



Episode 141 – Grandmaster Rick Alemany | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio episode 141 and thank you so much for tuning in. Today, we're going to talk to Grandmaster Rick Alemany. At whistlekick, we make the world's best sparring gear and here on martial arts radio, we bring you the world's best podcast on the traditional martial arts twice a week. Welcome, my name is Jeremy Lesniak and I'm the host and I'm also the founder of whistlekick sparring gear and apparel. Thank you to the returning listeners and welcome to those of you checking us out for the first time. Now, if you're in the market for shin guards, please give ours a look. They're double thick but only where it matters and they're pre-shaped to your shin so they won't twist around like those flat shin protectors that some companies make. They're a lot easier to clean than the cloth ones and honestly, they just hold up really, really well so check them out at whistlekick.com. If you want the show notes, you can find those at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. If you're not on the newsletter list, do it. Do it now! I don't even know what kind of accent was that. Was that a terrible Schwarzenegger accent? I'm going to leave it in. We send out exclusive content and it's the only place to find out about upcoming guests for the show. As a thank you for joining, we'll send you our top 10 tips for martial arts in exclusive podcast episodes. Sign up for the newsletter at our website. It was from the efforts of two past guests that we get to hear from Grandmaster Rick Alemany today. Both Professor Brannon Beliso and Mr. Daniel Hartz coordinated with each other and with our guest. They then reached out to us to coordinate it. Personally, I'm glad they did, because I truly enjoyed my conversations with him. Prior to the episode recording, I had a few phone calls with him, just to work on schedule stuff and talk about how the show worked. Each time I hung up the phone, I came away feeling that this man is someone special, and someone that I was really honored to speak with. I hope that you enjoy hearing what he says as much as I did and I hope that your reaction is as positive. Here we go. Grandmaster Alemany, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Rick Alemany:

Thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thank you for being here. I appreciate you taking the time out of your day to talk to me and share some stories.

Rick Alemany:

Good, it's a pleasure and I'm actually [00:02:36] just to see the part of what my life is all about. I still, to this day, whenever I see my teacher, I thank him for giving me a life because this has been my life. It's teaching so trying to stumble onto a better job than teaching. It's not a job.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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No, it's certainly not and I know we're going to get into all that and a whole bunch more but I think it's really important for everyone listening and for me too, that we get some context for who you are, I can't think of a better way, than for you to tell us how you got started in the martial arts.

Rick Alemany:

Let's see, I think the very first step that happened, I think I was working at the San Francisco navy shipyard and I kind of punched at this guy and he was kind of working with me and said, do you take Karate? I said no and he said how come you punch like that? I said oh, I just punch like that. Well, I do and then he said, well, will you want to go down and see a class? So, absolutely, I'd love to and I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know what reaction I was going to have and it had to happen to be Grandmaster Ralph Castro's school that I went to in San Francisco on Valencia street. I went in and watched and everybody was working on forms and sets together and everybody was on time and nobody made a mistake and I thought wow, that's really impressive to see them working as a group like that so I talked to Master Castro and said I'm registering and he said yeah, ok, that will be \$60 to start, \$15 for the uniform and \$15 a month, 3 months in advance and as soon as the next check came, I went in and I had to wait about 3 weeks before I got paid so what the guy I was working with started to join me some of the time so when I started with the class and as Master Castro was showing me sets from Number 1 to 5 and I picked it up right away and then, he says wow, you really pick that up fast. I didn't tell him that my friend had showed me. He was under the impression that I pick everything up fast and was able to do that and so, anyway, that's how I got started. That was back in 1962 when I got started into the martial arts and into Kenpo, Kenpo Karate system.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's early, right? You're beyond even what a lot of people would call first wave. A lot of people think of that as the mid to late 60s but 1962, there aren't a whole lot of people teaching martial arts in the country at that time.

Rick Alemany:

No, I think 4 was there. Castro was there and Yamaguchi was another one. I think there was 3 and then Great Grandmaster Castro right here in the 3 schools so when I first got in, I said and they split back up. I played baseball my whole, when I was 10 years old all the way up through the navy and when I got out the navy, I played for the city league in San Francisco but as soon as I saw Kenpo, that was the end of my baseball career because I found something that I have to work hard to be make me better than the average person. That was always my goal is do better by doing it more than everybody else. Consequently, showing me routine sets to practice. I would always get up in the morning, working out before I go to work and work on it at lunch time and at the shipyard and down a sandwich before the whistle blew and have lunch and work for 45 minutes so trying to find it in 2 years and I made brown belt which was a short time. It usually took you 5 years for you to get to black or 5 or 6 years to get to



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black but I just had to set a goal that I want to be the best that I can be during this so, consequently, I think I was always in my brown belt. It was my first tournament in combat, I think it was in blue belt, my first tournament and I took 2nd and then, that put a pressure on me that Rick's going to win so consequently, I did really well and get to brown belt and went to the internationals and took 1st place in brown belt. I think it was in '66 Men's and then again, at '67, it was harder because the internationals because people now I kind of had a reputation for being a pretty good fighter and then, I think my last brown belt tournament was with Chuck Norris training in Las Vegas. Took first place and then I moved on to fight black and my first tournament in black, I thought that I fight this guy that I beat 4 or 5 times already and so, I just have to in the ring and then, he'll just fall at my lap. I lost which I needed to. I needed to feel that feeling, what I didn't like. I didn't like that feeling of losing so it just made me more humble and appreciated and accomplished already. Just try to get better and practice harder and not take any competition for granted ever.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, we got a sense as to how you got started but I'd like to talk a little bit about the why. Here you are, you're at work, you throw this punch and a gentleman that you work with invites you to go to a Karate class to watch it. You must have had some idea of what martial arts was. I'm guessing there must have been some, even if it was subconscious, interest in training.

Rick Alemany:

Training in anything is being the best that I can be in everything I did. I mean, take the Navy for instance, you got to do the dishes dirty and I'm doing the pots and pans, well, I'm racing the guys in the front to try and see if I'd beat them before everything's done. So, they have one pan coming in, I'm already done. I was real competitive that way. In anything I did, I wanted to be the best that way so that carried over into the martial arts because there's a sense of accomplishment when you practice and you get it and you get various things that come naturally and automatic for you then you realize it's all about practicing and practicing correctly and doing this as often as you can and never get bored of getting better. That's what I say repetition, how can you get bored and feel bad about getting better? The more you do it, the better you get. There is no secret. That is the secret actually.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That is probably the most elegant reasoning I ever heard for practicing anything. How can you justify not doing it if you're not going to get better?

Rick Alemany:

Right. So, that's how people get, just start believing in yourself through movement to get that. They succeed at this one, they succeed at anything you want and they just got to do it and put the work in and they all get better at whatever you wanted to get successful at. That's the biggest payment there is



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you get as a teacher is a student comes back and says wow, you made a big difference to my life. It isn't about the money. It never has been. I'm not good at that part anyway.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You and many other martial arts instructors.

Rick Alemany:

Sure, take the sweatshirt. No problem. Sometimes, like the other day, oh no, that's \$25 but if you want to pay, pay for each his own. Not a good business guy.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think everyone has the opportunity to leave a mark in the world in different ways and you certainly have left yours as an instructor. This is a good opportunity to mention to people that past guests on the show, Professor Brannon Beliso had actually threw someone kind of down line in his system and had reached out to me to make sure that this interview happen, that it was important to him because you were important to him, you were important to quite a few people, I've learned, over the last few weeks. It's great to have you here and hear your stories and I know you've got a lot more stories. I'm sure you got tons. You've been training and training with amazing people for quite a long time.

Rick Alemany:

Yeah, the real question is that it seems that when I needed it, somebody would drop in and be exactly what I needed to further my training in the martial arts. I know that having a story in the early days when I was a brown belt, I went to the East Coast and I can't exactly remember where I was but I went there was Ralph Castro and Ed Parker and then, they used me as an attacker. He sweated me and it wasn't part of the kata that we used to and he showed it to the classes and covered his back and then, when he did it to me, he swept me and I used to be face down on the mat and on the back, I went like whoa, that's just how you end the attacker and how these guys are high-ranking. Ed Parker put on this side of the ring and a couple of guys got up there and they used a real knife and so this guy did a bunch of sassy moves with the knife then he went and stabbed him, caught the guy right through his hand, Parker didn't know it was on the back and said get that off the front, out of the ring and then he started to drag him away and ran out over the intercom system and [14:57] turned him in and another thing too where Castro goes, and this is my fighter that I brought, my fighter, this is my fighter, his name is uh...Rick. Oh, Rick Alemany!

Jeremy Lesniak:

He forgot your name!

Rick Alemany:



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I'm doing it like yeah, you forgot the guy you brought.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How did you meet Grandmaster Parker?

Rick Alemany:

Through Ralph Castro at the international tournament in '66 when I was a brown belt. My first, that was actually my first big competition where I placed and then I met him through Ralph in a boat in Hawaii and we both ran the coast guard together and that's how they met each other. They both took from Chow but took it in different days, Professor Chow, they both took it at different times and they say that Parker made his black belt from Chow and Ralph Castro might have been a purple belt or a lower belt than that. If that was the case, he sure has some fantastic Kenpō forms and made a good martial artist and great fighter. That's another thing too, trying to spar with your teacher? Useless. Not that it's going to do anything for me but you can't hit the guy that gave you, put you where you're at. I couldn't even throw a punch towards him ever. It's just too negative of a feeling.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Other than martial arts, which is your life as we've talked on the phone before, do you have any other interests? Is there anything else that you felt passionate about through your life.

Rick Alemany:

Never had as much as martial arts. Nothing. Somebody lined it, one of my friends can hear that says my whole life has been martial arts. You better ask questions involving that because there's nothing else I'm interested in other than teaching what I do, teach what I teach and help develop people to believe in themselves. That's my whole life in a nutshell. 34 years of...I'm going out of breath, sorry.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's ok.

Rick Alemany:

I have a lung problem.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Would you like to take a break?

Rick Alemany:

No, no. Down to the end.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright.

Rick Alemany:

Just going to the fall on the mat when it's good.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Just like a sparring match.

Rick Alemany:

Just like a sparring match, don't give up.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hopefully, nobody's getting hurt out of this.

Rick Alemany:

I have to take oxygen periodically.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Tell us about a time in your life where something didn't go well, something was difficult or whatnot, I'll leave that vague intentionally and tell us how your martial arts training allowed you to overcome that.

Rick Alemany:

Ok, say that first part again.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Just think of a different time in your life. Some people that have come on the show have told us about a physical altercation or confronted by people or a loss in their family or a difficult financial time.

Rick Alemany:

I'd say the most difficult time I had was in my relationship with my first spouse. That negativity and the yelling and screaming and I'm just not an angry man or temperamental person and the martial arts really helped me in that that I just bury myself into my forms and training to get better at fighting. It just made me do that because I had that to cover that negativity that lead the way and a very negative person. So, thank god for my wife now who got me out of an ugly relationship.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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How do you think it would have gone if you didn't have the martial arts to bury yourself in during that time?

Rick Alemany:

I don't think I would be disciplined. I'm not sure. Me and the part of me, maybe that's always been a part of me that I find something that ok, I'm going to go out to bat and do that for a couple of hours. I'll probably find something that I have to do to kind of cover that up so I put my mind someplace else so that's why what we do in a way. When we do martial arts, it puts us in a different space so I would say negativity is happening, get up and do a couple of forms or even just run around the block and do something physical and be surprised how you just, the stress of whatever you're going through, it's important moving in this life. Not moving is not.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I know you've had the opportunity to train with quite a few amazing people. you've mentioned a few names already. I know of some other names. I'm sure that there are many, many names that I don't know.

Rick Alemany:

First, I remember is Ralph Castro, of course, is my main teacher but we had a falling out and the reason was I had started a school on Pacific, ahead of 25 people and Great Grandmaster Castro came out to watch the class and said well, I'm going to kind of takeover this class. You go back to the main school and you can teach sparring class there. I want to take over because these guys are going to get rough and cocky like you are but I never viewed myself as being a cocky person. I always thought I was a fairly good-tempered guy but he took over and that's why I taught the sparring classes. I've never been abusive but I am stacked for being in a good condition so he got a lot of complaints because his classes were getting to be too difficult for everybody. He couldn't do it. He couldn't do what I had been planning for them so he just said I can't have you teach my class and I understood because that's his livelihood. It's his money. It's his money coming in to the class so I said no problem but a couple of guys, matter of fact, it was Brannon's father that asked me if I could teach him on Tuesday or Thursday, I don't remember which day it was. I said oh, sure, no problem. You and your brothers? Yeah, no problem but that went from those 3 guys to 30 and so, half the guys were in my class. That was Brannon's father's place was from the school and I told the guys, hey, listen. It snowballed on me. I didn't expect that to happen that people actually like how it worked out so I told the brothers and then his father, Brannon's father, I have to tell your Great Grandmaster Castro that I'm doing this. I didn't expect us to snowball like this so what I'm doing is not really the right thing to do and so, before I can do that, one of the brothers went and told Great Grandmaster Castro that I'm quitting. He said why are you quitting? He said I'm going to Rick Alemany's school. Rick Alemany's school? But he doesn't have a school and then it was in Brannon's father's basement and I was there working out by myself and going through my forms



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and whatever, going through my regular workout and I get a knock on my door and I opened it was Great Grandmaster Castro and I said whoa. He goes I want you in my school, Thursday. I said wow, sparring night and that's what it entails. I brought all the guys over there with me. We tried to explain. We didn't expect it to snowball like this. Before we know it, Rick wasn't basically in Kenpō troubles but anyway, he said well, you're no longer a black belt in my school and he took my belt. I didn't come dressed in my uniform. I just rolled the belt up which I thought was respectful. They thought it wasn't respectful and all my students were trying to explain to him that it snowballed and we didn't think it was going to happen and he said, well, anybody must quit in this style but they all came with me and that's how my school was kind of started with that group.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Did you ever have a chance to settle that? To make amends?

Rick Alemany:

Yeah, I went back and my ego got ahold on me and went out to the car and got my diploma and everywhere else I brought that and he was at his desk with his head down and he didn't want to do this. he really gave me a lot of attention and I think I was taking private lessons day to day and that I had a back operation and he showed me more than he showed most people. He was like a father to me, really but he gave me back the diploma later. What happened was I got the job as special adviser in the Killer Elite with James Caan and so I'm going to be a choreographer and know what do in the fight scenes and so they kind of softened up to me at that point and I thought that was great. I thought we were comfortable because when we had the first breakup, they were going man, that Mr. Castro, I said wait a minute. Don't talk about that that way about my instructor. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for him. You wouldn't be here if it wasn't for me so I never let anybody mouth him. It was the right thing to do but, in any case, after that I started taking private lessons from him and I got back into his good graces again and joined one other and the negative incident was I remember, I was one of the founders of ATAMA organization which was quite successful when it was going and has promoted me to 9th then to 10th then Castro invited me to a big meeting with black belts and I sat and I said oh no, come on and come out here and sit with the family and then he goes, he stands up and he goes ok, I just want everyone to know that Rick Alemany is not going to take over the Kenpo Karate system then I said excuse me, with all due respect, and I don't want to that time, my aim was to take over the Kenpō organization. I am what I am because my students pushed me up there. They said where is your list of black belts? Oh, here it is, 200. They said wow. Anyway, that caused a little of dissention for a little bit and again, it softened up and got back together so we have a good relationship now. He invited me to a special seminar he did for all these black belts and I didn't put that as important and the seminar came up and he introduced me first as a special guest and recognized my 10th. You always wanted to please your instructor, your teacher and then finally I got what I wanted from him as respect. That I'm a positive force in his life. Wow, that was a mouthful.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

It was. It was good! And the funny thing is we haven't even got to the question yet. I loved the tangents. The listeners know I love the tangents. It's the best stuff.

Rick Alemany:

And I'm a tangent kind of guy.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey, perfect! That's why we're doing this. Now, obviously, Great Grandmaster Castro was the one that got you started. He's the one that probably, I'm guessing, you would agree was most influential in your martial arts upbringing.

Rick Alemany:

Absolutely. They always ask me who do you look up to when you first started? I looked up to him when I first started and still do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Was there anyone else along the way that also had a significant impact on you?

Rick Alemany:

After that first breakup from [30:27], they blackballed me from the Kenpō system. Blackballed me from the NAA that [30:37] through and so, I needed to block the organization. I was working out with Johnny Perra who was, I think he came in with some more guys and they took me under their wing. I guess what was influential is the way their foundation was. I kind of copied some of their stances and some of the ways that they did their thrust kicks and so that part of it. I definitely got that from them and I think after that, I'm trying to think of who came after. I think I was in another movie and they were having tryouts in my school and Remy Presas came into my door and I didn't know who he was first and I just heard his name, he just said my name is Remy Presas and I do Filipino Arnis and would you be interested and I was like oh, yeah, yeah. I got tryouts right now so why don't you come back and he came back and he showed me some stuff and I liked it and it was very influential to me, adding it as part of my system and then I also took from his brother, Ernesto. When Remy went on tour, I kind of introduced Remy to Bruce Juchnick and Bruce, I went over there to do a seminar with Remy and Remy, he just sat in the corner and laced up and watched me and he goes, very good, Rick. You are very good and I said thanks and Bruce came right up to meet him and he goes, yeah, I take [32:38] do you want to play? Mistake! To play means you're challenging the guy. So, Remy didn't hurt him, hurt him but he let him know who the boss was and then, Bruce took him on tour and he gave seminars all over the place so that was good for Remy but I never seen them after that and I had the opportunity to take a class from Ernesto. I can't remember the name of the school I went to but then, he came and started doing seminars for me and so



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I could add on to what Remy had tried because he taught the same thing. They both far out demonstrated. They're lowkey when you see them. When they move, it's unbelievable. It's like magic and that helped our system out and it helped me out these last few months because I've been having health problems and breathing problems so it's driven me to the sticks. Really helped me tremendously because it doesn't take so much out of me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We had the chance to, I had the chance to talk to Hanshi Juchnick back on episode 120 and what a great guy. Such a large personality and see, the thing that I found interesting about my conversation with him is he's been involved with everyone. Whether it was in passing or he spent time training with them, it seems like he knows everyone.

Rick Alemany:

Yeah, I got him when he was 2nd degree and promoted from 3rd up to until 6th and then he called me one day and he said, who is this guy, James Mitose? I said that's the guy, he's in Folsom and people said he was some kind of martial artist and I said well, it's true because when I was teaching for Grandmaster Castro when I had my back operation, he had Mitose's book on his desk and I was reading it and he said you're not ready for that yet. I said oh, no problem but I got the gist of it, of who Mitose was and that's what Bruce was good at doing was he got the Hawaiian instructors to be recognized for who they were, what they had done for the martial arts in Hawaii. He did a lot. People say oh, he's in it for the money but you're looking at the wrong part of it. The fact that you would've never met some of these guys and I would never had met them if it hadn't been for Bruce and he has that gathering all the time. I missed that last couple of events the traveling was a little bit too much for me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We had a chance to hear a little bit about Hanshi Juchnick's time with Mitose, traveling to, I think it was Texas, where he was incarcerated, if I remember? Maybe I don't remember...

Rick Alemany:

He was incarcerated in Folsom. Bruce asked if I wanted to meet him and I said absolutely and I walked in at Folsom and you can feel evil. Even if it's crushing almost, how heavy that evil feeling was when I went in there then I met him and we were sitting outside. I think it was a cement table and bench and he just commenced to tell me all about me. He said you are this kind of a guy and you are this guy and this is the way you believe and I said wow. Awesome and then I'm walking out and then I turned around and looked at the prison and said, what did the guy do? Hypnotize me? The prison looked like a castle and Bruce's wife and my wife were walking towards us and all they can see were my teeth. I had such a gigantic smile on my face that I couldn't get out of this overwhelmed by meeting this guy. He was awesome. He wrote letters. I wrote him, I sent him money. He didn't have to do what he did. He wasn't



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doing it for any recognition. He gave me my Master Number 2 certificate but that was it. That was it. Parker and [37:27] and their answer is that how artistic you were for getting that. I said he didn't give it to me but he stated that I'm the number 2 master physically. It's all about the spiritual aspect of it and he believes that I passed that requirement as far as him asking the questions and telling me how or who I was or what I was all about and at first, Parker said, you're telling me that someone I don't know has accepted me and that's about it. I'm sorry, that's what not Mitose is all about. It's definitely the spiritual aspect of it is what he's all about so I thought I was really fortunate to have tested me. I didn't train with him and I didn't claim to train underneath him and I just met him and I was in awe. The guy just didn't belong in there. Even the prison guards, head of the prison had Mitose babysitting his kids outside the zone. His house was up on the hill. That's how trustworthy he was and he wrote letters and said that Mitose didn't belong there and trying to get him out. He didn't get out until he died and that was Bruce's battle and helped with his funeral and all that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's certainly, from the little bit that I know of him, such a tragedy that such a talent was confined. How many people could he have taught? How much good could it have done?

Rick Alemany:

Yeah, it was pinned to the wrong guy. One of his students wasn't all there and he went over there and he was the one who physically did the killing of the husband and wife. Not Mitose. Mitose was just hearing it out. This guy was in jail, loaned him money and how he in America, that same rule didn't go with the rule that we had in Japan where you loan money and you succeed in the business then you pay 10 times that and the guy said, I'm an American now, I don't have to pay you anything and he didn't pay him back and the reason he didn't pay the money that he loaned was he got upset but he just said it to the wrong guy. He aimed at the guy and said hey, why don't you go over there and straighten these people out and collect for me? He just said that and the guy, according to Bruce is, he's really unstable. A lot of unstable people.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, we've heard some of the people that you've had the opportunity to train with. Was there anybody that you wanted to train with that you didn't get to?

Rick Alemany:

I would really like to, I don't think I can remember his name. I really can't think of...I had people come in. Oh, Max, Max. Max Fallon! He started here and then I moved to Hawaii because I liked what he had to do. The way he moved and how he did the sparring stuff but I never got the chance to get back into that. Max, his biggest son, Jordan, is a fantastic stick fighter. The live sticks with the pads on? Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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So, you would train with both of the Presas.

Rick Alemany:

Yeah, with Remy, Ernesto. All of it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What was it about this other individual that was different that made you interested?

Rick Alemany:

It was the speed of his blocking and sparring. He did it without even looking. Just bam, bam, bam! That was what I wanted to be able to do but never really tried it and I moved to Hawaii and was gone for 10 years so I never got the chance to get back into it. Jam Castro was another one. I just call him Magic Man, some of the stuff that I took from him that I put together and the fourth kata that I put together myself was including the sticks and doing this and Jiu Jitsu. Jiu Jitsu was where I took more and he had a 6-week course to raise money so he can buy certificates for his students so I brought 8 of my guys and they said it's \$25 for the whole course, the 6-week course. I made them pay \$25 every time they went in. I said this guy doesn't know how good he is and that was the beginning of it was he said, wow, can you come down and show my guys the sparring stuff in my house? I said sure, absolutely. Then after that, after this, you have to get these martial artists together and share knowledge and then, a body that can help people get rank because we have that person representing that style and so, no matter what, last week we had no teacher, somehow don't have a teacher that we had this style and that's how ATAMA got started. The teachers' association sharing knowledge and help people with the rank. Hindsight is appreciated. We lacked it for a year to see if we can stay. Hindsight. Get that stuff there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You talked a little bit about a couple of movies that you were involved in so I'm guessing that you have an affinity for martial arts films.

Rick Alemany:

That's the part that I wanted to hear that I actually got involved in, the stunt aspect of it and putting fights together. The reason that the tryouts were in a hotel in Venice, we had a demonstration for a Filipino audience and so, we already had a routine set so we said ok, what do you do with it? Ok, there's an audience and it almost started where they never see the hit and a bunch of them wanting to see but they know it happened and so, I just walked out, did a back tuck, did a punch over on this and stop. Ok, is there a problem? No, no. We want to film it and so they filmed it and they want to show it to [45:33] and so, the next day when we went back, the guy said can you make up fight scenes? First of all, he asked me who put this together? I said I did. He said can you make up a fight scene at lunch? Sure, just tell me what the situation is and I did it and they hired me as a technical advisor along with [45:56] guy



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and the problem with [46:01] was this Japanese style of trying to make the Kenpō guy, Kung Fu guy, Taekwondo guy do Japanese way of blocking. What I did was if I throw this, what would you do? I just threw it and they would come up with a block that they would naturally do as part of their style and so, I let them almost make up their own fight scene. What made it easier was if you got hit low, then you bend over and that tells you that there's another strike to the neck. That's how you get them to do it. I did set some speed aspect to it to go set with the camera.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You were bringing some authenticity. What are your thoughts on the movies from back then versus, if you've seen any of the films that have come out more recently?

Rick Alemany:

They're a higher degree of difficulty now. Just going by the tournament where they took out the groin shots, there's all of the high head kicks so it's exciting. I guess it's exciting and it just depends on who does it. Everybody do it like Chuck was when he head out there and we're always hoping that he would make it and it couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You knew him? Or know of him?

Rick Alemany:

Yeah, met him. We talked in tournaments. We fought against his team. He's written a couple of notes to me when my students ran into him in Las Vegas and sorry, I missed you and I think a book writing, wrote inside the book, I miss the good old days and when he came on to San Francisco and did Eye for an Eye, one of my friends sparred with one of the actors in there and he said to come on down to see Chuck and he just said I got to see him and went to his cabin and talked for a couple hours for about the old days and in the old days, I'm still fighting. You what? What do you do? Show fighting? Yeah, I got to fight tomorrow. Guy took out his time and that was a trip.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Tell us about that. I've actually heard a couple people talk about that as I've talked to them one on one outside of the show.

Rick Alemany:

What happened was he said I had split up and I was married to my present wife now and I started saying I want to come out of retirement because I was watching the 35 and over and some of the fighters were really good and I thought gee, I sure would like to fight that guy so I started working out and my first tournament was Ron Martini's tournament in Stockton, which 10 years before that I won the lightweight



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black belt division and so I fought in the 35 and over and I won that then I had to fight the lightweight, the middleweight and heavyweight and for whatever reason, they just weren't moving like I shown a technique and I go damn! This guy is not getting out of the way of moving. Just my timing, some days your timing is just on and you just can't do no wrong so I went grand on my first tournament and I won the grand once if I could until I won it but I won it on the first round, the first tournament I entered which I should have been disqualified on the 1st hit but Bruce was my judge and I was so hyped up that it came off when I was on the back neck and they said Mr. Alemany, one more time, I have to disqualify you but I come down. My adrenaline was way, way up into the years as I fought and I won one more time. I entered 12 tournaments, I took 11 1st place and 1 3rd, which is losing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's losing in your book, 3rd?

Rick Alemany:

3rd is losing but I fought a couple more tournaments after that and I made sure that when I went out, I went out winning. I don't want to go out losing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, you weren't just kind of talking when you said you were competitive. You are that competitive?

Rick Alemany:

Yes. One of my biggest win was a Cup Ellis where I fought some named guys. One of them was Dan Anderson who had just won international lightweight then, with Dan what I did, and we got to be good friends but he does his attack then I ran like I'm afraid and the next few times he moved and I nailed him and he has never treated it like nothing ever. I'm a deceptive kind of a fighter but the Cup Elis one was I won the lightweight division then I had to fight the middleweight. It was [51:49] went up to his neck. I beat him and I beat Johnny Burrell and Johnny, my nose was busted for 3 or 4 weeks before then and I went underneath and Johnny went over the top and hit my nose and you can see me following him around going just push it over, just push it over but he spun away from me then after I beat him, then I had to fight Bob Halleburden who was the grand champion from the year before then I was fortunate enough to beat him in overtime. What do you not throw at a tall guy who has a good body punch? Back knuckle so I re-bowed, I jumped up the air back, then I came down and bounced back. Deception, right?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sounds like it was your bread and butter.

Rick Alemany:



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Do what you got to do but I had some good fights with some good [52:56] Bill Wallace. Bill Wallace and I did a class in Denver. I got punches and he tried kicking it down to [53:07] school and then we went down to the tournament where they lined everybody big to short and then we kept going and before you know it, the only two guys left is me and him and I learned a valuable thing with Bill is that it's better to try to react when he does than to try to anticipate who's quicker. Just react because he'd be pressing his leg in the same spot, round side hook. His knee comes up to the same spot every time so you don't know which one he's going to throw. He beat me 2 to nothing so I took 1st and he took grand. He was really on. He was being guy 7, 8 to nothing at 8 to 2. He's good and my first match, was with the Tri-State lightweight [54:03] and he came off the line and back knuckled me and then I saw stars and then I went to Mike Stone. I said is that what it is, Mike? And he said, that's what it really is, buddy. I said no problem so at 7 to 2, he got one more point but I think, I accepted. I came away from California and they stuck me with a top guy.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But it worked out.

Rick Alemany:

It worked out, yeah, it worked out.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Let's talk books for a second. Have you written any books? I apologize for not knowing the answer to that.

Rick Alemany:

No, I haven't written any books at all. I have notes and stuff that I need to start putting together. I'm getting help now from one of my student that's coming today at 10, matter of fact, and I gave notes so he can read it over and see what I need to improve on and what else I can add to it and if it's feasible to put it into a book. It's finding strategies.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I would like to read a book that you wrote. I can tell that there's a lot that you've collected from others and formed and I think that would be interesting and, of course, let me just take a moment, for anybody that's new to the show that's listening, I'm going to say when because I'm going to hope that a book does happen. We'll list it in the show notes, everything we talk about today on any of the episodes, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com is the website and links to the other folks that we've talked about and have been on the show like Bill Wallace, like Hanshi Juchnick so are there books from others that you've enjoyed that you might recommend to people listening?

Rick Alemany:



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Yeah, Dan has his book on sparring. That's a good one to have. Art of War.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think that's the most recommended book. Why do you recommend it?

Rick Alemany:

Because what you do is the strategies that you end up developing as a fighter is timeless. You read that, wait a minute, that's my idea so it's pretty amazing that strategies on fighting in particular are timeless and I can't think of the words right now but anyway, that's probably one of the better strategy books that I liked.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, are you continuing to train, to challenge yourself? I mean, martial arts is your life. We know that so how does that tie into your days now?

Rick Alemany:

I'm having to readjust my workout because I have to keep my oxygen level up. I have stage 3 lung cancer so it's preventing me from trying to do everything that I get to do 6 months ago. I go 3 or 4 times a week, I run on my days off, do all my katas and teach and right now, it's trying to keep me down and rightfully so because I only have one way of showing technique and that's the way I've been doing it for 54 years and I get winded so I just try to do as much and then sit down and hook up to the oxygen tank and get it back up to 98 and when I went and kind of did that special routine for me, I just couldn't do it. One of the students in the school, Martin Cameron, his wife was a nurse and I was coughing and she noticed that so she ran across the street to walk saying I think your oxygen intake, percentage of oxygen is 71 and that's no good so Bruce said that I had to set a one liter, 2 liter with a thing on my finger and it went up to 98 then I felt better but I never would have known about it, I don't know why they didn't tell me that the reason for having this oxygen making machine was I'm supposed to be regulating my oxygen intake and get it down to the 70s then obviously I need some oxygen so, like I said, I'm going to do this until I can do it. I'm not going to, I cancelled out the 12th of December just to give me a month's break and then start back to going to Brannon's on January and see if I can go in there later and I'm going to be happy to go in there because I teach those classes at 7:30 to 9 but still wait at San Francisco at 1 o'clock and have to wait all that time before I teach which I didn't mind it before because what I do is whatever I'm going to teach, I just keep going over and over again so anyway, that's where I stand health-wise.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure, and I'm glad to hear that you're going to keep going.

Rick Alemany:



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Oh yeah, I kind of jokingly said that once in a seminar I did in San Antonio was in Kenpo school and I didn't know what I had, I just knew that I was out of breath. I did my 4 techniques and then I go whoa, man, I always wanted to die on the mat. Oops, bad joke. Dan said I'm sorry to hear about you. I said hey, bummers, hey. He said you got a sense of humor. I said what else are we going to do? You can't do nothing about it. It's what happens. You got to take the good with the bad, the bad with the good. I just keep on doing what I do. What I live to do is teach but it's hard to do anything soft when you've been doing it strong for so long. I always try to get the physical aspect of my workout. I think when I turned 70, that's when I started to feel a little different. Then I was doing 1200 crunches and doing all my katas and all my sets and all my basics 3 or 4 times a week, if not 6, just to do it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I just want to underscore that. You said you started to feel it at 70.

Rick Alemany:

Right, I started feeling that the power wasn't there as much as it was so the smart thing to do was trying to do it 6 times a week. I cut it down to 3 so I got a day to rest in between.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There aren't a lot of people that stay that active, that strong even with their training. what would you say made it different for you? I mean, a lot of people start to say they're seeing things at 30 or 40, some at 50. I've never heard anyone...

Rick Alemany:

50, 60 were prime time. I was teaching in Hawaii for 10 years and you kind of like have to stop them when you block so that's what kind of motivated me was I have to change some of the techniques a little bit to fit somebody's mantras but I developed some good guys in Hawaii while I was there so it lead me to believe that the system works so wherever you go, you can develop these kata champions and sparring champions. They just have to be willing to do the work and we got the technique and the strategy behind it and have to see that grow over there and you got something that you keep in mind what I taught them and winning with what I taught them.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Excellent. Well, that's great. So, lets close up and we always do this in the same way but I find it to be a great way to end. What advice would you give to the people listening?

Rick Alemany:

In relation to working out?

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Any advice, I mean, almost everyone that listens is a martial artist.

Rick Alemany:

You can accomplish just about anything. You just got to want to do it and do the work that's involved to get you to where you want to go. There is no substitute for quantity and quantity in doing everything correctly no matter what it is so that's my goal is teaching people and getting them to believe themselves and to be respectful, respect themselves so you respect other people which was what's lacking in today's martial arts. They need a little bit more respect and get respect out of it to a certain degree and so, if you respect yourself, then you must respect the people.

Jeremy Lesniak:

When I consider Grandmaster Alemany's impact on the martial arts, on the number of people who have been touched by someone he trained, it's mind boggling. In fact, I bet that most of you listening knows someone who has trained with Grandmaster Alemany or someone who trained with him. There aren't a whole lot of people we can say that about. Thank you, Grandmaster, for your time. Over at whistlekickmartialartradio.com, you can find the show notes including links and titles to the things we discussed today. There's also a great place to sign up for the newsletter. You can follow us on social media. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram, username is @whistlekick. If you want to know what's going on behind the scenes of the show, check out our secret Facebook group, whistlekick martial arts radio behind the scenes. I guess, I can't keep secrets. I just told you about it. we're always open for new guests for the show so if you want to throw your hat in the ring or perhaps your instructor or someone else, head on over to the website, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, fill out the form there. If you have some other feedback, we'd love to hear it. You can fill out the form on the website or you can email us: info@whistlekick.com. If you lie the show, make sure you're subscribing. We put out episodes twice a week, every Monday and Thursday and you know we're always asking for reviews because they help us spread the word and push us up in the rankings, helps people find the show. Now, we haven't had reviews for a couple weeks. I don't know what's going on there but please, if you've been listening for a while, help us out. Get over there, go to iTunes, it's the best way to do it. Search for the show, even if you're subscribing, it's kind of got to be this way. If you're not an iTunes user, you can still do it, take you a little bit longer but we'd still appreciate it. It's free and as a thank you, every week, we're going to give out at least 1 shirt. Now, let's be honest. It's rare that we have multiple reviews come in in a week. We're still a fairly small show but if we start getting a bunch more reviews, we'd give out more shirts. We want reviews. Alright, I'll shut up now. Remember the products that you can find in whistlekick.com? Every one of them ships for free everyday including today's featured products, our shin guards. If you're a school owner or a team coach, remember wholesale.whistlekick.com. Until next time, train hard, smile, have a great day!



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