



Episode 420 – Mr. Rich Ting | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, everyone! Welcome! This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 420. Today, I'm joined by my guest, Mr. Rich Ting. I'm Jeremy Lesniak, your host on this show, the founder of whistlekick and I'm just a guy who loves the martial arts so I found a way to spend as much time talking about martial arts as possible and we do that here on this show, twice a week. Mondays, we bring you an interview. Thursdays, we generally bring you a topic-focused show. Sometimes I'm solo, sometimes I bring out a guest or two but there's a lot more going on than just this podcast. If you head on over to whistlekick.com, you can see everything we've got going on. All the various projects, all the different websites and even the things that we make and if you head in to the store, you can use the code `PODCAST15` to get yourself 15% off anything in the store. If you want the show notes with transcripts and videos and photos and links and a whole bunch more, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, is the place to go for that. If you're at all a fan of TV and movies, there's a good chance you would recognize today's guest. Mr. Rich Ting has been in quite a few things and a broader set of movies and television than you might imagine of someone that we would have on this show, however, he's also part of a new project. Something that we've talked about on this show a bit and we've even had one guest behind the launch of that project but this time, we bring you someone from in front of the camera. We have a great chat about his experience with martial arts. His experience being on camera, on set and how martial artists become actors. Let's welcome him to the show. Mr. Ting, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Rich Ting:



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How you doing? I'm happy to be on.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey, I'm doing great. I'm happy to have you on. It's not too often I get to have conversations with people who just, honestly not even a week ago, I was watching a television show and watching you do your thing. Doesn't happen too often with guests and unfortunately, not every television show even has martial arts but our listeners are most likely to know you from doing a little butt kicking. We're going to get into that and if the name isn't familiar then I'm sure we'll get there and the listeners will sign off and go dig into the show but before we get there, everything we're going to talk about today is about martial arts, is about your story as a martial artist so let's roll that tape back. How did you get started as a martial artist?

Rich Ting:

I mean, I started at the age of 4 years old and that was the age in which it was the first time, I was exposed to Bruce Lee. First time I saw movies like Enter the Dragon, The Big Boss, The Chinese Connection, Game of Death and I remember my parents were watching it at the time, I was just completely drawn in by this man who I identified with at the age of 4 just because he was Asian and me, being of mixed Asian descent, I never really looked for, let me say this, I never really looked for an Asian role model on the big screen at the age of 4 years old but when I saw Bruce Lee moving and doing what he did which inspired so many of us around the world and, even up until the present day, it affected me and I remember at the time with my parents when I want to do that and so, right after seeing Bruce for the first time, my parents enrolled me into a Taekwondo studio which actually, at that time, that specific form was called Tang Soo Do and it was in Los Angeles and that's when I started and the rest is history and we can fast-forward to 2019 already.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, I'm curious. So you're talking you're touching on an element of Bruce Lee and Bruce Lee's impact in the United States and doesn't get a lot of attention and that is the fact that he was an Asian getting prominent placement, getting movies, getting a lot of things and, of course, we had Shannon Lee on not too long ago, talking about a bit of the, what do you call it, legend or controversy, however you want to look at it, at the idea that the show Kung Fu should've been his but because of prejudice, it wasn't, right? so, when you're parents are exposing you to those movies and, admittedly, we may have some parents saying I've watched those movies, I don't want my 4-year old watching those. I suspect that there was some importance that they were placing on those movies and showing them to you. Did they have a connection to martial arts or was it a cultural element where they're looking to expose you to a, I guess, a role model?

Rich Ting:



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That's a great question. I think the short answer would be that they were not actually looking for a role model for me. I think this thing that is very unique about my personal situation is that my mother is 3rd generation Japanese-American so my grandparents, my Japanese grandparents were actually born in the U.S. and my dad is 2nd generation Chinese-American and they both actually did not grow up speaking any language other than English. They were kind of the breakaway even though my mom's more American than my dad is. I think they both represented that breakaway generation from the motherland and then now assimilating in the US and mainstream American culture so when I came along at the 4th generation, bi-racial American kid, I don't think they were trying to find an "Asian" role model for me. I just think my parents were Bruce Lee fans and happened to have it on and I saw some stuff. I saw the way he moved, I saw...just...I think at the age of 4, I try to recall as much as I can, but the one thing that sticks out is I just identified with this guy. I just looked at him and I think it's a great kind of indicator, at the time, and now, obviously, hopefully those above barriers that are being broken down but what I'm referring to are those moment where, as a kid back in the '80s, there just was a complete, what's the correct term? There was a complete...I mean, Asian-Americans did not exist on camera, let alone Asians and especially on U.S. television so when I saw Bruce, it wasn't like I was like I look like that guy. It was like wow, who is this man who is Asian like me? The side note is the way Bruce spoke and obviously, his environment he was in was very foreign to me because I grew up speaking English. I grew up around my parents who have perfect American English accent, obviously, because it is their first language. When I see Bruce in these Hongkong films and with other Hongkong actors and Chinese actors and he spoke a certain way and they filmed in Asia, it was very foreign to me overall but there was something about him being an Asian leading man which, obviously, I didn't know that term at the age of 4. There was something about that that really captivated me and drew me in and then, obviously, I just think being a 4-year old male kid growing up and seeing another Asian with literally this skill and this ability to finish people, I should say. I don't want to say punish people but finish people and just his moves and his use of weapon, it was this...it was so cool to me at the time that I was just naturally drawn to it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So you said you started with Tang Soo Do and I expect that you journeyed from there so what did that stage in your martial arts development look like?

Rich Ting:

I mean, it's very foundational, obviously, that's one thing I'm very grateful. That my parents serendipitously just put me into a Taekwondo, Korean-style martial arts in the very beginning. I've been able to venture into other forms of martial arts throughout my entire life but I truly feel having the original foundation, so you start at that young age in Taekwondo, it was probably the best thing for me. Just learning the fundamental stances, just moving, learning how to chamber, how to recoil, hand placement, foot placement, finger placement. I really owe a lot to the Taekwondo world just because I feel like, for me, it prepared me in the best way to pursue other martial arts and to obviously do what I'm doing today.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, so let's take a little bit of a sidebar. Let's finish up the circle and we can go back and we can fill in some of the details, what is it you're doing today? For the folks listening that may not know, because I know.

Rich Ting:

Yeah, no, I'm very humbled and blessed to say that I am a Hollywood actor. A working Hollywood actor, to add that in. It's been a fantasy of mine, ever since I was a kid. Ever since seeing Bruce Lee on camera that it kind of planted a seed in my brain, at the time, that would be, I don't say dream, because a dream of mine was to play football in college and to play the Division 1 level and to be a Division 1 college athlete. That was the dream and when I say it like that, I mean, a realistic dream to me. I excelled in sports as a young kid and throughout high school and that was a realistic dream that I thought I could achieve and I actually did achieve but fantasy is what I call it is when I was a kid and I would see these celebrities and movie stars and Hollywood actors and then, people like Bruce Lee, people like Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Tony Jaa, so to speak, and I was like God, that would be so cool to be able to take my craft and my skill and apply it in front of a camera for a global audience, for a domestic audience, whatever you have. So, to this day, I always call it the fantasy. I'm living my fantasy out and, even add more, to add more, I guess, this overall impact to the fantasy, I just completed season 1 of HBO Cinemax's Warrior which premiered this past April in the US and we finished this past June and currently, it's being shown in the UK, Australia, South Africa, Asia on HBO One. It's just captivating a global audience at this point and the irony there is, for those of you guys that aren't familiar with the show, Warrior, the original treatment of Warrior was written and envisioned and created by Bruce Lee, back in the late '60s, early '70s and, as you kind of mentioned in the Kung Fu, it was Bruce Lee's idea to create a martial arts western back in the day but, unfortunately, due to the times of the late '60s and early '70s before he passed, it's been documented in interviews and other articles that Hollywood was not ready for an Asian leading man back during that time when Bruce was alive so, come 50 something years later, Shannon Lee brings it to Justin Lin, Justin Lin brings it to HBO, HBO brings it to Cinemax, Cinemax brings in Daniel Woodrell and Jonathan Tropper and we completely fulfill the original vision and dream of the martial arts legend, Bruce Lee, in 2019 so that's where I am currently. To sum it up in a nutshell without taking 3 hours to say that in.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I've been fortunate enough to watch the show. I just finished up with episode 10 not too long ago and it's a phenomenal show. I've long been an advocate for martial arts as television, as movies. You can go back before Into the Badlands was released. I was on this show pre-emptively yelling at martial artists to not critique the fight scenes too loudly, to stand behind something to allow us to have shows that we could look at and say hey, this is a thing that we do. This is an expression of something that we're all



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passionate about instead of kind of going the cliché route and everybody trashing it and leaving the most obvious demographic tuning out.

Rich Ting:

Totally, totally.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We got a few seasons into the Badlands but there's something, there's something really different about the way the martial arts is portrayed in Warrior and it's, I don't know that I can fully articulate it. I'm wondering if maybe you know what I'm talking about, because I'm...why is it different? I guess, is my question for you.

Rich Ting:

Yes, yes, first of all...yeah, thank you so much for tuning into our show and for watching and supporting and I appreciate that tremendously and you're completely correct. It's hard to articulate the style of martial arts in Warrior just because it's so...I'm going to just brag a little bit because I'm so proud of our choreography, our stunt coordinator, Greg Chan, was a gift given to us but yeah, it's next level and I think it's never been done before especially in a television series and so, to sum that up, I think number 1, there were so many weird factors that came into play with Warrior. First being the fact that, and I'm not talking weird as negative or positive, just weird and maybe coincidental and very, an eerie way, very meant to be. As I said, this was Bruce Lee's baby basically and then, it's so many years later, I was able to be a part of fulfilling his dream so it's like where do you even start on when you think you're going to do the legend's show, the iconic martial artist in the history of the world, the fighting better be legit. It better be what he wanted it to be, let's say, but thinking of that, I think it's very unique because had this been done in the early '70s, mid-'70s and late '70s, that was a time in which the on-camera martial arts fighting and choreography was completely different than it is today. The traditional kind of standoff where one guy throws some kicks, the other guy throws some kicks, I mean, the perfect example was like Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris. They do their little warm up, they do their circle and then, they engage and at the time, I'm not discrediting or taking anything away from those two legends right there, that was the way to do it and that was epic and it just kept us all engaged in the scene but I think on another positive level, the evolution of the martial arts, with the MMA and the UFC gaining popularity in the last decade, I just think that the on-camera fighting has become so mixed overall. The fans want to see something that they believe, obviously, and the truth of the matter is I think now, we are finally capturing what true fighting, what true spontaneous self-defense is all about because, at the end of the day, martial arts is about a lot of different aspects of life and living and discipline but it's obviously based on self-defense and a lot of these films and TV shows in the past, to me, it never looked like self-defense. It looked like these guys knew they were going to fight, they knew they were going to throw down right now and they knew they were going to throw this move and this guy's going to throw this



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move and this guy's going to win. To me, it was never like oh, wow! This guy had no idea he was going to be put in the situation and have to literally defend himself or his loved ones and this is what he did to survive. At the same time, we're doing it for camera so we have to keep it clean and the reality is, the unfortunate reality is, a lot of times, in real life, self-defense is not clean. When you're put into a certain situation in the real world on the street when you least expect it, it's not going to be a clean fight. It's going to be a survival mode which things get messy and so, how do you bring that organic realness, messiness to a fight that demonstrates two martial arts skills but, at the same time, make it viewable and seeable by an audience and that's the trick today. How do you combine all these aspects and then, all these newer demands and higher levels of the bar that have been raised by other people and other show and other martial artists so the fans and the viewers honestly believe it? Not only believe it, but then, are engaged with it so, I mean, that is just overwhelming telling you about that now let alone, okay, let's go do Warrior and make sure we meet all these "fighting requirements". I think, in the very first conversation I had with our stunt coordinator, Greg Chan, we were joking, I saw him recently, and we were joking about it and I said the first thing he came to me was like what do you think of this style for Bolo? What do you think about that style? And I said well, I'm good, what do you think? He said, well what do you think? We just kept going back and forth because we wanted to stay so true to the original treatment which, obviously, it was a Gong Fu-based Chinese style of martial arts let alone Bruce Lee's own Jeet Kune Do style, Wing Chun kind of remix together but how do we keep the trueness of the Chinese martial arts with the time period which, for those of you who are familiar with Warrior, is set in 1878 San Francisco Chinatown so number one, you have to incorporate the fact that it is a Bruce Lee story so we are going to stay true to him. It is a period piece so we had to stay true to the fighting of that period but then, also, we're filming it in, we started in 2017, finished in 2018, Season 1 so you combine Old World, New World, New School, Old School. All these crazy stuff and I think the only way we're able to achieve it was that we just were so specific with each character's fighting style. I talk about this in other interviews is that everything of Warrior was so detailed and so stylized, I mean, from all of our lead's hairstyles to what we wore. Again, those of you guys who have watched the show, you guys already know there's a Hop Wei Tong which is where Bolo, my character, belongs to and there's the rival Tong which is the Long Zii. Tong meaning Gang. It's basically about these two underground tongs, so to speak, in Chinatown that are warring with each other throughout season 1 amidst all the political and social and demographics that's going on the surface with the British, the Irish, the Confederates, all that other stuff that was happening in the late 19th century so my point is we just didn't throw on a jacket. My jacket was specific. My hatchet that I use was specific. It was different than other characters' weapons. It was different. I wear all black where in our tong, everyone wears a white shirt so with all these details and even with our language, the martial arts was definitely under a microscope the whole time and with Bolo's character because the character is actually based on the legendary martial artist, Bolo Yeung, who is known from Enter the Dragon and also, with Jean Claude Van Damme in Bloodsport as Chong Li. He was a Chinese martial artist that had a foundation in Gong Fu and we decided that we were going to honor him and attribute him and keep it within the Hang Ga Gong Fu style for him which, those of you who are unfamiliar to it, the old principle is basically minimal movement with maximum



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impact and that's basically what the Bolo character was about where our lead ensemble played by Andrew Koji, who is the character who Bruce would've played had they made this back in the '70s. He has Gong Fu skills, he has Jeet Kune Do skills, he has Wing Chun and he's stylized martial arts-wise in a whole new different way than Bolo is so once we got specific enough to dial it in that okay, this character's doing this style of martial arts, this character's doing this style, then, we had to then take it to the choreography meaning that now, that we're loaded, so to speak, in these different martial arts and we know where we're going and we know our back story, we know our foundation, how do these two or these three or four different styles of martial arts come together for a fight scene, for a brawl or for any of the fights that we did in season 1 and make it real and that's where it really, to me, was like a Kumite-like, all styles, all kind of colors, all fighters tournament. Depending on who I had to fight, it was like this guy's this style, I'm this style, so he would go this and I would counter with this or I will lead with this and he will follow with that and so, I mean, that's where the stunt department and our fight choreographers get the all the credit. We're basically doing what they want. Of course, they are very open to us and always want our input. Funny side story is during, I think, episode 2, at the beginning of it, we have this the Hop Wei Tong, meaning gang, there's an opium trade and a molasses trade that's kind of going on that was kind of like the underground drug trafficking trade at the time, let's say, and episode 2 opens with the Hop Wei Mai Tong, basically paying off the port officials to intercept an opium import that the Long Zii, our rival tong, are picking up and this fight scene was just supposed to be an opening scene before the teaser, before the credits and it turned into this whole other thing because, literally, in the description, I'm supposed to cut off this guy's arm, split this guy's head open with an axe and I'm supposed to slice this guy open with an axe as well and that's like my main 3 kind of kills, so to speak, prior to the day, I speak with our showrunner, Jonathan Tropper, and our director for that episode, Loni Peristere, they're like okay, we need, we want to put a little flash in Bolo, we want the audience, we want the viewers to see that bolo's not just this kind of, I wouldn't want to say stiff but just this certain, rugged, stiff martial artist, we want to show that he has flair. He has a certain amount of ability to kick. He's not just going to grab you and knock you out, so to speak, or he's not just going to grab you and knee you and break all your ribs. We want to show that he has a finesse side to him as well. So, after all these months of prepping in the Hung Ga Gong Fu style then all of a sudden, they're like, they knew I had a Taekwondo background so then, they asked me, you know what? For the opening sequence, can you do like a spinning wheel or a jump spin kick and I'm like, and I told them, I was like dude, that is so Taekwondo. That is so not Gong Fu and they're like yeah, but we need it and so, right there is a perfect example where I laughed because there was people on the crew that were martial artists and they would literally came up to me, one of the camera assistants came up to who didn't have any idea of this back story, he asked hey, your base is in Taekwondo, aren't you? and I started laughing, I said why? And he said, I saw your footwork and your chamber step before you did your spin wheel kick and it read a hundred percent Taekwondo style so I started laughing because you're exactly right. I tell the story because no matter how much you try to stick to the original script, to the original form and stay true to this style, you just can't help but venture off because different situations call for different things and that's why I emphasize that there would be no way we could've gone to where we went on



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the show fight-wise if we did not start up as specific and as true to our certain styles of fighting because things happen during filming. Things get in the way, you have to adjust and what's cool is that instinct kicks in. Even though, we've been repping in choreographing a fight where I counter a certain way after a certain move or feint, there are times where my instinct kicked in and I did something different and they loved that so they used that and that may not have been a traditional Gong Fu move, let's say, but it worked for the shot and it was believable and it was real so, I mean, that's my best way to articulate the fighting style and incorporating all these influences. I said you have to incorporate facts from the original treatment, you had to stay true to those forms, you also have to adjust because of the period of the 1880s and the 1870s but you also are appealing to a 2019, 2020, millennial generation audience so what might have been a completely accurate and traditional back in the 1800s may be completely boring and unrealistic and not believable in the present day so that's why I think, at the end of the day, when the fans, everyone that supported our show watches our fight scenes and are blown away that we've never seen anything like this crazy, it's so real, it's so bloody, it's so gory, I mean, mission accomplished and like I say, when it looks easy and it looks great, that means it's extremely difficult to do and I give all the credit to our stunt department and our stunt team.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice and I have to agree that the fight scenes we're talking about, they are next level. They are beyond what I'm used to seeing, certainly, in anything on TV and similar to the level that we're starting to see come through in some of the movies. A lot of people look at something like *The Raid* or *John Wick* and talk about the violence, the intensity and the perceived reality because let's face it, very few of us have ever been in an exchange that we would see in those movies or in *Warrior* so it's hard to speak from personal experience but when we talk speculatively, this seems a little more realistic to us and I have to wonder, the way you're describing this process is different when I heard, you know we've had some other folks on the show who have participated in movies and TV shows and been part of choreography, but you're talking about it in, what sounds to be, a much more collaborative method than is typical, at least in my understanding, less typical in Hollywood. Is that true?

Rich Ting:

I mean, yes and that actually goes beyond the fighting and what I mean by that is, this was probably the largest cast that I've been a part of, we have, I think, 13 or 14 leads because there's so many stories and so many characters throughout the Season 1 of *Warrior* that we had to get to, basically, and that was intimidating to be flown out to Cape Town, South Africa where we filmed *Warrior* to a foreign country, to a foreign city and to then have to don and to work with 13, 14 strangers that we've never worked with. I have never worked with anyone on the show before and so, to me, it was exciting because I was already a fan of people like Hoon Lee from his show *Banshee* which was obviously Jonathan Tropper's show on Cinemax. I was obviously a fan of Joe Taslim and obviously, everyone know him from *The Raid* and it was just, I was just really excited with the opportunity to work with people like those two individuals. At the same time, I had hoped we would come together and mesh as a unit to fulfil the



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dream of Bruce Lee and that was always the overall pressure and, to sum it up, it was a family. I give all the credit to the casting and to Justin Lin and to Jonathan Tropper and Danielle Woodrow and Shannon Lee because they brought together 13, 14 strangers from around the world, literally. Just to give you some perspective on that, I am the only actor on the show that's based and from Los Angeles. I mean, that was weird in itself because everything gets cast out of L.A. I'm one of those weird actors that's actually born and raised in L.A. and lives in L.A. and now, works in L.A. and to be paired up with Dianne and Olivia, our female leads, are from Vancouver. Me, Perry and Henry are all from the East coast. We have Joe from Indonesia, Jason Tobin from Hongkong and we have Kieran Brew and Dean Jagger and Andrew Koji out of the U.K. and Langley Kirkwood out of South Africa. I mean, I'm missing someone, Joanna Vanderham from U.K. like it was such a Global casting that when we finally met each other and started working, it was so, there was so much unity and so much love and I mean, people brought their families out there. I mean, we always have to move our lives where we also shoot, we're going to be on a show like this halfway around the world, we can't commute, so to speak, so it was very cool that we got to meet everyone's family. It is the tightest cast I've ever been a part of and I think that love for each other kind of challenged each one of us every day. Meaning that we got up for work and we knew that everyone else was giving a hundred fifty percent that we would have to give just as much and then, that kind of fed in to the choreography because we already had this kind of off-set bonding going on, so to speak, and once we got to work, where we all love to work and we love what we do for a living, it just accelerated that bond even more. The trust, the perseverance and the commitment, to not only the show, but to each other and so, to me, I knew it. I used to tell my castmates, you know what? The fact that we do get along so well on this show and the fact that we do, literally, we sincerely are friends, will definitely pay off especially with the fighting and stuff so I think that was one of the most realistic things that came about while we were shooting is that you know what? I trust you and you trust me and I actually like you and you like me and we're going to go and we're going to create this epic fight scene for the world to see so it was very open book. Brett Chan and our stunt department really did an excellent job of just mixing our styles, ask us what we felt most comfortable with and, at the end of the day, it was about delivering a realistic fight between two people, 3 people, 9 people at one point, that not only looked like a dance but like an unchoreographed dance because, again, the biggest thing that we had to do is make it look like we didn't plan to do these fights, that it happened on the day at that specific moment and this is how you react and handle it so, again, when I hear the feedback from the fans and everyone, it blow my mind because people are asking like wow, you guys look like you really got along. I'm like no, we get along to this day. We meet up wherever we are in the world. We're always on chatrooms and on conference calls and now, obviously, with all these technology, on video chatroom calls and it's such a cool situation to be in because we actually kind of forget about this show because we were so engaged in everyone's real life and everyone's well-being that work was work and we got along so well on a personal level that I just think it was a residual effect when they see the love between the characters. They see the hate but behind that hate is love and behind those fights are blood, sweat and tears that we all poured out for each other just because we felt like we had to because we didn't want to let down your fellow castmates, so to speak, so I'm glad that came through, definitely.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, it certainly does. One of the things that we joke about on this show, one of these things that, I'm not taking credit for this, I heard this for decades, this idea that as martial artists, we befriend people not despite the fact that they punch us in the face but because. Sometimes our best friends are the ones who will push us the furthest, help us grow the most as martial artists and it sounds like that happened even broader, beyond the fight scene but the entire experience of being part of this crew.

Rich Ting:

Yes, totally. That's so accurate. Again, traditionally, my sport that I pursued besides martial arts was football. Some of the guys that I started playing [00:36:50] full-contact football at the age of 8 years old and some of my closest friends to this day who excelled in football as well and we all went and played college football and was Division 1 Level and some of us even, I didn't, but a lot of good friends and longtime teammates were able to go to the NFL. Those bonds we created when we were 8 years old, crying in full gear in 100 degree weather, bear crawling on dirt and grass mixed together and it just created this bond that lasted a lifetime and it's so weird because, like I said, it was the first time we met. All of us, the cast, in Cape Town and we only had a certain amount of time to get to know each other and start doing, to start filming and start putting this legend's vision into kinetic energy and movements and bring it to life and it just shows you that yeah, you know what? There was a bond because we were training every day and yeah, we were sweating, we were getting hit. Obviously, unintentionally but there were injuries, there were recoveries and it really allowed us to grow off-camera and I think, overall, especially in the filming industry and especially in the action world of Hollywood. I can only speak for myself but I believe I truly bonded with Andrew Koji in preparation for our finale fight, not to give any spoilers out there to those that haven't watched it but Andrew Koji plays Ah Sahn and we have a fight, I think in episode 7, and we started training for that fight because it's a longest fight of my career that I ever had to do, let alone the longest edited fight that I've been a part of. Again, for those outside the business, you know you can literally film one fight scene for a week or weeks and that fight ends up getting edited down to less than a minute, maybe, or a minute and a half, 90 seconds, but I believe, this fight was almost edited to 4 minutes which in reality is a lifetime to shoot and we encountered a lot of adversity, not with each other so to speak, but with our environment with, you know, stuff that happens on the day. I have this one day we have been filming for at least 5 hours, just one sequence. It's hot, like we're dripping, we're changing shirts because we have to keep the continuity, we're just sweating through our clothes and they let us know 5 hours later that we may have to do it all again because a light in the background end up turning off 3 hours into the fight and that continuity-wise, they didn't know if they could put it back in or how but they literally told us, you know what? We have to stop, we have to go back and re-do that and I remember, luckily for me, I've just been in a lot of situations so to me, this is part of the game but Andrew, Andrew being this is his first show and he did a phenomenal job as our lead, leading us from episode 1 to episode 10 and I just looked at him and hey, man, this is how, this is reality. I said just put your head down and let's get back to work and lets just keep going because



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we're already warmed up so let's just keep doing what we just been doing and we'll get the shot and we'll move on and I think times like that when you're tired and you're exhausted and you're past the mid-season mark, there's a lot of other factors that start to wear on you. Just like when I was playing football at the age of 8, jogging a mile as an 8-year old in full pads, with the helmet, side note same helmet I wore in college, I was wearing at the age of 8 because I had a huge head, that mile jog no matter how slow you do it, seemed like an eternity and just like the 5 hours or less of putting in work for this one day for this one sequence that we had to do again seemed like an eternity, I mean, those are the moments that you grow as individuals and also, you grow with the people you're in the trenches with, so to speak, and that's exactly what happened with me and Andrew and those are the moments that I cherish. It's easy to come to work the first day, the first week, the first episode and have good energy and be positive and just, overall healthy and mentally, physically, emotionally, everything. I always say I want to know how you're going to be the last day of a 10-episode season 5 months later, banged up, bruised up, injured this, injured that, that's when you're going to see someone's true colors and that's when you're going to grow as a person or as teammates and so, to me, it was such a just rewarding experience. I always say I'm always going to deliver on-camera for you. No matter who I work with, that's my assurance to the people that hire me but what I never count on are the relationships and the friendships that come about during these times and to just walk away with one really good friend is always a bonus, let alone I walked away with 13, 14 friends that I can sincerely call my friends and I think that is the special, that's the gift and I attribute that again to Bruce and I always say Bruce Lee is the gift that keeps on giving and to this day, right now, on the show with you right now, he continues to give to me and I am forever indebted to this man and this family because you bring up all these amazing points that, again, reinforce the fact that we're brought together by this, I believe, this higher being. I don't want to say it's Bruce Lee overlooking us but I really believe he's been watching over all of us our whole lives because there's no way that a kid like me back in the day is thinking that one Sunday, I'm going to help Bruce Lee's legacy out, you know what I mean? Like someday, I'm going to get that opportunity like there is no way. It's truly remarkable.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Super cool. Now, one of the things that I find interesting about a show like this when you look at martial arts as it's been portrayed in cinema, whether it's small screen or big screen, you seem to have 2 categories of people. You have actors who are accepted for their acting skill and then, they learn some martial arts and they tend to get pushed back or at least, disparaged because their martial arts skills aren't quite there and then you got the exact opposite. You've got people who are hired into the industry because their martial arts are topnotch but their acting, meh, maybe not quite so good but then you get the rare person who has both but they still tend to be treated as one or the other. I mean, there are a significant number of actors in Hollywood who have real martial art skill but most people will never know it and then you've got martial artists who's been in camera can really act but they never get the roles to showcase their acting skill. With Warrior, it seems like we ended up with a number of people who have both, how did that happen?



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Rich Ting:

I think you need to bring Justin Lin, Shannon Lee, Jonathan Tropper and Danielle Woodrow on your show and ask them that question because all that, what you just asked is attributed to, I mean I saw one of Justin's interviews and he said literally, we had to search the globe because you're exactly right. Actors, stuntmen, stuntwomen, martial artists, when you enter Hollywood, you get typecasted real fast and a personal story of mine is that having all these, I would say, physical tools in my back pocket, whether it be the martial arts or the athletics or the football, baseball, basketball and track background that I had throughout high school and college, or even the academic backgrounds, what I always told myself that I'm going to always carry all these tools in my pocket for whatever character I need to showcase a little bit here, a little bit over there, a sprinkle of little things there because I was able to, not only graduate from college but finish law school and get my J.D. and get my MBA as well and actually work a little bit in the corporate sector but I was raised in a medical family. My dad is an orthopedist and so, as the eldest of my family, I'm just kind of taken notes my whole life on all these different areas of living, whether it's medical, academic, athletic and the one thing I always say at the end of the day, I just got to be an athlete. When I say that is I mean you just have to be flexible enough and limber enough to multitask. You need to be able to walk and talk, you need to be able to kick and talk, you need to be able to not move and talk, you know what I mean? And in a weird way, like I said, I'm living my fantasy as an actor in Hollywood because I never thought I would be able to do this as a job, let alone career, and so, what I realized once I got into this business is that you know what? All these different aspects of my upbringing which is extremely diverse and very, just, random at times, I realized it was all preparation for me to enter this business as an "actor" and that's what my team and I have strived to do in my career. I'm an actor first with a lot of different tools and, again, I can't speak for everyone else on the cast but I believe there's a lot of similarities with that mentality. Perfect example is Jason Tobin who plays Young Jun. I've known Jason as the actor. He's been in one of Justin Lin's first films, Better Luck Tomorrow, and he's been in one of the Fast & Furious films as well and, I've always known Jason Tobin as the actor, and then, come to find out, he has the martial arts training background, he has a foundation in it and it was very obvious once we started doing fight choreography because I've worked with a lot of "athletes" who are not martial artists and they can pick up certain moves and certain choreography just because they're in tune with their biomechanical self, let's say, but with Jason, it was very evident right away that I was like no, this guy definitely had some training and then, I found out that yeah, I've had training in martial arts my whole life. I've just never been called to use it in front of the camera so this is the first time I get to use it and I say that's remarkable because another fellow actor of mine, a close friend of mine now, that I had no idea he had the skill and I think I've been the same way to other people. There're certain people that know me as Rich Ting the athlete, Rich Ting the football player, Rich Ting the martial artist. I just thought a lot of the people were in the same boat where if I show up in another job and I have to be, it's a procedural deal and I have to be a lawyer, people like oh my god, like you can do these things that real lawyers, whatever that means culture, mannerism, behavior, it's like I would tell them yeah, I've been in a courtroom. I've dealt with true legal



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cases. I've dealt with court deadlines. I've dealt with working at a huge firm. I know what that real vibe is. That's something else that's very similar to martial arts or you may have no idea this certain individual has that background and then, all of a sudden, you get called to do a part and then, all of a sudden, you bring that tool to the forefront and perform and the craziest thing with all this is what you said, there's actors, there's martial artists, everyone gets labeled but the baddest martial artist on our Warrior team is Jonathan Tropper, our showrunner. He is the most unassuming, nicest, just, you wouldn't even think anything, that he's just a truly nice guy, extremely intelligent, extremely giving, he's the captain of our show and then you find out, he's a black belt and it just blows your mind because he starts doing these movements you would never anticipate him doing and it is a 100% legit. You know what I mean? I think you're right. People get typecasted all the time, at the same time, you would never think our showrunner is the deadliest dude on set when we got people like Joe Taslim walking around so I think, all the credit, again and I have to give credit to our stunt team, I have to give credit to our casting and to our producers and to our showrunners because they found us. You're right. You can go on and get the actor and train that actor but is it going to be believable in a fighting situation? You can go out and get the stunt guy or the stunt girl and help them with their lines, their "acting" but it may not be the same. I always tell people like there's such a difference and separation between martial artists in the real world and then bringing that realness to camera. I always say you have to have the foundation, obviously, and then, you almost have to relearn the art so that it's believable and it's readable on camera because certain times, just simple things, like the way you chamber or the way you withdraw a punch in real life doesn't read realistic on camera. You have to break form, you have to break technique on camera to sell a hit so some of the best martial artists in the world, some of the best demonstration guys and demo teams and technical guys, technically make some of the worst martial artists on camera just because of the different technique so you throw that? Not only did you have to find the actor that can act but you have to find the actor is also a martial artist but, more importantly, can sell the martial arts on camera and then you got to find the 3rd element is someone who's done enough or they're not only a martial arts-based individual that is an actor but has done enough on camera to understand the art of fighting on camera so that's why in a weird way, the cast of Warrior, and I'm not trying to put us up on a pedestal or anything but I'm just trying to be as honest as I can, it is definitely an elite special group of talented actors and I say talented, under that umbrella of talent, comes acting, martial arts, athleticism, vulnerability, flexibility. There's all these different requirements, adjustability for example, and somehow, some way they found it and we came together, it was magic and again, I'm loving your questions and your statements because they're so specific and they're so right on. Everything you're bringing up is definitely, completely right on.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool, I'm glad I'm getting it right. I appreciate that. So, we've talked about the now. You gave us a little bit of the past, let's look forward. What's going on for the future for you? What are you looking forward to? What are your goals? Talk to us about that.



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Rich Ting:

Yeah, well, first off, I just came back from my first ever Comic Con which was craziness. Such a pleasant trip and just wow, the fans, I can't say enough about the fans. Unfortunately, Warrior was not able to be present this year but hopefully, next year but I actually went because my next show, I'm part of the Amazon Prime family now and I successfully completed the final and fourth season of Amazon's Man in the High Castle following our filming of Warrior season 1 last year so we just made an announcement at Comic Con 2019 in San Diego that the Men in the High Castle on Amazon Prime, the 4th and final season of this show, will be premiering on November 15th this fall. I'm so excited. We were able to keep a lot of different scenes for the fans. We had a sold out panel. They had to shut the doors, it was just an overwhelming turn out at Comic Con for the Man in the High Castle and for it to be our finale season or just me having the opportunity to be a part of this family was just another gift of mine last year and that's going to be dropped in November 15, like I said, and yeah, we're in a lot of meetings and actually, as soon as we wrap this podcast up, I got to jump to another one because there's a lot of stuff cooking and I can't talk about it right now because I don't want to jinx it but I'll say this, my stunt coordinator, Brett Chan, told me, we had a quick conversation back last year in Cape Town, it was the last day for my final fight scene on Season 1 and the joke was I told him and I was being honest. Man, I'm so glad we're finishing now because I felt like I had a pre-season, a season and a post-season all in one season and I need to recover and I'm banged up and I'm going to need to take a breath basically and yeah, I'm looking forward to not having to stretch and sweat so much on the next one and he laughed and said, you know what? When the world sees you as Bolo on Warrior, they're going to start calling for more Bolo and more Warrior-ish type of skill and projects and I started laughing because, you know what? I actually didn't even think about that. To me, Warrior season 1 was one and done and I get to move on to the next one and he quickly reminded me that you better get ready because once the world, let alone Hollywood, sees what you did with this character and the way you moved and the type of fighting you did, just be ready to continue that genre, so to speak, and I'm completely open to that and so, without giving anything away, we're taking a lot of meetings and like I said, I don't want to jinx it but it's going in that direction right now and it's very, very positive and I'm excited to see what I can announce in the upcoming months so stay tuned.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome, awesome. Keep us surprised and we'll make sure that the audience knows what's going on with you. If they want to follow you, social media, websites, that kind of thing, where can they stay abreast?

Rich Ting:

Yes, I'm on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. @richtingworld is the name.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Alright, cool, and we'll drop those links in the show notes, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com for anybody that might be new to the show. This has been a blast, ton of fun, thanks for giving us the behind the scenes. Thanks for letting us what's going on with you. It's been a great story. I mean, look at you! To go that full circle, I mean, there's something really poetic in that imagery of you as a 4-year old to now and helping bring Bruce Lee's vision to the rest of us, I mean, that's powerful.

Rich Ting:

Yeah, it's nuts to me. I'm not someone that sits back and goes, yeah, yeah, you're right. I'm like no like it's still like, I don't know if there's deniability that's still present with me but the fact that I'm such good friends with Shannon Lee and the Lee family, that's even, I mean, that's crazy to me. You know what I mean? Because she's taken me in as family from the beginning of this show and she continues to keep that relationship going, keep me included with all the events, it's been surreal and I can't put them in words because, to me, I'm Rich. That's it. I'm Rich, the actor, always grinding and training and always prepping. When people go, oh my gosh, I loved you in Warrior like you made Bruce Lee so proud, it's very weird to hear that because I think it's very rare and very unique to be able to have an idol as a kid, as a 4-year old kid, that's someone that influences you philosophy-wise, living-wise, physically-wise, in every part of life. Bruce had so, he just had so many lessons, so much knowledge that he gave the world outside of martial arts and it's all affected me and impacted me throughout my entire life and to come full circle, like you said, who gets to repay their idol who is no longer present in this world by fulfilling a vision and the treatment he did way before I was born. You know what I mean? It's crazy and so, I mean, we talk about it as a cast all the time and at the end of the day, I always conclude Bruce Lee is the gift that keeps on giving. As long as I can impact or affect some other kid out there who's in a similar situation as me, maybe I can just inspire just one person, then again, it's the gift that keeps on giving because that kid's going to grow up to give back as well so it's just, I'm still, people still need to pinch me, literally.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I believe it. Totally get it. We always ask our guests to send us out in the same way. What parting words, what wisdom, what bit would you offer up to the people listening today?

Rich Ting:

I would say people always say the cliché thing is if you work hard and you believe in something, it will happen. Life is limitless. My remix version on that is in order to succeed and to fulfill and reach your dream and goals, and in my case, my fantasy which was being a Hollywood actor and obviously, we're talking about fulfilling the legacy of Bruce Lee via Warrior and playing the character of Bolo, I always believe that hard work alone may not get it but hard work, perseverance and commitment is going to help you get a little bit more luck on your side so it's a combination of luck and determination and hard work, you can fulfill your dream because a lot of people think it's just going to happen overnight and



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sometimes, it does happen overnight but it happen overnight because of what you put into it and what you dedicate yourself to up until that day before the other night and then you get a little bit of luck and then your dream comes true so that's my remix on that one.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I always enjoy talking to people who have taken the martial arts, something that they love, and turned it into, let's say, a non-traditional martial arts career. We have a lot of people on the show who teach for a living and that's great and we need that but I love to see that being a martial artist doesn't necessarily mean that your job as a martial artist is to be a martial arts instructor and here, we have Mr. Ting talking about how martial arts, not only changed his life, but it gave him a platform from which he can reach the world through all the different characters that he becomes. Thank you for coming on the show, Sir, thank you for everything that you shared and I hope that we get to talk again. If you want to find the show notes, transcript, videos, photos, links, all the stuff that we talked about today, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, is the place to go. Sign up for the newsletter while you're over there, maybe jump on a link over to whistlekick.com, save yourself 15% with the code `PODCAST15` and maybe check out some of the other things that we do while you're there. If you want to help us out, whether you make a purchase or not, feel free to share this episode, leave us a review on Apple Podcast, Google Podcast, Facebook, Google. Anything you can do to help will be greatly appreciated, helps us grow, helps us stay here, honestly. Our social media is @whistlekick, one word, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube. My personal email address if you want to reach me directly, jeremey@whistlekick.com. Thank you for your time and all of your support and until the next episode, train hard, smile and have a great day!