



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, everybody! This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 452. Today, I'm joined by my guest, Miss Lauren Mary Kim. If you don't know me, I'm Jeremy Lesniak. Host for this show, founder at whistlekick and a passionate traditional martial artist. Karate, taekwondo, Kung Fu, Filipino martial arts, you name it, I love it and I've done a lot of it and here on this show, take that knowledge and experience and I get to talk to a lot of really cool people and if you want to see more of those really cool people I've talked to, go to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Sign up for the newsletter, look at the photos, read the transcripts, find the links, there's a ton of stuff over there. every single episode we've ever done is available for free and why do we bring you this show twice a week for free? Because we hope that you'll support us and you'll go to whistlekick.com and you'll make a purchase whether it's a shirt or a uniform or some protective equipment or any of the other many, many things that we've got going on. Make a purchase, show some love and if you use the code `PODCAST15`, that will get you 15% off and helps us know that you made that purchase because of this show. After all, the goal of this show is to connect, educate and inspire traditional martial artists around the world. Let's talk about today's guest. There are a number of ways that you may know Miss Kim but, likely, it's from something on screen. She's been compared to some pretty prominent martial artist of history and she does some incredible work and I was fortunate enough to get to talk to her and in the episode, she talks a lot about her past, her present and pays homage to a pretty amazing martial arts instructor that she's been fortunate enough to train



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

with. A name that, I think, you will recognize but instead of me digging into that, let's let her dig into that so here we go. Miss Kim, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Thank you, thanks for having me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey, thanks for being here and I appreciate you being here. It will be fun.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yes, of course. Yes, a lot of fun!

Jeremy Lesniak:

I know we're going to get into a lot of different stuff. We're going to wander around. We're going to talk about you and your career and path through the martial arts and I'm sure we're get into tons of other stuff but we always start of in this kind of, it sounds in a boring way but we got to do it because it's a martial arts show so how did you first find the martial arts?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Man, ok so, unlike some people, I actually started a lot later in my life. I was actually a dancer my whole life so I was a very physical, since a very young age, always using my body because I started with tap dancing, acrobatics, ballet, modern dance, jazz so I was very familiar with classes and performance, I guess you could say and then, I moved to LA and I was taking an adult gymnastics class and I met a bunch of stunt guys and all of them were trained martial artists and they're doing some kicks, some mitt drills and I was like wow, what is that? I want to learn and so, they literally put me under their wing and started training me just on the side and they all had taekwondo backgrounds so I was like I want to do this! So I enrolled into a taekwondo school called Jun Chong Taekwondo in Los Angeles and that's how I first was introduced to martial arts and that's how the first martial art I started, actually.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And what did you notice about the similarities and differences about dance and taekwondo?

Lauren Mary Kim:

It's like a sequence of movement, right? It's definitely that and even though, dance listens to music, martial arts is more to the rhythm of other people whether it's sparring or doing a form with another person so you're in sync with other people in some type of way. I don't know, just a magical way to use your body, I guess, whether it's an aggressive or combative or dance performance or form which is also performance, yeah, I think it's just an amazing, beautiful thing which really resonate with me.



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do you still dance?

Lauren Mary Kim:

No. I don't know. I guess I just got burnt out with the whole dance community and everything in the whole classes. I don't know. Once I fell into martial arts, I just never looked back. I just kept doing that and I kept exploring new martial arts and, I don't know, dance was just a thing that's in my past now but I still love watching people dance and I have definitely still have an appreciation for it, for sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What kind of dance did you do?

Lauren Mary Kim:

I started in tap, ballet, lyrical jazz, like all these kind of thing. I did like the whole recitals when I was a kid, competitions.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And so, martial arts sounds like it kind of filled the same niche or void for you?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, yeah. Definitely and I transformed it into doing stunt work so after I met those stunt guys, they literally helped me in the business. The business side, anyway, we all know about. As you all see on film and TV, there's a lot of fight scenes and uses a lot of martial arts techniques and different types of martial arts so yeah, I was able to transition into that career path easily and it's been awesome. It's made me explore different types of martial arts so I first started in taekwondo then I did some wushu and then after that I went to Guro Dan Inosanto's school in Del Rey and that's where I trained Silat, JKD, Muay Thai, Filipino Martial Arts and then, I also go to Fit Arts and I train with Alfred Kendrick for capoeira so yeah, it's been like a journey. I always want to learn something new so it just opened my eyes into this whole new world that I never had when I was a child so it's kind of cool to do it as an adult, I think, sometimes.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely and we'll talk more about that but there's something you said that I want to go back and unpack. We've had a few stunt folk on the show and for each of them, it's something that they were really into. Something they were really doing everything they could to push into that aspect of film and I have a few friends now who are working really, really hard to try and crack into that but this kind of fell on your lap and I don't say that to belittle it or anything but it's not easy work.



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Lauren Mary Kim:

No. It's not like I just met these stunt guys and just started working. I had to train for several years and to get a job, it took a long time. I would book a job and then, I would not book another job for several months after so that's why I had to continue dancing because stunts was not paying the bills in the beginning and the first 5 years was difficult because you had to learn skills, meet people and then, when I started, the business was a lot closer so no one really wanted to take a chance on new people so it was harder for us to get bigger gigs or gigs at all because they don't trust you or know you so yeah, it took time for me to develop my career. I've been in the business for 15 years now so, yeah, I wouldn't say it was an easy and smooth path.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I didn't think it had been that's why I wanted to go back, I wanted to clarify but if you've been in it for 15 years now, you're certainly seeing some success, what is it about stunts because from everything I understand about it, it's really hard work and it's physically grueling in a way that, I think even, general martial arts training is not. It seems to be even more so from what we heard on the show.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Every job, that's the beauty of the stunt business, because every job literally is completely different so I was on a job for 6 months in Atlanta. We had to do tons of wire work and it was nonstop. We were doing rehearsals for fights and then, we're on the wires constantly doing wire gags and sometimes it doesn't always work out so you hit your head or bang up your legs. So many things can happen so yeah, that one was a difficult one but at the end of the day, when you wrap that job, you can look back and see all the cool things you did but I'm not going to tell you that all jobs are like that because I'm in LA right now day-playing on TV shows and I, yesterday, played a flight attendant being hit by a bag and that was padded so you have days that are easier and just fun like that. I mean, they're all fun but some days you have easier days to rest, I guess you could say. Not all stunts are crazy but the people that do the harder stunts, these are the days that we look forward to because we don't have to hit the ground too hard but then, there's jobs that you have to get hit by a car and yeah, those are the gnarly days and you're like oh my god, I can't believe that happened. You may get a concussion but yeah, those are the days that you need to rest and recover and you hope that you have an easy day the next week or the day after but that's the beauty of your job because every day is a new day. You're not doing the exact same thing. You're not working in a 9 to 5 in front of a computer. I'm blessed because I don't think I can do that. Some people can do that but some days, the other day, there's this one episode we worked on. We had to act like we were insane patients so we had to knock our heads around and act like we were like, pretty much, lost in our mind. You're just the most fun that day. I just feel that we act like children at work o it's like a really fun and super blessed to do this job, I love it.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Yeah, that sounds pretty good. Acting like a child at work. I do that myself but for different reasons and fortunately, I'm my own boss so you started martial arts first then you went into stunts so I'm curious, how has the experience in stunts changed, not just what you train, but maybe how you train?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, I mean, I think in my early 20s, I did anything and everything. I was like, falling on the floor without pads, training nonstop for multiple hours because you can when you're in your early 20s. You feel you're invincible but now that I'm older, yes, you have to train differently and I've learned over the years that training has got me hurt and then, you can't be hurt at work so I've had sprained ankles, I've hurt my knees. I have temporary dislocated my shoulders and that's just from training. Yes, you have to take it easy, not go at it hard, make sure you stretch to warm up your body before doing anytime of session so now I know that because you can't just be like you just can't be wild anymore and just get crazy. You got to really take care of your body and I noticed like recoveries' a big thing too. I really take care of my body doing chiropractor, a massage, an acupuncture. I'm a big advocate for healing because they will help you train better in the future.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, what you're talking about reminds me of the way pro-athletes talk. They go when they're training and yeah they have days, maybe like pre-seasons or when games are far off where, for the most part, they're looking to maintain skills and to recover and just kind of stay in that top form because then, when they go out to games or in your case, when they go out to work, they're putting it all out there and everything else has to support that so they control the next day.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, exactly, super important and martial artists have to build that too. We've been...you're training week by week, you have to take care of your body. If you're doing judo, you're doing tens of falls. If you're doing breakdowns, in Silat class, yes, make sure you take care of your body and make sure your partner understands your body and if you have any issues going on with you so yeah, definitely be communicative with people.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Totally. You mentioned a pretty prominent name, Guro Dan Inosanto. What's it been like training there and training in his school?

Lauren Mary Kim:

It's still amazing. He's taught me so much about martial arts and his humbleness and he's, I think 82 now, I think?

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

That sounds right.

Lauren Mary Kim:

And yet, he still is hungry for learning and he has no ego. If he does a technique in hila, he calls up someone like hey, show me this technique and then, he'll tell you which technique he wants you to do and you accidentally do something else. He's like Oh yeah, that's correct but that's not the one we're doing but yes, you can also do it. Never scolded anybody. He believes that there's not always one way of doing things and he explains that there are 25 different ways to do one technique and this school does it this way. I like doing it this way but this person's body may not work as well so he really makes it, he customizes things so that it works for you and he lets you know that hey, it's ok if it doesn't work for you that way because everyone's different. Some martial artists, I've learned, they're very no, it has to be like this! This is the way we do it. We do it like it's a...he's very open-minded, let's just say that and I really, really learned that from him and not righteous at all. I really look up to him and I just see that translating in other parts of your life, just being open-minded with life so that's what the main thing I've learned from him and it's really opened up my eyes a lot.

Jeremy Lesniak:

He is an amazing man. Somebody that I hope someday to, not only get the opportunity to train with, but to have on this show because I've never heard a single person say anything negative about him.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, he's amazing. Literally amazing and all his students. I've trained with him for years, not only move similar to him but have that same added to the belt life and I think it's a beautiful thing that he was able to spread that seed of wisdom to so many people.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You brought up ego. What's it like in the stunt community? Is there a lot of ego or is it tempered because people are getting the crud kicked out of them even when they're doing it right?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Of course, I think there's egos. I think there's egos in every industry, though. It is a male-dominated industry but I see it is transforming now. Back when I started, women, if they had a suggestion for a fight move or a fight choreo, they wouldn't really take them as seriously or if someone had like a suggestion, sometimes the boss would turn them down but I'm seeing more and more nowadays, that people are actually more open-minded to hearing people, what their opinions are. I even notice that with women. People are listening to me more and asking my suggestions which is super flattering now and I don't know, I think it was an ego-based industry and I think it's transforming for sure and I don't know if it's because of the changing times but it's definitely, but yeah, I see people being less egotistical maybe. It's



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

been a really great journey to see this business transform and I'm seeing more women coordinators and it's pretty awesome to see that and even women directors. The whole entertainment industry is changing and evolving.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, things are changing pretty rapidly and it's wonderful to see. Looks like in our lifetime, we're going to be able to look back and just marvel at how far we've come. It feels like things, not only is it changing but the rate of change is accelerating which is awesome.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, it's a really cool thing to see right now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

As you've traveled and trained and worked and really worked on some amazing projects, I'm sure there are a lot of stories and I was hoping you might share a couple of those with us. Give us some behind the scenes, some stuff that maybe the listeners wouldn't know about.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Let's see...like what kind of stories? Like on set, I guess?

Jeremy Lesniak:

The way I typically ask this question is tell us your favorite martial arts story. You can take liberty with that however you choose.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Man, I mean, that's a tough one because I just enjoy training every day. I have very limited time nowadays so my training is not often as I like it to be so I really relish in going to sessions now or going to class and I really enjoy going to new cities and finding what schools are the best schools there so, yeah. Man, that's a tough one.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Maybe an impressive injury? Those always go over well.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Well, I've had a couple. I broke my nose twice, actually, from kicks to the face. The first one was sparring session at Jun Chong School. I was sparring with this teenager at the time and teenagers are good! He was a boy teenager. He was like super-fast and we ended up going pretty hard and I thought I could hang with him and I could for the most part and then he literally caught me doing a spinning hook kick



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

to my face and yeah, I had blood everywhere. I had to go to the hospital so that was the first broken nose. The second one was completely different. In Silat class at Guro Dan's school, it's called light play so it's like...kind of like sparring but more friendlier so it's kind of like hoda in capoeira. It's something like that but it's Silat which is also very similar to capoeira but we go on our knees and do kicks from the knees and on your bottom and we sit on the floor which is a little different in capoeira and me and my friend, Paul, we were just going back and forth. We were having fun. Literally laughing and throwing kicks with each other and then, all of a sudden, I went in the wrong way and he spin hooked kicked me too from the floor, same thing, and then, I got knocked back and had to go to the hospital, another broken nose and then, they set it back in place. So, yeah, I had 2 broken noses just in martial art, not at work. I'm sure a lot of martial artists have broken their noses, that sort of thing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I don't know too many martial artists who have been training a while who haven't broken something. I mean I've got a, I took a good shot on my face and one of my teeth cracked down and broke a finger at one point so, it happens. It happens. I mean, it happens. It's rough out there and as one of my instructors was always fond of saying, look, it's better you learn how to take some shots in training with people that care about you and know how to react to that and how you're going to feel taking those shots and heaven forbid, you don't end up on the street in an altercation and that's the first time you ever get hit hard.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, definitely. Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

When you think about the instructors and the people that you've trained with; you've worked with a lot of people and I'm sure a long list of very amazing people. We've heard a little bit about Guro Dan and, of course, I think most people listening to the show know who he is but who else? Who else would you want to tell us about that maybe has contributed to who you are today as a martial artist?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Jun Chong. Jun Chong and taekwondo school in LA. He was actually my first instructor and he's a very gentle man but very strict and he has a lot of discipline in his school and a lot of his students really respect him for that and I think that's why a lot of parents take their kids to his school because he doesn't let people just get away with things and I feel in this society, kids are getting away with a lot of things and I think discipline is a good thing. It creates who you are as a person. It creates structure and discipline and I don't know, I think it's an important lesson in life in general and he makes us meditate after class and I think that's a beautiful thing to clear the mind because you're doing an aggressive art so you have to balance it out with meditation so he usually makes us sit down and settle in our minds for



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

the last 5 minutes of class and Master Jun Chong has taught me so much from school 1 and I knew nothing and he was very patient with me and very kind. He is just an amazing man as well. He has a ton of students and it just shows how much love is in that school as well.

Jeremy Lesniak:

A lot of the people that we've had on the show who've turned martial art into their profession had some resistance from their family whether it was going into stunts and acting or opening a school. You've found a way to turn martial arts into a job like all of them, what's been your family's response?

Lauren Mary Kim:

I actually have a business degree so I always thought I was going to be a 9 to 5er. Actually, I dreamed of it. I was like oh yeah, I'm going to work in San Francisco, the financial district, that's what I'm going to do until I took a finance class in college and I was like whoa, this is not for me! I just don't understand it at all. I went what did I get myself into? But I just finished what I started so I did get my degree and that was about the same time when I was in college training martial arts and starting in the stunt business and I genuinely thought it was just a phase. Oh, this is what I'll do for right now. I'll get that job later and my mom was, my parents were like yeah, this was just a phase. She's not really going to do this for the rest of her life or a big portion of her life so they just thought it was a fun little phase making a little bit of money but then it exponentially grew over time and I was like oh, wow, this is really fun, I love this. I can't imagine having a 9 to 5 job and then, my parents were like what are you doing?! When are you going to get that real job and I'm like I don't know so they're still waiting but I don't think I am. I think this is my career now whether it's behind the scenes more, like helping assisting, coordinating or in the future maybe, but right now, I really love performing still and I think I'm going to keep at it a little bit more.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice, I think you should. Seems like it's going well! Why would you stop? If you could train with anybody, anywhere in the world, anywhere in time, who would you want to train with?

Lauren Mary Kim:

I get asked that a lot and I'm always like why don't I have an answer?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Really? I thought that was my question. People are stealing my question! But that's ok.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, a lot of people have asked me that and you'd think like everyone would have and I have said Bruce Lee and everyone like, it seems to be the go to but everyone is like it seems to be like the go to but he



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

seems like he trained with Guro Dan so he learned so much from him and obviously, he would be one of my top choices. I mean, I would be scared of him a little because he's so iconic and he's kind of like a god to all of us martial artists. I would definitely be scared of him but I think just to see, even just to watch him, not even have to train with him but just to watch him train because I've heard he was just so fast and his fitness level was on another level. Yeah, just to be a fly in the wall when he was alive would be really cool. I actually worked with Jackie Chan and that was really cool to work with him.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What was that like? Tell us about that.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, I got to work with him on Rush Hour 3 and he is so hardworking. If he's not doing a fight scene or helping look at shots or going over shots, he's cleaning the floor. He is just so...what's the word I'm looking for? I have blanked out right now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Really, cleaning the floor? Even as huge a star as he is, he won't take that downtime, he just goes?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah! He just goes! He is an amazing person and that just shows martial art. How he is a true martial artist. You're never too good for anything. He'll do the grunt work and he has no ego as well. He just wants to get the work done and yeah, just get on to the next shot whether he has to sweep the floor himself, he will do it. He's super creative and funny and generous so yeah. Who else? I'll say his name wrong, Iko Uwais. I'm like the worst with foreign names.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Iko Uwais? I'm not convinced I'm saying that right either but somewhere there.

Lauren Mary Kim:

I want to train with him but I did also work with him on Mile 21 and he is so kind and so sweet and no ego as well like definitely true martial artist and he is very loyal to people that helped him and so, he'll bring them on to his projects now that he's made it big in America. He brings on his people which I really think is really awesome and I think it's a big thing for him and he would always tell him on set, I want to train with you. I need Silat techniques because you know we're so busy. We don't have time to do that but I just really wanted to train with him. I think he is amazing and I think he's kind of taking the place of Jackie Chan's path right now so I think it's really cool to see that and seeing it from an Indonesian star too is really cool. People are opening up their minds to that because what other Indonesian star that you know of, you know?



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right, he is utterly impressive for anyone that hasn't seen any of this work really should check it out because we're seeing this progress, this growth in stunt film. We just recorded an episode talking about Ong Bak and the launch of Tony Jaa and how, really prior to Tony Jaa, the only major martial arts actor, at least that I was aware of, who was doing the majority of his own stunt work was Jackie Chan.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, oh and Jet Li as well.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Does he do most of his work? Oh, that I did not know.

Lauren Mary Kim:

It's...I know he does a lot of it and I know, obviously, Iko does a lot of it. He is amazing and fast. His technique is impeccable. He hits the ground with no pads. Now, he's a true stunt guy.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And so, as we see these martial arts actors come up and doing their own stunt work, does that give you any inspiration to do work beyond stunt and take more spoken roles?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah! I've done some small parts here and there like I worked on Iron Fist and I had the opportunity to play one of the Crane sisters and have some lines and that was so fun. I don't know if you know who Andy Chang is but he's also an iconic martial artist/stunt coordinator/ second unit director. He was actually on Jackie Chan's stunt team. I'll be doing a film for him, actually acting, because he always believed in me as an actor from a very young age when I started and so, yes, I'll be doing an acting role at the end of the year or the end of next year, actually.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Can you tell us anything about that project?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Let's just say it's out of this world and we're shooting in another country so yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. We'll keep an eye out for that.

Lauren Mary Kim:



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Yeah, definitely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There's certainly a lot of adrenaline doing martial arts in front of a camera, on set, stunt work and all that. For a lot of martial artists, the place that they feel that adrenaline is in competition. Did you ever take your skills out into the ring in that sense be it full contact or point sparring or forms or anything?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, when I was at Jun Chong's school, I did compete. Not very often or not that much because I was already doing stunts and I was getting a little busy but yeah, I did forms competition. I did sparring competitions and I come from a sparring school so it was, you know, that competitive aspect was at least there. I loved it when I did spar and then, over time, you get hurt and then your ego gets bruised a little here and there. I don't know if I love it as much now that I'm older. Maybe like friendly sparring, I don't mind but very conscious of not being hurt now. That's a very big goal of mine so I don't really do it anymore but yes, that competitive aspect was in me and definitely before Jun Chong because I remember going, I used to work at an MMA gym a long time ago called Legends and it was owned by Randy Couture and Baz Ruten. It was in Hollywood and so, I used to work there. I used to train there. I used to take Muay Thai and boxing classes there and we would spar a lot and I would get my butt kicked constantly by girls and guys because I wasn't that skilled back then but I wanted to do it. That's when I wanted to do it the most, actually. Now, it's like aggro. I was like an aggro 21-year old or 20-year old, I think, and so, yeah, but then I would get my butt kicked constantly and kind of schooled me in a way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Where did that aggression come from?

Lauren Mary Kim:

I don't know. I don't know if it comes from growing up because I grew up in a rougher city, maybe? I grew up in Stockton, California which I know is famous for the [00:34:51] brothers but it's a...I don't know. I guess I always felt like I had to prove myself when I was a kid like yeah, I could do that. I could do that. So, I was very much a daredevil at a young age. I don't know why I always felt like I had to prove something but I felt like I did so maybe that caused my aggression. Yeah, I don't know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I have to confess. That doesn't line up with the image I had of you talking about dance. When we talk about someone being a dancer, we tend to think of someone being...it's my own stuff. I'm not meaning to generalize especially since, clearly here, I'm wrong but when we think about dancers, the images that we see on TV and in movies are of people who are a little more reserved, we'll say, rather than aggro.

Lauren Mary Kim:



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Yeah, I mean, I think with anybody, I think everyone has layers and so, yes, you do have the composed part of you and then you also have another side of you that have to prove yourself that you're worthy. I remember people would be like I dare you to do this and I would do it. I remember one time, I was in grade school and we're at Great America and I was wearing someone's hat and it flew off the tram and so they were like oh, are you going to get that? I'm like yeah! So, I jumped off the moving tram, not knowing that it was dangerous but you know and just got it and I really hurt myself and yeah. I just did things without even thinking. I think a lot of kids are like that, though.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely but did it get you into trouble? Did it get you hurt?

Lauren Mary Kim:

I felt invincible. I remember doing front flips in heels at clubs when I was 21. I was just crazy. I mean, I guess it did but I just don't remember. Maybe it's all the concussions I've had. I don't remember. Probably. I think I did. You have to ask my mom. She remembers way more stories when I was a kid than I do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'd love to do a follow up with your mother. Get her to tell us all the dirt about you.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, she will.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Moms are good for that, aren't they? I don't think there's a mom out there who will both brag and sell their child down the river at the same time telling all of the old stories.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, they remind you of all the stories and you're like what, does what me?! No, I don't remember that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That couldn't have been real. That didn't happen! That doesn't fit my narrative.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Exactly.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

One of my favorite subjects to discuss with martial artists is the subject of their own challenges. We've talked a little bit about some of the physical stuff and you kind of just opened the door a little bit here so I want to go through that a little bit more. Martial artists have this skillset, this toolbox; physical and emotional, you talked about meditation that, also the rest of the world just doesn't have. It's one of my personal favorite things about martial arts. I'd love for you to tell us about a time, about something that you went through, something tough. I don't know how you define that, however you want and how you were able to move through it.

Lauren Mary Kim:

The first, I'd say, 25 years of my life has been like rollercoasters. A lot of up and downs and a lot of dark things happen in my life like people passing or things I've gone through that was really hard which put me indefinitely lows of my life and then, once I found martial arts, I kind of transformed things. I was able to learn about meditation, being still and before the martial arts, everything was a roller-coaster and I would have high and lows and highs again and deep lows but then, once I found the way, I felt like the middle way was the way and things now in my life are more constant and I'm not saying I don't have a lot of joy in my life because I do but I guess it's more stoic in a way where things don't affect me as much as they did before. I'm not as dramatic about things and because of meditation I think it's created a calmness, a stillness, a stoicism so things that may have bothered me in the past don't bother me as much like you're not as emotional and it's kind of how Buddha was. He always said the middle way is the way and I think I really took that to heart when I learned about that because life is going to throw you so many curveballs and things that you can't control but it's how you respond to it, right? So, and it's just like sparring so if someone's like angrily kicking you and going at you just because they really want to take your head off, how are you going to respond? Are you going to fight back with fire, with anger and try to hit him hard too because he's trying to hit you or are you going to just be like a spectator and like, ok, he's going through his thing. Do what you can. Avoid it but maybe it will change his energy as well because it's not about hurting people, it's about training so I think it's just that and that, I think in the past when I used to spar, I would get angry if someone hit me or if they were going hard because they wanted to and I was very reactive and that's what causes a spike. You get really angry and mad and you go to a big low and when you hit that person, you're on a high but then they're at a low so that wasn't the middle way at all and I notice that with training at Guro Dan now. People are like very calm and chill and most people are, the veterans are very chill because they've been doing this forever. What did they have to prove? Nothing. So, yeah, I've learned that through the way of martial arts, meditation. It takes practice because obviously you're not going to be happy every day or in the middle way but at least, I'm more consistent now. There's traffic on the road. I'm way more chill, but like put on an audiobook on now, not cutting off people like maybe I did when I was in my early 20s but yeah, I think it's just practice and it's helped keeping calm and finding that middle way, definitely.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

And of course, easier said than done, right? It takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of effort and if we have somebody listening who maybe is newer to martial arts, who is relating to what you're saying; cutting people off in traffic and having a hard time balancing out those highs and those lows, where might you suggest they start?

Lauren Mary Kim:

I think just maybe 5 minutes before your day starts, just maybe listening to meditation music. Just 5 minutes and just calm the mind. That's a good start. 5 minutes is better than no minutes or at the end of the day reflecting on your day or even, if something happens, immediately don't react. Just stop. Take one deep breath and then, try to go from there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sage advice. Absolutely. Lets switch gears. What's your favorite martial arts movie?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Oh man, there's so many.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There are. It's funny. Actors or anybody in a film industry really has a hard time answering this question.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, because not only do we work on a lot of them but we watched so many and it's how do you just narrow it down to one?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Pick a couple if that's easier.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Well, I have to say Game of Death. Obviously, it was made so long ago but it inspired me to make my own little fight scene based on the Game of Death which I'm going to be releasing very soon.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh cool! I'm pumped to see that.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Because basically, the warehouse fight where he fights different martial arts, originally he was supposed to fight different martial arts and the whole idea that was were at the end, he combines all the great things of all these martial arts to create JKD which is his martial arts so I thought that was a really



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

beautiful thing that he paid homage to that in a movie which, you know, he obviously died before the movie got finished but that's what the idea of it was supposed to be so I made my own version of that because I've also trained in many martial arts so I guess you have to see it. I'm releasing it in a couple months so definitely be on the lookout. It will be on YouTube that I'm wearing a yellow jumpsuit and you'll get the idea that it's really takes everything our whole interview was about into a 5-minute fight scene so yeah, I'm really excited to share that with everybody but yeah, he's inspired me in so many ways so yeah. I don't know if you've heard about My Kali Diaries.

Jeremy Lesniak:

No. Tell us about that.

Lauren Mary Kim:

It's actually released on social media but basically, when I started Kali, I wanted to see my progression as a Kali artist so I just made all of these fights using the techniques of Kali and I did a diary. I literally did a video diary of my training but in fight form so you could see it on YouTube under my channel, Lauren Mary Kim.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. Nice and in case anybody missed it in the intro, we do link all these stuff on the show notes, whistlekickmartialarts.com with everything that we're talking about here and now, I've got a question for you. This is a long standing theory that's only, there have only been a couple people who have not fallen in with my theory here. Was Game of Death your first Bruce Lee movie?

Lauren Mary Kim:

I think it was.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Or Enter the Dragon, really. I don't remember.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Whichever movie is their favorite tends to be almost every time, their first Bruce Lee movie. There's something about your first Bruce Lee movie that you hold close in your heart. I don't know what it is but me, it's Enter the Dragon. That's the first one I saw and that's the one that's most special. For plenty of people, it's game of death.



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Lauren Mary Kim:

I think I just like the meaning of what it was even though turning it into a little something different at the end but what he was creating in his mind of the different martial arts, that really resonated with me and how he developed JKD because it's a beautiful thing that he literally took the best things that he thought were the most efficient in each martial arts and turned it into his own.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right. We've talked about a number of actors today. People that you've had the pleasure of working with, people that sounds like you want to work more with. If you could pick one, just one person and you had to, let's say, work with them and no one else for the rest of your career, who would that be?

Lauren Mary Kim:

Oh man. Oh, let's see. That's really hard. I mean, does it have to be...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Could be anybody.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Anybody. Maybe Iko.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I had a feeling you'd say that because I would imagine that being in your shoes, you're not just looking at who's going to be challenging and enjoyable to work with but who are you going to learn from. You talk about your desire to learn, there's a lot there certainly for...

Lauren Mary Kim:

Just to pick his brain would be amazing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And a question I've been asking people from the film industry that come on lately, if you were given an infinite budget to design, produce the ultimate movie that you would be involved in, who would it star, what would the genre be, what role would you play? Tell us a little more about that. Somebody plunks down, I would say, a couple hundred million dollars and they would say make the movie of your dreams, we'll get out of the way.

Lauren Mary Kim:

It's actually not a martial art film.



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Ok. Totally fine. Tell us about it.

Lauren Mary Kim:

It's this idea I've been toying around with for the past couple of years. It's actually about autism and how it relates to spiritualism. The spiritual aspects of autism and yeah, it would be a movie about a woman who has an autistic child and basically, she's at a low in her life. Her husband leaves her and then she finds her way through her child, love, and her child actually teaches her all these lessons in life that she never knew about and she took for granted and sees her child as a gift versus a burden. So, I think it'd be more of a story about yourself and learning who you are as a person through another being, another soul.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sounds pretty powerful. Thank you for sharing that.

Lauren Mary Kim:

Yeah, thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Let's look to the future. What are your goals as you look out the next year, 5 years, 20 years, however far you want to look into the future? Tell us about what's coming down the pipe for you and what you're working towards.

Lauren Mary Kim:

It's funny because the whole last year I was working on TV and I love TV. I've worked in TV for a very long time and this next project called Stargirl that I worked on is one of my career highs because we got to do some amazing things with wire work and just creative shots that I've never had the opportunity to do before but I always tell people I want to do film, I want to do films next year and I actually have an opportunity to work on a film this coming year. I actually am leaving soon. I can't say what it is but it is kind of big so I have that and then I have that movie where I get to where I have an acting role and then, after that I might get some time off to work on my own personal life. Maybe have a child and then from there, I wouldn't mind stepping into more assistant coordinating and more of the administrative work, taking a little break but I'm not going to stop. I just can't imagine not working doing something or maybe start writing again and just, I like to be creative so I'm always going to be doing something wherever it takes me, it takes me, I guess.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right on and if people want to find more about you online, websites, social, give us all that stuff.



Episode 452 – Miss Lauren Mary Kim | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Lauren Mary Kim:

I'm pretty active, I guess, on Instagram so my name is Lauren Mary Kim on that and my YouTube channel which is also Lauren Mary Kim.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great, nice and easy. Awesome! I appreciate you being here and we always ask guests for one more thing as we wind down the show. What parting words or wisdom or advice would you want to leave everyone with today?

Lauren Mary Kim:

I think, exactly what we were talking about earlier. Finding the middle way in life, not reacting, being humble. Just be a good person. End of the day, what kind of footprint do you want to leave on this planet? Were you a good person? Yeah, I think that's something to think about for everyone, right?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I had a good time with this one. Really enjoyed talking with Miss Kim and I have to say, I can't imagine that her career hasn't peaked yet. I just have a feeling on this one. We're going to see some really big stuff coming down pretty soon and thank you so much, Ma'am, for coming on this show. I really appreciated your time and your conversation. If you want to learn more about this episode, go to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Sign up for the newsletter, check out the show notes, see everything we've got going on over there. When you're done with that, go to whistlekick.com. Check out the products, use the code PODCAST15, get yourself something nice. If making a purchase isn't in the cards right now but you'd still like to help us out, you can share this or any other episode. Follow us on social media, leave us reviews, Google, Facebook, reviews are great and you can make guest suggestions, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. There's a form there, tell us who we should be talking to. Our social media is @whistlekick, it's all over the place and my personal email address: jeremy@whistlekick.com. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day!