting ownership over myself. So, it was really intense for me. I didn't know it at that time, you know. But as I got older, I realized that's what I enjoyed about it; that I was able to fight back on equal playing field. Because my brother was older than me. So, he would always get the better edge on me. So, when I have another kid in front of me, around my size or age, I would try to annihilate him. Yeah. I was like... I remember, Jerry told me - [24:34](#) is a friend of mine, he was one of the best point fighters I've ever seen and he... We fought. I tried to kill him. He seemed so scared. It was funny.



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

You had that fire in you, certainly. You needed somewhere to direct it, I guess.

Taimak Guarriello:

Right, right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Were there any avenues for you to get that emotion out other than in the ring?

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, acting. That's, obviously, must have been why I fell into that. It's destiny, you said before. Yeah. I think the acting was a way for me to express and then learn how to grow a person, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Taimak Guarriello:

That's great. I love it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You're still passionate about acting today.

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, I've been acting since The Last Dragon.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.

Taimak Guarriello:



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I've been doing mostly theater, though. In fact, in my book, at the end of the book, is a [25:41](#) for a sequel to The Last Dragon that would stand on its own merits. It's not a copy of the original one. It makes some connections. There are new characters. It will extend the martial arts aspect of it further as well. So, there's other snippets of some screenplays I've wrote that I put in there as well, and some poetry I put in my autobiography. So, there's a lot going on.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, you're just an artist overall.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It sounds like you got different ways for directing that passion, and I think that's great.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Fantastic. So, if you could train with somebody else, somebody that you hadn't had the chance to - and I'm pretty sure that your answer off the top would be Bruce Lee so I'm gonna take that one off the table. If you could train with somebody that you hadn't had the chance to, be they alive or dead, who would it be? And I guess if you want to use Bruce Lee, I'm gonna ask you to do a second one.

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, I'm training with Marcelo Garcia because I wanted to study Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. And when I saw him, I thought he'd be the perfect person. I didn't know he was in New York. So, it just happened to be that one. When we met, we hit it off. We really liked each other, and I've been there ever since. I'm a purplebelt with him. I love training there and love the academy, all the guys and girls in there. It's great. And that's why I really enjoyed training and learning his style of grappling. That's very unique and expansive, and that it's ever evolving, you know? And that's



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

what I like about Marcelo. Other than Marcelo, there's so many amazing martial artists out there. Off the top of my head, I can't think. I've seen but the name doesn't call me right now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. What was it about grappling that drew your interest? Had you had any experience with Jiu Jitsu?

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah, I studied a little bit with Marcelo... I'm sorry, with Jo Marrero who was cool and great, Allan [27:58](#) who's a former champion. He is a friend of Marcelo's. I mean, sorry, I said Marcelo. A friend of Jo Marerro. Allan [28:07](#), he used to come by and teach a little bit. And also, of course, the Gracie's who brought Brazilian Jiu Jitsu to America. They were very impressive. But I always liked grappling. I just, you know, never got a chance to do Brazilian Jiu Jitsu until it came to America in such a bold way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, let's talk about movies. Now, obviously, your movies are classic. I mean, there's... We don't have to even discuss that. It's up there, I mean, when I see lists. We were talking before the show about some of the ways I've heard if the impact and I've seen the impact of The Last Dragon on my life and on my friends' lives. But what other movies have you found to be significant for you?

Taimak Guarriello:

I think the Samurai Series with [29:12](#) Shogun Assassin, Enter the Dragon, Bruce Lee films, Sonny Chiba, The 7th Samurai. You know, the samurai films had a lot of impact on strength and honor and, you know, Zen. It's like, if you're gonna make a movie, you better make it. Don't think, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Taimak Guarriello:

And with the Shaolin films, you know, from the... Obviously, the Five Deadly Venoms was one of my favorites. There's so many great stories in these films - The Master Killer series with Gordon



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Liu. I love Stephen Chow. If there's an opportunity that I can create with him, I would love to work with him. You know, Kung Fu Hustles, Shaolin Soccer; the list goes on.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. As you've been talking, it really...

Taimak Guarriello:

Donnie Yen. Donnie Yen is great, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Some would say, and I think I'd probably be in that list, one of the greatest martial arts actors, maybe even the greatest working today.

Taimak Guarriello:

Right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Just absolutely incredible with what he's been able to do.

Taimak Guarriello:

Right. Michael Jai's done right. Michael Jai White's done very well.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, absolutely.

Taimak Guarriello:

With his career.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, yeah. Fantastic martial artist, fantastic guy.



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I'm lucky enough to meet him. We've got some common ties and hoping to have him on the show at some point.

Taimak Guarriello:

Sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But hearing a little bit of a common thread as we, you know, throughout what we've talked about, it seems like the philosophical aspects of martial arts really draw to you. Or you're drawn to them. Am I reading that right?

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah, yeah. I mean, that's correct. I mean, everybody can lift weights and go learn how to fight, but learning how to live was what martial arts is about. It's not about just the physical aspects of it. That's where everybody gets caught up in, with that system. That's only about 20% of what martial arts is that [31:37](#)

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. So, you mentioned some great movies, you mentioned some great actors. Let's talk about what's keeping you going. I mean, obviously, it's a big time in your life right now, the 30-year anniversary of The Last Dragon. You're out, you're touring, you've got your book. I mean, there's a lot going on, and we'll hear all about that in a second. But what is it that's keeping you motivated? I mean, you're charging forward. You're not slowing down. It doesn't sound like it at all.

Taimak Guarriello:

Oh, no. I'm speeding up.



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Speeding up, awesome. So, what's keeping you going?

Taimak Guarriello:

I'm going to be [32:17](#) this year. As the year progresses, I'm gonna get in better and better shape, because I had an injury that was really bad. And I got torn in my [32:24](#) everything, and it took 2.5 to 3 years to get fully recovered. I'm so excited. But what's keeping me going is my love for my family. My little five and a half nieces are spectacular. You know, that love for them and love for oneself and love for my fans is a dream come true. I can't write a better script 30 years later - it's actually 31 years. And it's like there's so much clarity for me when this, lack of better work, spiritual growth I had. Life becomes very clear, you know. I've done seminars at Landmark Education. That's been a huge impact, doing the Landmark Forum and the curriculum for living over there. They've had a wonderful program where you uncover blind spots from your childhood. Actually, it's like a self-fulfilling prophecy that you create story when you're a child that you don't even know it's a story anymore, you think it's reality. And so, over there, they uncover those stories with you and then you're able to shed them away. But the clarity of purpose. Clarity of purpose is living an inspiring life. A bold, courageous inspiring life. There's no other life to live. You don't have any other moment but this moment. So, if you're talking about it, you're never gonna get it down if you're talking about it. Living life is living in action, you know. Sleeping, that's good for meditating. There's sleep meditation and there's action meditation.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do you meditate in the lot of people would think of? I mean, are you a yoga practitioner or transcendental or any of the other things we might...

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, for me it's like a yin-yang. Like I said, there's sleep meditation where I just do a [34:43](#) basic meditation to release all thought, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Uh-hum.

Taimak Guarriello:



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

And then I do action meditation. That's more visualization. So, that's kinda how I approach it, and you have to look at both sides. You have the one that's of mind and of no mind.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I like that.

Taimak Guarriello:

And the thing is, of no mind is where you just shed back all thought. The best thing to do is once you've done that and come out of the meditation, to write down who you think you are for people, not just for yourself. But you think you are for people as a contribution. Because usually, a thought, you always find some identity that's based on some ego-looking-good survival type of things. When you do meditation, no thought and there's no looking good. What would be your purpose? You write it down afterwards. What's my purpose? And that really inspires me to be for people, you know. And then you'll find your action meditation will be somewhere in there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sounds like you've spent a lot of time with this and it's a pretty important part of your daily practices.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah. And have fun.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So now, let's flip the table a little bit. Tell us what you've got going on. I mean, you've got the book. There's a tour.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah. Well, the book and the tour is everything, you know. That's everything. I've got all my screenplays, and The Last Dragon sequel is in the book, and we are in tour. And fans are coming out and we need more support of fans letting other people know to look at the link. There's incognitobooks.com/37:03 So, that's incognito which is spelt I-N-C-O-R-G-N-I-T-O, incognitobooks.com/37:19 And that's where you can find out what city I'm gonna be on. I'll be



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

in Detroit on the 15th and there are many and many more cities that I'm going to. Maybe 15 to 20 more cities.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, cool. And for anybody that's new, we will have these links over on the show notes, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. So, the spelling on that, it's a little weird. Don't worry. We'll get you there. Okay. So, there's the tour, Detroit. Any other cities off the top of your head that you know you're gonna be in?

Taimak Guarriello:

They're all in there - Philly. We're doing... LA and New York hasn't been posted yet but the New York one's going to be at Urban Action Showcase in November. But on Facebook, I got a [facebook.com/iamtaimak](https://www.facebook.com/iamtaimak), [instagram.com/iamtaimak](https://www.instagram.com/iamtaimak). I post and then there's my website, iamtaimak.com. So, Washington, DC, Kansas City, Missouri. There's gonna be Virginia, all over Atlanta. I just did Chicago. I just did Pittsburgh, I did Dallas. But the upcoming cities are the ones I've mentioned. There's just so many more.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure. So, if someone comes out to one of these, what can they expect to see?

Taimak Guarriello:

There's Florida. Well, they can expect to see the fans that love the movie as much as them, sitting in a big theater, watching on a big screen, sitting next to me and taking pictures and having a blast.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, it's just kinda like... I shouldn't say "just". It sounds like a pretty casual, laidback and really fun environment.

Taimak Guarriello:

Oh, no. No. It's more. It's fun but it's wild, too. I remember one guy was jumping in the Iowa throwing kicks down the aisle. You know, so it's an experience that is hard to explain. You'll see if you look online, people and their conversations about it.



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome. And so, this sequel, is there a timeframe on that?

Taimak Guarriello:

Well, the timeframe is the script was written. When Hollywood's ready to take it and do it, then that's when it's gonna happen. I don't own the rights to it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, okay.

Taimak Guarriello:

Kerry Gordy and Sony owns the rights. I talked to Kerry Gordy and he asked to get Sony involved and interested. So, that's the thing. So, even though martial arts films are highly successful and they have a strong desire up there in public, there aren't many made. At least not big one. So, for some reason, it takes more to get a martial arts film made than an average film even though they make a lot of money. So, the thing is we gotta do what we gotta do. We gotta keep picking the phone, keep calling, keep pushing, and keep on it until it gets done.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right on. Well, here's to hoping it happens soon because I've been waiting a long time. We've all been waiting a long time for that sequel or something.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm sure you've been waiting even longer.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah. At the end of the book, you tell me what you think about that concept. But Kerry Gordy is reading it now.



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right on.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome. Well, I'm excited and I have no doubt that it will happen because it deserves to happen. And I believe things that should happen do, at least the majority of the time. I'd put some money down on this one.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah. I mean, I know that people want it. They don't want to remake, obviously, because they kinda shut that down online when they had that idea. But I know people want to see me and I know that people want to see great martial arts and great entertainment, and this would be it. And it just needs some great music which Kerry Gordy knows all about. He even handled... was one of the people that handled Prince's company in Paisley Park. So, he's an extraordinary talent. And Sony is there and they just have to get onboard because people want to see some great, entertaining martial arts films that can last a lifetime.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely. We do. We undoubtedly do.

Taimak Guarriello:

There's us and there's a lot of martial artists out there. But I think people like martial arts, too. It's not just the martial artists.

Jeremy Lesniak:

No. No and as I said, I think your movie, or I shouldn't say it your movie because there's more than one, but The Last Dragon...

Taimak Guarriello:



Episode 80 – Mr. Taimak Guarriello | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Oh, that's the movie.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's The Movie, right? But I really feel like that's in a very small group of movies that transcended so deeply outside of martial arts, into general popular culture. You know, we don't have a lot of martial arts films that have done that. So, I think it's quite [42:40](#)

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah, yeah. Before they start the film, the host on the tour, the host usually says, how many people haven't seen the movie? Normally, it's like two or three people. But last time, when in Dallas, were 20 people that haven't seen the movie. And we always ask them at the end how they enjoyed. They're like on fire. They loved it. I love it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's a pretty special film.

Taimak Guarriello:

Yeah, yeah. It is.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright. So, any parting words of wisdom for the people that are listening?

Taimak Guarriello:

Oh, I don't know. I don't know everything. I just... For me and the times we live in, I think that we have to be bigger people as human beings. Bigger meaning more loving, more understanding, more bold, more courageous, more honest, more fun, more light, more generous, more unified. That's all I gotta say.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thank you for listening to episode 80 of whistlekick Martial Arts Radio, and thank you to Mr. Guarriello. Head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com for the show notes including some rare photos, clips from the movie, and links to everything we talked about today like upcoming



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dates on The Last Dragon tour. If you liked the show, make sure you're subscribing or using one of our free apps. They're available on both iOS and Android. For those of you kind enough to leave us a review, remember, we randomly check out the different podcast review sites. And if we find your review and mention it on the air, be sure to email us for your free box of whistlekick stuff. If you know someone that would make a great interview for the show, please fill out the form at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Or if you want to shoot us a message with a suggestion for our Thursday topic show or some other feedback, there's a place to do that too. You can follow us on social media. We're on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram - pretty much everywhere you can think of - and our username is always whistlekick. Every episode is also on YouTube so check us out there if you have a chance. And remember the products you can find at whistlekick.com like our comfortable sweatpants. And, in recent news, you can also find all of our sparring gear on Amazon. Now, if you're a school owner or team coach, you should check out wholesale.whistlekick.com for our wholesale program. But that's all from us. So, until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.