



Episode 97 – Steven Seagal | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

What is up everyone! It's time for yet another episode of whistlekick martial arts radio and here we go. It's episode 97 and today going to talk about legendary and recently controversial martial artist Steven Seagal. I'm whistlekick founder but I'm better known as your host Jeremy Lesniak. whistlekick if you don't know makes the absolute best sparring gear apparel and accessories for practitioners and fans of traditional martial arts. I'd like to welcome the new listeners and thank everyone that's come back again. If you're not familiar with our products you can learn more or by over whistlekick.com all our our past podcast episodes, show notes, and a lot more on another website and that's whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. From either site you can center for newsletter and I really suggest you do so because we offer some exclusive content to subscribers, some great discounts, and as you at least find out about the upcoming guess for the Monday shows.

So like I said today's episode is about Steven Seagal now I made that comment about him being controversial and that's really tied to one specific incident that got a lot of play on not just social media but conventional media during a recent visit to Russia where Steven Seagal was doing some demonstrations and at least from what we can tell what the video, it looked pretty awful, it looked fake. Right? And so I've hesitated whether or not we should do an episode on Steven Seagal because of that. Should we except who he is now in and talk about where he started and really give you the full treatment like we've done with other episodes, should we exclude that part out of respect to him and what he's done or just not do anything entirely. And honestly I've been considering this episode for a few months now and really just decided you know what it's unfair to the listeners and to who Steven Seagal is to not present him in his entirety so that's what we're going to do here today.

Steven Seagal was born in 1952 in Lansing, Michigan. So there's some different stories about how Seagal started his martial arts training and they are kinda conflicting and so the two most popular one is he started training at age 7 under Fumio Demura which doesn't really seem to add up but another one says that he started learning Shotokan karate from a cook at a restaurant they start working out when he was only 13. He actually lied to get a dishwashing job and met this cook. His family moved into California hey start aikido training in the 60s under Harry Ishisaka who was one of the pioneers of aikido in the United States. Seagal is fluent in Japanese and was even the first non-Japanese person to operate in aikido dojo in Japan. His school, aikido tenshin dojo is in Osaka and it looks like it's still in operation today. This was pretty early in his life it was before he moved to LA, had been discovered and started his movie career. After founding the dojo he did move back to California and it wasn't with the intent of getting into acting or anything like that but he was living near Hollywood and around the time he earned his 7th Dan in aikido he was taking on a lot of private students and some of them were famous and one of them was Michael Ovitz and Ovitz was a Hollywood agent who represented Tom Cruise, John Belushi, Steven Spielberg, and a whole bunch of other names that we won't rattle off because you kind of get the point, he was a big deal and so this guy really saw some potential in Seagal and wanted to put him into movies. And so that was what led to Saul's 1980 debut the movie that a lot of people consider is best,



Episode 97 – Steven Seagal | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

above the law. He followed that up with *Hard to Kill* and a few others before starring in what was really the most popular and most critically acclaimed role the one he had starting in the 1992 film, *Under Siege*. His success also contributed to his demise as he grew in popularity he was given more control over his movie projects and with that control he started to put more more of his personal beliefs and into the films. Environmental and spiritual elements became a big part of his movies and a lot of his fans struggled with the commentary that was smack in the middle of their martial arts and action films sandwich that were the movies that they had become used to from him. His next few films had him saving an indigenous population in the movie *On Deadly Ground*, the environment in the movie *Fire Down Below* and then in the movie *The Patriot*, he kicked it up a notch with him saving the world from a lethal virus in the hands of a terrorist group.

Between 1990 and 2014 he starred in 27 different films and all but three of them were direct to video. One of them was the film *Machete* in 2010 where he played the villain. Now he was actually involved in the movie industry before he started acting. In 1983 he was working with Sean Connery on the James Bond film, *Never Say Never Again* and he was teaching Connery's martial arts for the film when he broke his wrist. Yeah Seagal broke Connery's wrist. Seagal's good friends with Jackie Chan and Jackie Chan actually offered him the role as the villain in *Rush Hour 3* but he turned it down. He's not just one trick martial arts pony so to speak he is more than aikido, he's a master swordsman, has a huge sword collection, and he has black belts in karate and judo. If you follow Seagal online or you're a fan of reality TV you may know that he has spent more than 20 years as a police officer. Originally in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana and later in Maricopa County, Arizona. And the reason that I say reality TV is that Steven Seagal as a police officer has been turned into TV series called *Steven Seagal Law Man*. They filmed three seasons and unfortunate last one is released in 2014 it doesn't look like were getting new episodes out of that but if you have the chance to check it out it's kind of ridiculous and you probably should give it a whirl even just to say that you have.

Now he got in the law enforcement originally as an instructor he was teaching martial arts and marksmanship to some of the deputies near his home in Louisiana and the sheriff was really impressed with his skills and so impressed he actually asked him to join the force. Seagal graduated from the police academy in LA and he's been a police officer in again first Louisiana and later Arizona ever since. In addition to being a tremendous martial artist, he's also an accomplished guitarist and he's released to studio albums and worked with a number of other musicians including Stevie Wonder. Some of his music is shown up in his movies including *Fire Down Below*, *Into the Sun and Ticker*.. And he spent the summer of 2006 touring the US and Europe with his band *Thunderbox*. He's got a huge guitar collection and some of his guitars were owned by some pretty prominent people and again shortening a list here BB King, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Buddy Guy, and Jimi Hendrix. Seagal hosted *Saturday Night Live* back in 1991 and David Spade has said publicly that Seagal was the worst host he ever saw. He claimed he was humorless, mean of the cast, and wouldn't do a Hans and Franz sketch because the premise involved the characters Hans and Franz saying that they could beat up Seagal. And pretty sure Lorne Michaels has actually come out and backed up the statements and we start to get a picture here of Seagal maybe not being the



Episode 97 – Steven Seagal | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

nicest guy. Now just about a month ago the website reddit which is kind of a social discussion website if you're a familiar host is something that they call in AMA, ask me anything with Seagal. And this website's done a bunch of these and usually the way it works is famous people say hey, ask me anything and people will ask them questions and of course it's the Internet so people ask some less than nice things but does those tend to get ignored and the celebrity will answer the questions or at least the legitimate ones. Seagal was a disaster pretty much from the get-go and he bailed after a pretty short period of time about 20 minutes he seems usually go much longer and the entire thing is hysterical. And it's worth reading and unfortunately it's not very nice but in the comments get some people that seem pretty legitimate in what they're saying about Seagal behind-the-scenes information that I'm not going to quote here but check it out, will link in the show notes whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. I do want to caution you though it's got some pretty inappropriate language.

In January of this year 2016 he became a citizen of Serbia where he was asked to train the special forces. He's also good friends with Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin and even once called him and unfortunately I'm quoting here "one of the great living world leaders" and there's actually a lot of other kind of political stuff that's gone on involving sick all that kinda stretches what you know we talk about here on martial arts radio but it does paint an interesting picture especially when we consider that relationship with Putin. So now you know way more about Steven Seagal than you thought there was to know, right? He's on twitter [Sseagalofficial](https://twitter.com/Sseagalofficial) official if you want to follow him there. I am because after learning all of these things that I did in doing research for this episode. Why would I not?

Now you can to us on social media were on Facebook, twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and YouTube. Username is always whistlekick, you leave us comments there on the website whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and if there's something you think you want to hear on a topic episode or someone that you want to suggest for an interview, go ahead fill out the form at the website and will get it and we'll go from there. Don't forget to subscribe to our newsletter, download or subscribe with the apps that we've got and that's really about it. You can learn more about the products at whistlekick.com and sparring gears on Amazon, and I'm rambling so it's time to say goodbye. So until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.