



Episode 380 – Mr. Adrian Paul | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hello everybody! Welcome! This is whistlekick Martial Arts Radio episode 380. Today, I'm joined by Mr. Adrian Paul. My name is Jeremy Lesniak. I'm your host for the show. I'm the founder of whistle kick. I'm the guy who said "you know what? I'm just going to do it. I'm going to jump in with both feet and make martial arts my life". It's what I do, it's my job, it's kind of several jobs. And one of those jobs, is whistlekick.com and you can check out all the things that we make over at whistlekick.com including apparel, and uniforms, and training gear, and so much more. And if you're interested in purchasing something, use the code `podcast15`, saves you 15%, let us know you listen to the show. Man, if only we could do the show entirely in video. We do have a few video episodes. You can find those at our YouTube channel which is [youtube.com/whistlekick](http://youtube.com/whistlekick). Now the show notes, everything we've got going on with this podcast or is at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). We drop 2 episodes a week for you. They are always free. We don't ever make you pay to get access to all the episodes like some shows do. We just give you the whole thing because well, we want you to enjoy it. And I think you'll enjoy today's episode. My guest as I've said, Mr. Adrian Paul who you may know from the Highlander Series? You may know him from a variety of movies, television. You may know him from the sword experience events. There's a lot of stuff he has got going on. He talks about a ton of it, gives us some stories, some insight, and through it all, we learn a lot about his perspective on martial arts. But I think you're going to come away with some pretty good stuff. So, let's get into it. Mr. Paul, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

**Adrian Paul:**



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Thank you very much! Really nice to be here.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's nice to have you here. (AP: Digitally.) Digitally yes! It is amazing with technology that the new types of relationships we people can have. I have friends, people I would consider great friends who I've never met.

**Adrian Paul:**

That's kind of sad actually.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Is it sad or is it creating another option? People that live far away, it doesn't mean I don't want to meet them.

**Adrian Paul:**

Yeah I know. It's pretty sad that we now have work digitally rather than meet somebody because I think you may experience is about the interaction that you have with somebody. I think it's face to face that's missing. Kids today spend a lot of time on Gameboys and a lot of phone, on iPad, and things of that nature which is good, it's not a bad thing but I think you have to balance it with the face to face human interaction because does work on the motor skills.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I absolutely agree and I think that when we look at the world, just the martial arts world, it doesn't take much more than a surface examination to see how important those relationships become whether it's instructor - student or the peer relationships within a training hall. They are all so critical, not just to enjoying training, but I think they are necessary in almost every case towards the advancement of skills.

**Adrian Paul:**

On the stuff we're doing at the moment, you could do certain things digitally, you can do a lot of videos out and that works fine. But there is something about being in the room and seeing the slight, new onsets people do in a movement or, somebody's hand can be in one position and you can't quite see on-line. And that could be the chase between the pressure you apply or the movement that you allow in weapons, for instance. So I think being in the space has a lot of value, has a lot of stuff that you can't really get on-line yet.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right. And I think if all we needed was video, and this is not to discourage anyone from using videos as part of their training or anyone from putting out videos to educate others. If all we needed was videos, then martial arts classes could be reduced to someone demonstrating and everyone else copying. But certainly, that's not what happens.

**Adrian Paul:**

That's what the online gaming is about, isn't it? No rehearsing online, rehearsing in reality.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

In a sense, yeah.

**Adrian Paul:**

Exactly. If you went out on to the street and try doing those same things on the street that you do online, they might not work.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

In fact they probably wouldn't work.

**Adrian Paul:**

Yeah. I'm saying (04:49) to cover my basis plea.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I don't mind being a little more inflammatory. It's my show, I'm used to catching the hate, it's fun.

**Adrian Paul:**

Yeah, but I mean I think the online training is invaluable because sometimes, you want to work with a teacher and want to see what a teacher does. I'm constantly online looking at different sword and martial arts things before my business in sword experience to see things that we might want to cover or fights we want to address. And so, it's very useful to have that type of thing, but I think once you get into the room, it's another level of training.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Absolutely. Now you've mentioned sword a couple of times and this might be a good opportunity to have you tell the listeners a bit about how you got sword in martial arts because your journey is going to be a little, from my understanding of it, a little bit a typical from the guest we usually have on.

**Adrian Paul:**

Well, I didn't start as a martial artist. As a young boy, I was always getting into fights and in England, martial arts when I was a kid, everybody watching, Bruce Lee was just coming out. It was the time of Enter the Dragon when I was beginning to watch it. Obviously, we wanted to know more about this stuff. Actually, I spoke to a stunt coordinator one time on Highlander and he said we heard about this martial arts coming and we're talking about the 60s, 70s times. And he said we didn't pay any notice to it. We do it for fun, we're going to smack them as hard as we can. Then we saw some of these guys oh my gosh this is something very different. And since that time, it's evolved in the past 30, 40 years. It's all evolved immensely from knowing all the different forms that are out there to the current MMA type of fighting which is the mixed martial arts has now taken it to a different level. So I think it's evolved immensely. As a kid, when I started mine, I started doing by kicking kickboxing, taekwondo type of things with trainers and in the gyms and things of that nature. And then, when I got Highlander, I really immersed myself into the martial art culture with weapons and with open hands because I have to do it on the show. I don't like doing things I'm not capable of doing or showing onscreen because I think and this is what I teach people today is the fact that if you want to be onscreen and be a sword man on screen or a martial artist on screen, you have to know the basics. You have to know because always you're really not going to be able to do a long take in any nature because people are looking at it you've not really moved correctly. That wouldn't work. You are not doing this. So I think you really have to know the basics first, or the fundamentals of anything to make yourself look good at all. So when I started Highlander, I was taught of sword work, I really learnt the European fencing gauge and styles from Bob Anderson who was the fight choreographer for Princess Bride, and Star Wars, and First Knight, and Highlander, and etc., etc., his list went on and on and on. I learned but after the first season I went and really studied martial arts and really started studying literally every day. In between time, when was on set, if you look at my performance as I went through it, I was getting better and better and better as a martial artist and as a swordsman because I was constantly working with different people. I was working with taekwondo guys, I was working with karate guys, I was working with kung fu guys, I was working with stunt coordinators. So you pick up a lot of stuff from those people as well as when you study in a class situation.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Now we've talked about, but certainly not talked to on the show folks who kind of have that trial by fire onset against educations probably better way to put it, I'm curious what it was like being exposed to all of these diverse skill sets, and I would imagine at a fairly high level if they are involved in these projects that are getting aired.

**Adrian Paul:**



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Yeah. When you do something like that, your work ethic, one of the fundamentals in martial arts, is respect and training. The more you train, the better you get. Doesn't matter what talent you have, it's a known fact, I've done these studies where somebody with talent could not train and they can do something but somebody that trains can get a lot better than the person with talent because it's a question of repetitive motion. When you are walking as a child, you walk along the street, you get to learn how to walk, you get to learn how to run, you get better and better at it, right? So same thing with martial arts, you get to learn those movements because initial reactions to any situations is putting your hands up or flailing because that's your animalistic instinct. What martial arts teaches you is a structured way of how to deal with certain situations. So in my situation, I was put into all these different martial artist, all these different things, and I just locked it up. I loved it. I absolutely adored physical combat. I enjoyed the art form behind it. I enjoyed the philosophies behind it which to me were as important as being able to kick or punch, or block or throw, or choke, or any of those things in the art itself.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's certainly coming through. Your passion is coming through and I'm curious, what would you identify yourself as a martial artist? If there were some kind of martial arts senses and there were boxes to check?

**Adrian Paul:**

It's interesting because I studied kung fu, I studied the (11:31) kung fu, I studied the shaolin kung fu, and I studied some Filipino stick fighting, and I studied sword, to be honest, I just think, you know the belt system, how wide the belt system was actually started. I'm actually working with a very good martial artist right now. I would say teacher of martial arts, grand master Mark Mikita from Fightology whose working with me on my sword experience academy which we'll talk about in a second. The fact is the belt system started because a teacher in Japan was trying to figure out when he taught somebody something, what will he have to re-teach? So in other words, you walk into a gym and say "who knows this form?" They'll go "I do! I do!". Instead of doing that, all he had to do was get somebody and day "okay I've taught you the first 3 forms, you guys get a yellow belt. I've taught you the next six forms, you guys get a red belt." or whatever it was. And from that point, the belt system started and I think that was a question of being able to accomplish something and prove that you've accomplished it. Today, I find out the belt system is given away way too freely. They are not working for it. There's a lot of things we want to achieve in America. I think it's all about achievement and getting the prize but not doing the hard work for it. And I've seen a lot of black belts and a lot of people say they are black belt and to be totally honest with you, I don't think they have the ability to call themselves a black belt by just going through the process, but they haven't really studied enough to really excel at what that art that they've studied. I mean it because you really have to in the old days, getting a brown belt or black belt or a 1st and 2nd, you really have to work years for it. Not a year or two. And I think, to me when you learn things, in my system, we don't have belts. We have certificates and stuff. I've learnt a lot of things. It doesn't mean I'm great at one or it doesn't mean I'm better than anybody else. It just means that I have a certain amount of knowledge and that's all the way I want to do. I don't need to prove to all I have a





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belt. I just want to say that I have knowledge and I would like to share that knowledge with you if you want. If not, I'd love to find the knowledge that you have. To me that's just a sharing of information between people.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

This is a recurring theme. We've had quite a few guest on the show over the last few years who've brought up this very point. This idea that they've expressed it differently but I'm going to express it this way: that maybe we've transcended belts. Maybe we've gotten to a point where their meaning is not as substantial as it once was and should we be doing something different? And if you look at the way some of the more modern martial arts are being taught, some of them just as you said, have gone to certificates and other ways of representing that knowledge than a belt.

**Adrian Paul:**

Belts had their time, I still think they do. But I just think they have to be earned. I think they have to be earned. My son's in the martial arts class. He's very good. He's already 6. He's athletic. So he's going to look good when he does talk because he knows how to move. So that's great but he keeps getting his one belt and he's now on 3 months later and I'm like okay. But that's what kids do achieve. When you get to a point, there's got to be a point like well now I'm a black belt. Look at some of the black belts, your motion is interesting, it's linear, it's not 360. You're putting a punch forward and you're not really showing it as a throw, you are now showing it as a block. Because there are several things you can do in one motion. In reality, it's interesting to see. I constantly tell my son remember you got to do this, remember you got to do that, remember this because it's so result oriented and that's the problem of society today is we see everything online. We see everything in the kick and how good they can be, and how great that can be. And then he says well I can do that. The gratification in the result, I need to be able to punch 50 times really fast. But what's that going to do when you're on the floor, when somebody grapples you? It doesn't work as well. So could be rounded, you have to really learn an art to understand what the whole physical thing about, angulation about, distance about, levels of defense and attack. It's multi-level that I just think sometimes we go into the (16:22) of we want to have a belt, we want to have a recognition of being great which is fine, but you got to really work for it. That's my motto anyway.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I think a lot of folks would be better served by a recognition coming from the hard work rather than what do I have to do to get the recognition? It's almost like chasing smoke. Like you are not going to catch it that way.

**Adrian Paul:**



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Correct. Right. Exactly. To be honest with you, if you're on the street, and you've got a black belt, you're going to tell somebody I've got a black belt in taekwondo or aikido, or whatever. That person's going to say really? Bang! That solves it, right? Or I'll take the stick, defend against this. You're not going to do that. You have to be smarter. I tell the story of Miyamoto (17:14), I don't know if you know who he was, he was one of the best swordsmen in Japan for centuries. Basically they name battleships after him. They wrote books of 5 rings of the cold war. Miyamoto was basically 14, killed his 1st man and he didn't know anything. He wasn't part of the elite class. He was a commoner and he was going to be in trouble and so he went into the woods for 3 years and trained on his own. And trained, and trained, and trained... Then came down and challenged the 2 best guys in the village. Now it wasn't a matter about how well he'd done, it was about looking at another level, this is the other level of martial arts, is looking at your surroundings, the environment that you are in, and knowing your opponent. And he knows that his opponent, the 1st one would sit there before he fought him for literally an hour meditating, seeing the fight, understanding where the fight is going to flow, how is it going to happen, etc... And he would envision butterflies, and he would envision all these stuff. And he knew this man's brother was hot headed. So Miyamoto arranged to meet them, what he did was he turned up 4 hours late to the meeting. And he did it on purpose because he wanted to unsettle the guy which he did perfectly because this guy was no longer the Zen on meditating mode, he was pissed because he was being disrespected and by doing that, it unsettled them and Miyamoto beat him and he knew that the brother was going to come at him angrily and he knew how to do that, he sized them, killed both of them. And he continued his career for 52 years, 52 fights before he finally killed his last man with a wooden sword made out of an oar, and never used a metal blade after that. Again, you don't think that man did it because he knew martial arts very well. He did it because he was smart. Because he understood it on another level. That you can't save somebody. It's something else that's another level up from being able to do 5(19:29). I've got a black belt, great. Okay you've got a black belt but, that doesn't mean that this kid over here has been on the street. Maybe I would have beat him because he's got something else that you haven't come across yet.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'll agree that you can't teach it, but I wonder, can you facilitate it?

**Adrian Paul:**

What do you mean by that

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well, if you're using the example of the kid has been on the street, those instincts and those kind of thought process that we might think of someone who's spent a lot of time on the street might have likely come from that being on the street. Sure there's probably a certain amount of innate ability that allowed them to survive, but a good deal of what they have come from that "practice"



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**Adrian Paul:**

Correct.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So could we create environments that would make it easier isn't the right word, more constructive for people, for martial artist to develop some of these more advanced skills that are as you are saying, beyond practicing routine techniques?

**Adrian Paul:**

I think that's being exposed to the world because I have people coming through my program and I have martial artist, I have stage combat people, I have different people coming through it, and a lot of the professionals say I'm really t be out here because this is not the dojo anymore. This is different grounds, different temperature. The weather is different. I've got to do just what I know to be in this environment and I think that's the other thing that you have to look at is what do you do, can you punch somebody or kick somebody when you are up against the wall or somebody's pinned you up? No you can't because the environment's teaching you something. There for the environment of the gym is one thing, but being out in the open and being in a different environment is something different. The kids on the street don't know, they might be able to know 15, 20 moves but martial artist knows 500. But what the kid on the street knows is the environment. He knows that this box is going to be doing this. So a balance of the 2 is something I think you know because you have the will to succeed and survive for somebody on the street and the technique for somebody in the dojo. So to marry the 2 is really where the better people come from, I think.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I can see that. You mentioned people that are coming through your program and I do want to talk about what it is that you're out in the world as you said teaching. But what is it like for you as you're working these people who are used to being in the dojo that aren't used to being out here, I'm using your words, are they able to hang? Is it so foreign to them?

**Adrian Paul:**

No it's not foreign to them. I learned a lot on Highlander, and I learned something very valuable playing Duncan MacLeod. What I learned was that he was up against some people 400 for years plus. When he did that, he came up against guys that were using katanas, using broad swords, using every cutter, absolutely everything. And he has to adapt to style or learn from that style to do that. And I think when you come to a different format, you have to be able to adapt to that format, or that style keeping your own foundation because you have a foundation when you come to it. But you have to allow that format





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and learn from that so that you can have a combination of the 2. If you look up the style that I have by the time I breezed the 5th or 6th season, it's vastly different from the very beginning. The way I stood, the way I move, the way I held the sword, everything because it was a variety of things all mixed up together and I think that's when people come to me I'll have karate guys that have never done sword before and I found it very hard and rigid. Whereas the sword, it's a flow, it's a movement. I hate the word flow in a sense because that's the end thing you want to do from one movement to another. But really the second motion of the sword comes from the fluidity that you have in a sword and I think whether you're dealing as coming from a Japanese - Korean katana style or from the epee very small, very quick movement style, there is a flow that has to happen in each and you have to allow yourself to get into that flow not stay rigid within your own things that you've learned. This makes sense?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It does. Now we typically say this for the end but I think it's going to give us some more context, some more things that we can discuss. So talk about sword experience and the things that you were out teaching that seem to be pulling in some of these folks from all different experiences looking to learn what you have to offer.

**Adrian Paul:**

When the sword has been started, it was funny because it started, there's a lot of people who said we should do a sword video, we should do this. I said to be honest, I'm not sure I'm qualified to do that. And the more it came, I said well the reason I want to call it a sword experience is why I wanted to keep people be experienced of being able to wield a sword, but also the fun of knowing the movie industry as well which I'm very well versed in after 30 years of being in this industry and doing martial arts for 25 years, I wanted to bring some of that experience and the things I've learned to show people it can be fun but there's also a technique behind it. So my goal was to teach people initially the sword fights from various shows which is what we do on our conventional elite's events. Conventions ones (25:24). I go to conventions for signing. We have inside the hall we go through a fight, we teach them the safety, we teach them the basics of sword play and then we teach them the choreography and then we film them, we photograph them and they get a whole package that goes with that. Our early events turn to be into exotic locations like castles and islands in Scotland and just recently we did a retreat in Belize. We go to all these different places and the same idea but much more in-depth because it's a slightly longer package that we deal with. But in all that time when I do this, there's always something you learn as you go ahead and do this. I was partnered with people that are martial artist or should I say qualified sword instructors from different places that I visit. In working with them I always said if I'm giving you the experience of what it's like to be in a sword fight, and you enjoy this process, and you had fun today doing this experience in film, this instructor with me would be able to teach you further if you're in the city, you want to continue learning and so I find with these several different sword experts or professionals around the country, actually around the world, really to do this as well as now and by doing that, I realize there's always a theme that keeps going through. People always have the same issues. They always have the same, it could be the way they move the bokken, the way they move their



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feet, and there's always some in doing this, I realize that people will get a lot more after it if they were able to work out on each individual thing separately. So early this year, or late last year, we started out our academy events. And our academy events are 3 separate types of events where you can choose which one you want to go to. Even though all of them as sync with each other. One is fitness and I do a class now recently started an hour and a half with bunch of things but now we probably taken it to an hour but it's really to do to work your footwork. To work the legs, the back, the arms, everything that you need because if you're using a weapon you need to have the stamina to do it. So we created that format and were still formulating that format as it goes forward. Based on a lot of different exercise of fitness regimes that come from either cross fit or some foot work and weight training and all these different things in the motion of using something that there is no force, it's not like picking up a weight. It flows but you still get a huge work out. So that's one portion of the academy. Second portion is technique. That deals with now we have a 12 points defense and attack system which incorporates footwork which is stepping or standing or shuffling depending on what type of footwork you've got, as well as angulation which is always the case that I find with people when I ask them to do a Shotokan some will come to the waist. Some will come to the head. I said no, this is the specific place you need to use this card. This number means you're going to this position. So these are all the defense and attack positions that we created which of course have a variety of (29:28) that we can come from that and I found out that people are really liking that because it doesn't matter whether you are a total novice and you just want to do play and have fun with it. Or you are somebody from (30:06) or from somebody that is a martial artist. Your targeting is extremely important because you got to know where the opening are. And if you are capable enough to be able to attack that opening, then you'll specific in where you want to go and you'll be able to be a lot better at whatever you're doing rather than just swinging. And the third class that we hold in the academy is performance. The performance one is taking a fight using the numbering system and putting a fight together you see on film and explaining the stunt portions of it and how you do with camera angles and the acting portion of it so as a stunt person, as an actor, as anybody that's interested in doing that type of thing or stage paly, you get to understand what you have to do physically as well as technically to put a performed fight together. To this format is going through. We have one coming, and a third one probably we'll be going to be doing another one in Chicago at the end of April. Another one at the end of April in Los Angeles. It will be the first one in Los Angeles we're running in LA for that particular format. So to me it's the technique is very important if you want to do something while. So when your martial arts or anything else, you really have to know what the basic techniques are and what the flow is. There are hundreds of adjustments that you can make when you do any sort of movement. Everybody I find another very simple thing people tend to do is that they are always looking in front of them. So if I'm doing a sword movement, my sword movement is going to the front well in fact, you should also be thinking the side and behind you because there's is danger all around when you are in a fight or any whether you are in a battle or not, danger's always all around you so that movement might be a parry, might be a cut behind you even though you are going forward with it, there are different things that you can look at as you do certain moves.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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I'm curious, you've mentioned that when people come into the training, they come in from different martial arts disciplines. Sometimes they're coming from stunt work, from film. Are you able to know? Can you tell who's who just based on the way they move with the bokken?

**Adrian Paul:**

I couldn't tell immediately if somebody knows how to move with the sword immediately. I could tell, it's like you've watched something, I've literally watched it thousands of times, the movements. Thousands of times so you can tell when somebody moves kind of what they might need, or what they are looking to achieve. I have a lot of people that come in, they are not martial artist, they are not swords people at all. They are just fans. They just want to come in and be part of that particular fight. As I've said, the convention and the elite events we have are all about learning the current view of your favorite sword fight you might've seen on film, and we've done all. We've done loads of it with everybody. We've done so many different t.v. and film fights, but people sometimes come in for that for a variety of reasons. People come in from all walks and that's I think is okay to be different levels, I will pay people up based on their experience so that you can work with somebody that is on your level. And sometimes it takes longer for other people to work on it which is fine. I like to have the patience to do it because people have some patience in me when I was starting. So I think it's important that everybody, but I can tell when somebody has done it or not, literally from the way they are moving. That said, you'd be really surprised by looking at somebody before they pick something up, as to whether they are capable of doing or not because I've seen people that are really muscular, very strong and they can't move. I've seen people that really heavy and they are moving gracefully across the floor so you really can't tell before they actually pick it up whether they understand what they have in their hand.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Interesting. I would imagine that there could be an element of unlearning that might need to happen. Are there people coming in with deeply seeded ideas of how they need to move and what they need to do and they are just like bricks? How do you work with that?

**Adrian Paul:**

The only thing you can do is offer information. The information, it's like you can lead a horse to water to make it drink. I know it's old adage but it's like okay I'm giving you this information, you can do with it what you wish. You can fight me against it and I'm not the only one who knew (35:20) sometimes, I mean I've had 85 people in our experiences. We've done before 50 people and I can mention experiences. So I have 2 or 3 other instructors with me. And when we tell you to say a thing and you're going to know but I think you should be doing this. Oh okay fine, that's your opinion. That's fine. We are just giving you the information and you can do what you wish. I can't force you to do it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Right and just what you're saying right there, I'm sure we have quite a few people nodding along as they are listening saying yes you can only say it so many times before you just nod and smile, walk off to help someone who maybe wants to learn.

**Adrian Paul:**

The interesting thing is when you teach, you learn so much when you teach. Mark Mikita said that's my wife, he said age is learn a lot more than you think by just doing these things here because he's watching people and working with people. For instance, we were doing a choreography where we have to pass between each other. A lot in films these days, some of the stuff that you see, you wouldn't do in real life. I'm not going to turn my back on somebody without a sword in my hand just to do a spin. Unless there is a pass and something coming prior that I need to get to their back, you may have to think don't do it. Well, we were doing this pass between the 2 of us and the pass was a reverse parry then came into a cut. But the person was not parrying in front of them. They were cutting across the head and they hit me in the head as we passed. I'm like Okay everybody, I didn't see that coming because I didn't expect somebody to do that because they were inexperienced and they didn't do the right motion, they did something different. So it allowed me to go okay if I'm doing that, I have to tell everybody else be very careful of that as well. So you don't know what somebody's going to do, when they are going through it and it can be frustrating but you learn through seeing that some of the pitfalls in the choreography of teaching or the actual movements that's have been put in front of you whether you've been learning.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I've heard a number of instructors say that the most dangerous people to train with are white belts and black belts.

**Adrian Paul:**

It's very true because obviously black belts, know what they are doing, and there's always egos involved sometimes. You can't tell me I don't know what I'm doing. Okay fine that's alright. But there is a humility that comes with great instructor or every great martial artist that they have the ability but they don't necessarily have to prove it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Sure. Here on the show, stories are kind of a deeply rooted tradition. One of the things we try to do when every episode is try to tell a story or two. And I have no doubt that you have a tremendous number of stories from your time travelling around and being on the screen. So if you might indulge me and tell me your favorite story.

**Adrian Paul:**



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About what though? What do you want me to tell?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah. Let's give it at least some loose hook to martial arts or weapons or... Let me insert it a different way. Imagine the audience that we have here, and then a story that you think they may find either entertaining or exciting or sorrowful, however you want to answer it.

**Adrian Paul:**

Unless you want to talk about the broken weapons that happen constantly on the set. The difference between the weapons they use on sets today compared the weapons we used to use, I still use some of them today, a lot of time when you see people with any type of weapon, it's not a real weapon they're doing because you need to be able to move it fast, you need to be able to do different things, you need to be able to have the safety involved in using that weapon on set. So a steel katana for instance would be an aluminum blade. Usually when you're dealing with aluminum blades, which today usually bamboos in fights breaks over on set. The aluminum blades we used to use, we would have the tang, which is the part of the metal, part of the blade would run into the handle so when we first started doing the fights in Highlander, I can tell you the numerous amount of times that handle would break off in the middle of the fight because the tang would only go halfway through the hilt. So in the end your holding half the sword handle fighting somebody and I didn't realize it which happened to me when I was doing a fight on the roof of the Paris Opera. Sorry I don't remember what season it was but I'm fighting this guy, we had a lot of experience, but had a lot of anger and too much wine before the fight, he split my hand open. My finger should've required stitches but I didn't. Because he hit me too hard, the handle broke off. This is all Rowdy Rowdy Piper who was a very big boy, very good martial artist and I'm sure many of your listeners will remember who he was if you don't, look him up. We were doing a fight and Bob Anderson said this power I'm getting here; I just feel the way he's swinging. I know when we get into a fight the difference between training and actually performing it is the adrenaline that happens. The odd factor I'd call it. Like playing golf. Those people that play golf knows that it's supposed to be the swing, not the force you put into it. When Rowdy was doing, we trained a little bit, I knew he was very strong and his parry skills were kind of weak. And he said I'll be fine. Right in the middle of the tape, sure enough he parries it and he split the metal sword, not the tang, the metal in half. They were flying past my head and his head and landed clanging on to the ground. So sometimes, there are situations that. If you want a real funny story, when I was shooting Highlander Endgame and I was fighting Donnie Yen. Donnie was the stunt coordinator at that time, the fight choreographer at that time, Donnie was going to be using a pole with a blade at the end of it. They fashioned it out of a lightweight aluminum perhaps. I had an aluminum blade with the handle on it but when Donnie got it, he said no, can't use this, it's too heavy. Way too heavy. So we have to reconstruct it, and we reconstructed his, a camera material we use but that meant, his was going to be wood and painted so it can be moved, so he could move through the fight very quickly. Which meant I couldn't use a metal sword, I have to use a wooden one. They're making wooden swords on the set, while we're shooting it. And sure enough, we have a pole which is a lot more weight against when you are hitting a balsa wood





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sword, that thing would smash a lot of the time. So we would constantly be on set, take 1! Smash, break. Okay take it again we'll go from this point. So we would constantly breaking the swords on each other. Luckily nobody got hurt but it's something that you don't see as much today because they've actually gone to a lot of bamboo as being used now in fights rather than regular wood which would be heavy, or splinter bamboo doesn't tend to do that kind of shatters a little bit. It sort of splinters off a little bit. It's a much safer type of material to use. So today you'll find a lot of those who'll say I use bamboo swords now for the bokken that we use in the sword experience because I find they don't split in half with people hitting heavy. They are not likely to break off. They are more likely to just start splintering off, in that way we'll just replace them with no harm to anybody.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What could you tell the audience that would be most surprising, most unexpected about the way fight scenes are handled on film?

**Adrian Paul:** I think people really are up to date with so many, so much information today that people have about film fighting. A lot of the stuff you see, hopefully most of the actors tend to do it themselves, that's one of the reasons I did an academy, was to allow actors to be able to learn how to do that comfortably and go on set and do it with themselves so they don't have to have the stunt double to do it. I would say that the most surprising thing really is the green screen effect. On how camera techniques can fool you as well as the editing. If you look, I would say at 80% of the fights you see on t.v. and slowed them down, and then try doing the same type of motion within that fight, you will find it is impossible to do because they've cut it in a softer way that the flow doesn't happen between the fight. The sound effects and the music and everything else cover the fact that there are mistakes happening all the time. I recently just did one from Game of Thrones which is Jamie Lannister against Brienne of Tarth on the bridge. When I look to the fight, both myself and the Jennings out of Chicago, we were looking at it and there were moments in there, wait a minute, it doesn't make sense. That parry doesn't make sense at all to go into this next cut. So you got to look at what you're seeing on screen is really just fooling you into thinking a great sword fights happening. When it really works and this is what (46:17) used to tell me, take the arrow-flints in that, they would shoot far off so you could actually see the stunt performance, all the actors doing the fight from ways away rather than cut, cut, cut... The minute that happens, it makes it exciting but the reality of it is really cut in half.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Do you have any role models? Anybody you look up to in a way that they've done choreography and fight scenes?

**Adrian Paul:**



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You know, I respect Donnie Yen, I think he's a very accomplished martial artist and he know his fight parameters on film as well. He's done amazing films so I really respect him for that. There are a lot of people today, unsung heroes. You don't hear about who are fight masters, or behind the scenes that make the actors look good that I would respect. I don't know some of their names and I know the fights they've done. I think anybody I respect is somebody that's going through the marches. They've done their time. They've done their penance I would put it because they've suffered the cuts and bruises and know how to fall, and know all these things. I would say anybody has gone through that, I really respect because they have taken time to do it and through a lot of passion and a lot of pain, they've been able to achieve something. So people that don't respect the people are disrespectful to other people because they are good at something. I'm not going to name names on that because I don't want to cause a havoc. They might be good martial artist, but I don't respect their philosophy.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Certainly, there are one wouldn't be too many but there are far too many of those. We dabble in that conversation here on the show.

**Adrian Paul:**

It's an issue because people believe that now they've achieved something, they can treat somebody like fair. And I don't believe that. I don't it gives you the right to do that. I just think you've achieved something through hard work which is good on you but to be able to be that disrespectful to somebody else who's learning or somebody else who's just not... I know certain actors and certain martial arts stunt people who hurt stunt actors because they can. I just recently had that conversation about some stunt people said we going up for these jobs and I knew this person was going to be doing it and I really don't want to do the job because I knew I was going to get hurt doing it because they just try to make it... It's not a question of making it look good, it's a question of ego. I can hurt this person and let me show them how far, how hard I can throw them. On film it doesn't matter. I've been hit in the face on film, it doesn't look like anything. Unless you actually have the crossing the line, the target area correctly, and the reaction is big, then it looks like you can hit hard. But you don't need to hurt somebody to show how good you are. In fact, it's smart if you'll be able to be as much in control as you can be to show how good you are.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Makes sense. One final question before we start to wind down here. Do you have a favorite fight scene?

**Adrian Paul:**

Are we talking swords or hands?



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Your choice. Maybe there's one that you look at and you say this is so beautifully constructed, everyone just hits all of their marks perfectly and you can get into the head of the choreographer.

**Adrian Paul:**

Getting into the head of the choreographer is one thing, but the performance of it is another because the performers have to give the essence of that fight to the audience. I did one of the fights, I think 2017, one of the best is (51:13). You know the film Blind Swordsman?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I know of it.

**Adrian Paul:**

What it is is really interesting because fuses in the essence of spice. It's been highlighted as one of the best fight ever. You look at it and say okay I get it but why? It's because it's so clean and so real. The other fight that was also (51:54) cartel. An old fight where after he came off Apocalypse Now, he went to do this The Duelist. Why was the Duelist so good? It was because it was so real. It felt real. It wasn't technically the best fight because in fights today, everything is really technically amazing. It wasn't technically the best fight but it was definitely you will kind of go in okay, oh my gosh how did that happen? And the little flicks, and the little actions, I enjoyed that fight because it was really basic. I like the Star Wars fight that was from... I had so many fights in my head. Thirteen Assassins was another one.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

There are a lot of fight scenes out there I would imagine that and I'm sure that you're looking at them very differently than someone like I would look at them. You're seeing a lot of effort that goes into it. I'm enjoying it. I'm imagining that there's effort there but you actually understand all of that work that that goes in.

**Adrian Paul:**

It takes a lot of time to really put a fight together. If you look at something called Bushido Man which was very technically interesting. Again another blind swordsman but it was about moving between the distance and a lot of working off your opponent. Bushido Man was a very technical thing and then (54:00) far which you're just chopping people up like in Game of Thrones. You can't find very many fights that were one on one and had more than like 2 or 3 cuts to them because in reality, that's what you are



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looking at. You're trying to look at that type of thing. All my favorite other fights was actually Die Another Day in Bond. We actually did it in one of my Chicago events. Again, very theatrical and some of it was very didn't make sense... But the level of passion and power in it was well filmed. Call it a different fight things to look at. Jet Lee's movie War was another one that had a good fight as well.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yes that's one of my favorites. Now people want to find, we've talked about the sword experience and all the wonderful opportunities that are there for people that want to get involved. How would they find that information?

**Adrian Paul:**

swordxp.com - just read anything on that site. Now we're adding a few more events this year. We are just finalizing one retreat in Germany, which is a 2-day retreat. And we're probably going to have another one in Seattle at the end of September. We are looking that as well at the moment. We're adding Panama. We're adding England, Ireland, bunch of places. Florida probably the end of May so we are going through a revamp at the moment because it takes quite a lot to put on depending on what makes sense to travel and to get the people to those locations and who wants it. We have people in Florida, Boston, Philadelphia, some in Texas which are very rampant fans of sword work. There's a lot of interest in those areas that we found. We are interested anywhere. We'll go anywhere as long as we have interest and we can share some of our information to the people.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Great. One more thing I'd love to ask of you as we start to fade out here. I appreciate your time today. What parting words, what advice would you give to the folks listening.

**Adrian Paul:**

I think the quote I would like to sort of (56:39) something that I end up in the sword experience academy events and that is if you are not able to great things today, continue to do small things in a great way and great things will surely come.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I think we find it time and again, martial arts is something that can be for everyone. It doesn't matter who they are, where they come from or in this case, how they are using it. I've never used my martial arts skill in a film. I'm going to guess that most of you haven't either. But from what we've learned today, it doesn't seem like it changes too much. Martial arts is martial arts. Ego is ego. And what make a good person in the way martial arts impacts that personal growth, doesn't seem to change. So thank you sir



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for coming in today, telling us a bit of your story. If you want to check out the show notes, we've got some photos, we've definitely got links to everything we talked about today, hit [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). You can find all of that over there. Use the code `podcast15` at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) so save 15% on everything we've got going there. Social media we are @whistlekick on Instagram, YouTube, twitter, and Facebook, and of course you can email me directly [jeremey@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremey@whistlekick.com). If you've got a guest suggestion, I haven't asked for that a little while, there's a form over [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). Let us know who should we be talking to. Who do you want us to talk to? Maybe it's you. I would love to talk to you. So reach out. Let me know. Until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.