



Episode 506 — Mr. Jack O'Halloran | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



**Jeremy Lesniak:**

How's it going? Welcome, this is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 506 with Mr. Jack O'Halloran. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, show host, whistlekick founder and everything that we're doing over here at whistlekick is in support of the traditional martial arts. Go to [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com). That's where you'll find everything we're doing and one of the things that you'll find there is our store. The code `PODCAST15` is going to get you 15% off every single item in there. Everything for this show is on a whole different website, [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). This show comes out twice a week and the entire purpose behind this show, well, we're working hard to connect, educate and entertain the traditional martial artists of the world. If you want to help the show, the work that we do, you can do quite a few things: make a purchase, share an episode, follow us on social media, tell a friend, maybe pick up a book at Amazon, leave a review or support the Patreon, [Patreon.com/whistlekick](https://Patreon.com/whistlekick). The place to go for that, you can support us with as little as \$2 a month but \$5 and up gets you more stuff, more content. Sometimes we drop book drafts. The recent strength and conditioning program went out for free to everyone in the \$25 a month tier. We try to deliver as much value as possible. If you're willing to spend your money with us, we're going to make sure, you get as much as we can possibly deliver. You might not know today's guest as a martial artist but he is and he was a martial artist before quite a few of us were ever born. He has accomplished things few people ever have and his name is mentioned alongside some of the greatest people in their fields and we talk about them on today's episode. I can't think of how to introduce this and give you more without ruining some of these moments so I'm not going to. I'm just



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going to encourage you to sit back and listen and be ready to maybe have your mind blown a little bit. How are you?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I'm very well, thank you, and yourself?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'm doing alright. It's a beautiful day and in fact, when we're done talking, I think I'm going to go outside and go for a walk.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I'm going to go out and get on my stationary bike and go for a bike ride. Have a bike in my backyard.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's perfect. You get the best of both.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Works out pretty well.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

In between rains here, we're having our rainy seasons so...

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Where are you?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I'm in southern California.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I didn't know Southern California had a rainy season.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

We get periods where we have 3 or 4 days where it rains and when it rains, it rains.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Yes, I have experienced that. Only once or twice but yeah, it's pretty intense whereas here, I'm in Vermont, we might have days where there is rain.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

What part of Vermont are you in?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Montpelier.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I like Vermont. Pretty state. I love New England.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I was born in Maine, went to college in Massachusetts so I've lived in New England my whole life. I've done a lot of travelling but there's something about it here. Something about the people.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Boston is like home to me. I've lived in Boston for quite a few years and Rhode Island. I was in Providence, Rhode Island a few years and I have a lot of very dear friends in New England.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's a great place. Boston is one of my favorite cities. It's easy for those of us born in New England to forget how much is going on in Boston, how much of a resource it is.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Oh my god, it's changed so much though.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'm sure! I'm sure. When were you there?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I first moved up there in 1966. Been there in '86 as well.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

For personal reasons? For work reasons?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I had my boxing career.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah, it was quite the hot bed, or at least, was.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

My boxing career started in Philly and when I got into a little bit of trouble, they sent me to Boston and my whole life story, my father was a very prominent organized crime guy from New York so I was very close to Raymond Patriarca, Rhode Island.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah, I've heard. I have a few friends who have not been willing to go on record. They've witnessed things, they've heard things that there is a segment, and I'm going to be really careful the words I use because I know things that I'd rather not know, there is a cross-section of martial arts in Rhode Island that has ties to organized crime.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Oh, the guy I learned my martial arts, and there was a guy named Ronnie Dario whose father was the banker for Raymond Patriarca and Ronnie brought a master from China into Rhode Island back in the 60s who is the direct descendant of Master Po and he taught us. I learned bagua from him and I've been doing it for ever since. I've been doing it for like 60 years.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Oh, that's awesome!

**Jack O'Halloran:**

This guy was incredible. He was a little, he looked like a little Buddha and I took a swing at this guy with a samurai sword, full swing ahead, he caught it with 2 fingers. He taught us this push exercise where you put hand to hand, back of your hand and he would touch the center of his palm and just, he picked me right off my feet and hurled me backwards about 20 yards.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Have you gotten to that point in your training?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Yeah, I got to a very good point in it when I was younger and bagua, you defend from all angles. I have a document that I'd love to share. I'll send it to you and it's teaching you, it's from Master Po. It's from the 14<sup>th</sup> century that teaches you how to breathe and the inner strength that you get from breathing and it's an exercise that puts you at total relaxation. When you do it on a daily basis, you get into the habit of



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doing it, your body actually breathes itself and it's the best rest period you'll ever get because your whole body who is down into a rest mode, kind of a unique thing. You stick your tongue to the roof of your mouth and breathe up through your nose then you breathe with your stomach and you use your chi. It feeds your chi and take more oxygen into your body and then you let it out and you just keep doing it continuously and put your mind into a space of a place where you never had any conflict at all. Piece of tranquility like a color or a place or a thing and you focus on that and you breathe and breathe and breathe and you can actually feel the negative energy go right out of your body and if you can see yours which some people can you'll see the green just leave out of your feet.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You've gone pretty deep on this stuff, it sounds like.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I shared that with Bruce Lee because Bruce had his own type of meditation and I took it even deeper.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Ok, please don't gloss over that.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Bruce was a good guy and he was a good friend.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

When did you meet him?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Back in the 60s.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

How'd that come about?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

There was a guy down in Long Beach who had a school. You fought the guy down the school in Long Beach and the guy was a stunt guy and he was a martial art guy. Bruce brought a whole new element of martial arts through this guy and this old man, this master from Rhode Island, was invited to go to a showdown there and the guy, one of the people that he taught tried to take advantage and he wanted to show that he could hurt this master. What a mistake he made in front of a lot of people and this old fella, with just two fingers, watched him, touched this guy in 4 different places and shattered his bone.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What was the, I guess, the crowd's response?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

They knew this guy was being a bit of a dork. He actually tried to hurt this old man and the guy looked down and what do you think you're doing because they thought he was just doing an exhibition to enhance people's minds on the art and this guy was just one of those people that his ego got away with him and he made a really bad mistake. He never made it again, I'll tell you that.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

And Bruce Lee was at that event?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Bruce was there. Bruce could not believe what he saw but he did believe it because Bruce was a very and Bruce was very, in fact, that's what got him killed. Bruce was a bit of a renegade himself and he took the arts. He wanted to teach everybody and some of the old timers over there didn't want certain things taught to America. That's why we had this fella we smuggled out of China. They tried to do something but he was very, very powerful guy. Very high up guy and so humble. He was amazing. I loved him. He was terrific. Really was an amazing individual. I tell you something and this is true. It happened to me. When he first came over, he didn't speak a lot of English and when he was teaching us, I never spoke Chinese but he laid his hand on my thigh and started talking to me and I could understand what he was saying. Figure that one out.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I've experienced some pretty crazy stuff so I'm the last person to be skeptical of some things' possibility but we might have some folks listening who are saying no, that didn't happen.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

There's a lot of people. In fact, until you saw this guy in action, you would never believe it. If you told the story and I'll tell you something, how humble he was. When we brought him over, he wanted to go to work at a Chinese restaurant. He was a cook. He didn't want all the accolades and stuff. He was a very humble guy. He was actually amazing because we had a school with a lot of school but he took just a certain amount of people. He was very guarded in what he did and you had to really be into what he was talking about, he wouldn't be bothered. If you were doing it just to be a tough guy on the street or something of that nature and he knew. He was incredible. Guy was really the trip. He taught me balance, he taught me the body can endure an amazing amount of things and the strength you can put a solid strength in your bones and everything. You could hit me with a bat when I was a kid. You could hurt my legs.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

How long did you get to train with him?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Everyday! We did it for probably 6 to 10 years.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

We've bounced around a little bit. Was this before or after the boxing?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

It was right as I was into my fighting.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So, I would imagine there was a lot of carry over in what you were learning into the ring, right?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Yeah, yeah. I had a certain discipline that was amazing. He taught me discipline in life and as crazy as I was as a kid, you understand my father was one of the most powerful men in New York. My father was ahead of Murder, Incorporated and he was the Gambino family. He was the Anastasio family. My father was Albert Anastasia. In fact, I've written a book that was ready to be made a movie and we're going to do a series to tell the truth of the story.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Forgive my ignorance. Are there people who would be upset with you telling those stories and making a movie of it?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

On my side of the street, they want it told. We were tired of all the lies and the bad slant that's been given to organized crime and one of the amazing things about filmmaking these days is one genre that has never lost money was organized crime and they tell so many, Hollywood takes liberty and they slant things. The Italian mafia, so-called mafia, and I'm a believer. I live under the code of America, I've lived all my life. We were telling the story of how, from the very beginning, the government and the industry and organized crime and unions were partners. They created a lot of jobs. My father ran all the waterfronts and the Godfather, when Brando was approached to do the drug business, they said no because we touch it with our children, we touch that and it will be the downfall of our families. That's what my father said. They assassinated him in '57 and then came back to me when I was 14 years old and they told me later, it was the worst mistake I've ever made because he was the glue. He kept things



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together. The other guys entered the drug business because there was so much money and stuff and it was just as my father said. If you touch that stuff, you're going to use it and if you use it, it's going to create a vacuum of downfall within the families and it did do that.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I think this is the first time we've had an episode where 15 minutes in, I've got about 12 different directions that we could go and I'm not sure where to go because it's all inter-related.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

You live in New England and New England is totally controlled by the Familia. I mean, Raymond Patriarca was a powerhouse. Sam down at Springfield was a very powerful man at Springfield in Massachusetts. In fact, we used to have a home up in New Hampshire and one in Vermont and one in Maine. I fought a lot of fights in Maine that are not on record. I did a lot of smoker fights up there and Sam Silverman and the old man in Boston were promoters and they promoted all over the place up there and blew shows everywhere. It was an interesting time.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That sounds like the biggest understatement I've ever heard.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Rhode Island was, I mean, Raymond Patriarca was a powerhouse. You could do nothing in Rhode Island without, I mean, nobody did anything without him and they controlled Massachusetts and they controlled New England. They still do it, actually, in a lot of ways.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Why boxing?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I was playing pro football and I was down in Philadelphia. It was just an era, I left the school early, it was an era where you couldn't play professional football unless your class graduate. They didn't have what they do today, they have hardship cases where kids come out as a freshman and go right into pro ball and all that stuff. They didn't have that. You had to wait until your class graduated so I was grabbed by the New York Jets because I had a lot of ability and they had, similar to baseball farm teams, they have a study pro leagues on the east coast that lot of us played in until we were ready to play with aim, frame-wise and when it came time for me to play in New York, Philadelphia and I had a lot of friends of mine playing down there and they had a great team and Jerry Wollman had just bought the team and he was the new owner and I said to him I wanted to go down and play so they let me go and said I had a home if I wanted to come back to New York and I went down to Philly and they hire this guy [00:18:46] traded





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him to a championship football team in 2 months and Ali had just won the title and I said this to friends of mine who were organized crime guys who ran boxing and I said I can beat that guy. Next thing I know, I wound up at the gym.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You said you could beat Muhammad Ali. Did you mean it?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Sure. I meant it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Or were you just looking for attention?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I absolutely meant it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's a bold statement.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I was a tough kid of the street. I could never, you couldn't box amateur because I was already considered pro. Today, you could do that but you couldn't in those days and I started and I just had, I'm one of 10 heavy weights who was a ranked world fighter and never boxed amateur. My amateur fights were in the streets.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Sure. How far were you able to take boxing?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Ali and I were signed 4 times in a fight. I was a world-ranked fighter. I'm in several hall of fames. Once a pretty good fighter but problem is I got into, I think, after my 16<sup>th</sup>, I was undefeated the first 15 or 16 fights and they discovered I had a disease called Acromegaly which is a tumor in the pituitary gland and I shouldn't be boxing at all. They couldn't figure out how because it causes such depressions and how do you ever get up there to get in the ring? How do you do that? And you shouldn't be doing it and I said yeah, that's the whole of that. I like fighting. It's a great excuse for me to move around different places. I could take care of my street business without cover. I've been involved with people for a lot of years and I'm one of the few people that have never been to jail, only for weekends.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What do you attribute that to? How did you stay out?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

A little bit smarter than the average bear. I have some pretty good teachers when I was a kid and got some people in life. I never lived in one place long enough. I was always moving around. It's a problem. I have some friends of mine in New England that's done 30, 40 years in prison. Some of them died in it just because they never say anything. They lived under the code of Omerta which is to never talk. They wouldn't leave certain neighborhoods. It was easy for the FBI to get them for conspiracy and stuff. They put certain laws into place which if you were talking to somebody and that somebody did some crime and they attach you. I never hung my hat in the corner and say I belong to this fashion of this and that. I moved around.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Was that conscious or was that just your nature? Was that a conscious decision to move around to avoid getting picked up or was that you were a little bit of a rolling stone?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

It was a combination. I lived in Europe for 20 years.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What did you do over there?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I was in the movie business and I married a woman who was the heiress of Shell Oil. I really don't need to do anything but it was a great way to stay out of sight, out of mind and we had a lot of things going in Europe, gambling in Germany and friends of mine from Italy. I stayed busy.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I think, of all the things I'm hearing, and one thing I would never imagine anyone to accuse you of would be not being busy. I wouldn't imagine that boredom is something that suits you. How'd you get into movies?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

When I moved up to Boston and I was fighting out of Boston, Steve McQueen did the Thomas Crown Affair in 1966 and when he came into Boston, we looked after him. Make sure nobody's bothered him. He was such a great kid and he was good to you, oh you got to come to the set, I want to put you in the



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movie with me and he and I became good friends and he said, you should come to Hollywood, we would have a ball, bada-bing-bada-bang. He was a crazy guy and I just said it's just not for me, man. You and I are good friends, I turned him down and then I knocked the guy out in Los Angeles [00:23:46] ranked Number 2 in the world, ready to fight Muhammad Ali and I had, just to show you how kind of crazy it was, I took a fight in South Africa, I had to get out of the country for a while because we had some unions coming so I took a fight in South Africa for a month and they wanted me to move down there and box for South Africa and I said I don't think so. I got in great shape because I was doing nothing but taking up boxing so I fought a kid in South Africa and then, 10 days later, I fought Manuel Ramos in Los Angeles. I was in brilliant condition and I knocked this guy out in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round and they came to me to take a picture called the Great White Hope and Raymond, I never knew it until I got the fax and they threw me out and I was supposed to just walk in and sign a contract with this producer and I was talking Rambo all night and I said I don't think it's for me. Oh, you were supposed to just sign the contract. We want you to go to Spain for 6 months, blah blah blah. This was the biggest movie since James Earl Jones and it was a boxing movie so they wanted me to play [00:25:01] and I said I gave them a guy up in Minneapolis who has just retired. A big, tall kid. I say he's got 6 mouths to feed, he needs a job, you should call him and the guy was amazing. He turned in to town and I left and Eddie [00:25:25] put the thing together and he said ohmygod, you're going to get into so much trouble. You got to get into this movie. They want you off the street so you don't get into trouble. I said I'll take care of it. Don't worry about it and as I was leaving, James Earl Jones was coming, news goes around quickly. He grabs me and said you're [25:48] and he said is it true what I just heard about you? I don't know. What did you hear? You just told Hollywood to take the biggest movie out here and stick it? I said well, if you're looking at it that way, I guess. He says I got to shake your hand. I never met anybody who did that before and we became friends and McQueen called me on the phone. What are you doing, you crazy man! I said I'm not ready yet because I was looking to fight for the title. I just knocked out the Number 2 heavyweight in the world and I settled it with Raymond and stuff and when I retired from boxing, they came to me to do a picture and Robert Ludley with Robert Mitchum and I said I think it's time. I went to Hollywood and I met the director in New York and they flew me out to Hollywood to do the screentest and Mitchum saw the screentest and said it's him all along for the movie and we became very, very good friends. He really was a mentor and he taught me a lot about the industry. I played with Robert Mitchum.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I want to go back. I want to go way, way back and talk about your childhood because you're talking about a lot of different interests. Obviously, we're not talking about all these things happening across 6 or 12 months but it really seems like you could get plopped down anywhere in the world and you would find your place there and I'm guessing that that started somehow back in your childhood.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

It actually did. I started working when I was 5 years old, hauling orders. They have these poor little old ladies and the store was only a block away from the house so I had my wagon and I took work on



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Saturdays and took orders in the house and I take orders or something so I made a dollar or something. That was a big deal and I never, I hustle all the time. I delivered newspapers. In summertime, I sold paper on the beach and I bussed dishes at night and I had working papers when I was 14. When I was 16, I was a big kid and I didn't lie, we would spend summers in Wildwood, New Jersey and I worked a couple jobs. One summer, I was 14 years old, I had this great paper thing, selling newspapers in the morning at the beach and bussing dishes in the afternoon and at night I set pins on before they had automatic pin sets. So, I learned business and learned how to survive on my own and I didn't need anything from anybody.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What did your parents, what did your father think of this?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

My father, I only met once. I was raised by my mother. I was a lovechild. It was the 1940s, they were looking for Albert everywhere and he was in Indiana Gap, Pennsylvania and he was teaching soldiers how to be longshore men. He was a sergeant but he never spent a day, a night in the army. He was in Philadelphia every night with my mother. My mother, Jane Russell, and I was a lovechild in the 1940s.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What does your mother think of this work ethic?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

She was the one who taught me to be an independent person. She knew who Albert was. I never knew until, I met him once before he died and I was about to sit down and really get introduced to him but he left me 300 pages he's written up. It's very amazing. He was an amazing individual so the name O'Halloran, my mother was married to O'Halloran. He was away in World War II and my mother worked all the time and she was a gorgeous woman. She was a woman and met Albert at a club and I was the product of it. He always looked after me. He always had people around me when I was a kid people teaching me things. There was an Irish guy and his brother was the famous general of the IRA. He was an engineer for General Electric and was at the IRA down at the docks in Philadelphia and he was really close with my father and he came every day. He would be around teaching me different ways of compartmentalizing my mind. He taught me martial arts. He was the first guy that ever got me into judo and stuff like that. Taught me how to defend myself, taught me weapons. I did a lot of crazy stuff with him when I was a kid and he gave me a lot of discipline, showed me a lot of discipline. I had that in my life and when I met my father, when he was assassinated, I was 14 years old and I had a sit down with [00:31:52] and he sure took me underwing and I learned a lot of very valuable things which were very advantageous with my life. I used sports like a mirror in front and I learned how to compartmentalize. I have this guy [00:32:22] who was an amazing individual. He taught me how to, I could sit when I was a



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kid. I was only like 10 years old. I could sit and I could listen to the radio and I could watch television and read a book and listen to a conversation spoken in another room and be alert at all 4 of those elements and not just a word or a trick of it and he taught me a puzzle and I put 50 objects, list 50 objects and he gave me 2 minutes to go down the list and read it and then he would ask me a number and I would say the object. He would say the object, I gave him the number because I learned how to put a puzzle in my head and that's how I learned how to compartmentalize but I never got hung up on this or that, control my emotions and they said they sense it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It does. It's impressive. It's not something I can do but it's certainly impressive.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I learned that as a young child and I carried it through my life.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

When you stepped into acting and I'm not an actor, I've never been an actor. We've had a number of actors in the show and I've listened to interviews with actors which I find very interesting and one of the things I find interesting is the ability to draw on experience and it doesn't sound like, from our already pretty brief conversation, I'm sure, you talked about the book and we'll talk about the book in a minute, I'm sure if we went back and filled gaps, the experience that you had to draw on is quite vast and I would imagine that any role you would play, you'd have 3 or 4 choices of people to model.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

That was Mitchum. Mitchum was so instrumental in my acting and he knew. He knew about me more than I thought he knew and the very first day I went to work, he arranged for, they picked him up and they came to pick me up and we had to drive to downtown LA. I don't know if you've ever seen Farewell, My Lovely, if you haven't, it's a great film. He arranged for them to pick me up and I had not, I'd only met him once in a fight in a boxing match so I didn't really know him per se and the hotel called me and they said the driver's here. It was like 7 o'clock in the morning so I go skipping down the lobby and there's Mitchum hanging against the wall with dark glasses and he's standing his foot against the wall and I come in the lobby and I didn't realize even who he was and he said to me, oh, there's [00:35:28] so we hit it off right out the gate. We got in the car and he kept me laughing all the way down the set and then we got out of the car and I went to get dressed and I went to go do the very first shot I ever was going to do and he said to me, you read that script, kid? I know my role, your role, Charlotte Rampling's role. I know from cover and he said good, throw it in the trashcan. I said what? Throw it in the trashcan and don't let me catch you doing what thousands of people in this town do: acting. Just be yourself. Take yourself, put yourself into this character and walk down the street like it's you. You've been there kid. I know who you are and I was playing this hooligan and I say wow, this is a cakewalk and



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that's exactly what I did. From the very first moment, he taught me the camera, he taught me not to worry about this, not to worry about that and he taught me things that were valuable like don't look straight to the camera, let it find you because the camera's going to love you and it worked very well and Farewell turned out extremely well. Had I not been so, I had just come off the streets, man. Johnny Carson wanted me to do, Robert set it up. The movie came out very, very well. They thought I could get nominated for Supporting Actor that year and Robert set up a meeting with me for Apollo [00:37:20] and I went to sit down with Johnny Carson and we had a conversation and it dawned on me that show is live and they said yeah and I said I don't think I can do it. He said what are you talking about? I said I know Mitchum has told you a lot about me and I know you're onstage and you're going to ask about me about my father and I'm going to ask you where's the engine room at? You won't talk about your father? No, I won't. I won't talk about that side of my life and he said well, we'll arrange the questions and we won't ask those questions. John, I said no disrespect but you're the investigative reporter on television in this whole country and you have Albert Anastasia's son on the stage and you're not going to ask me about your father? I look like I could [00:38:15] offer and I said I really do, I have to give you a pass and Mitchum called me on the phone. Are you crazy? What's the matter with you? He said this is Hollywood. They love that shit. I just couldn't get my head around, you understand?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Absolutely, as much as I can.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I couldn't get my head around exposing certain things about my life on open television. I was like a fan. You see me here, you see me there, you see me nowhere. I could be just a face in the crowd, as big as I was, I could just melt away.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's changed. I'm curious why that changed. You went from giving up some pretty substantial opportunity to, now not just talking about it but promoting it and trying to set the record straight.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I saw so many changes. John Gotti was a foolish man and a lot of people, they change. They get into this drug business. They forgot how to make money and I didn't like where it was going and I didn't want to get attached and I staged more into gaming and stuff like that and I think then, it became, the sad part was that I would not do a lot of publicity even with Superman. I knew what I could do onscreen and what I did onscreen stood out and it was very much acknowledged and I became an iconic actor and I don't know. I just never ran down the street with publicity like a lot of actors do and every picture I did, I did well and I've gotten accolades for everything I've ever done.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Talk about Superman.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Superman was, I was doing a picture in Spain with Gene Hackman called March or Die and they came and asked if I would go to London and meet with Richard Donner and Hackman and I flew up there together and Donner and I sat down and had a conversation about the character Non and they said how do you feel about playing the guy who's a mute and I said I would embrace doing that. They said what? I would embrace doing that because Jackie Gleason is a friend of mine and he did a picture called Jigo and he won an Oscar for it playing a deaf dumb mute and I would love the opportunity again. I read the script and I said you've got 3 villains and Non was a genius scientist that they lobotomized but he was this huge brute of a man and you have turned Stamp as a vicious general and Sarah is a man-eater so somebody has to relate to the child audience and there's going to be a huge child audience in this movie so I'm going to take this big, brutish guy and I'm going to play him like a child learning how to walk and talk and use his eyes and all that stuff and act like a child and it worked very well. It came off pretty good and I've had people use it when they first started Comic Con and my god, I was so scared when I saw Non but I loved the character because it related to children so it came up pretty well. It worked out pretty well. I mean, what did you think?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It worked very well.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I became an iconic actor from it and yeah, I enjoyed doing the film. We all did. It was a great movie. We had a great cast. I was sad that they didn't let Donner continue because he would have done 3 or 4, 5 and 6 would have been a different franchise. That's another thing. It went on a different direction.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

These stories are great and I'm loving it and I'm not, I don't want to change anything but I want to bring some martial art thread into it because you've talked about discipline, you've talked about obviously the physical components of your martial arts training. You've talked about judo, you've talked about boxing and I include boxing as a martial art. Not that everyone does but I do and it's my show so we're going to throw it in there and I'm curious because when we have guests on who have done some acting, whether that's stunt work on in front of the camera, character work, one of the things I find really interesting is how their time as a martial artist enhanced or changed the way that they act so I'm wondering...

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I'll give you a good story. When I retired from boxing and I was in the acting business and I went to the gym everyday because I loved working out and they sent a kid from Detroit, he was in the Cronk gym



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and they sent him to LA because they thought he was a Southpaw and he was [00:44:08] but he was undefeated and they sent him out to the Goosing gym where I was working out at and I helped a lot of kids in the Goosing gym [00:44:17] and I worked a lot and they sent this young man out and I watched him train and I grabbed him and I sat him down and I said if you listen to what I tell you and you do as I asked you to do training wise, I'll make you world champion in 6 months and so I moved him to my house. I put him into a training regime like I would with martial arts and I taught him how to breathe and I taught him and I got him into the best condition he ever got in his life. I took his body fat down to 8% and I created Frankie Liles. Frankie Liles became the super middle weight champion of the world and defended his title for several years. I also started Freddie Roach who is one of the premiere trainers in the world. Trains Pacquiao and he started out with Frankie. I showed him, I taught Frankie how to move side to side and stepping. I taught him how to instill martial arts into his boxing ability and created a relaxation in him and he went right down. We went right down the list, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 contenders and just beat them all. He was a very skilled fighter.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'm not much of a historian of boxing as much as would be great for this conversation but from what I do know, it sounds like what you're talking about, this training regimen was not typical at the time.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

No, it wasn't.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What inspired you to give that a whirl but to be so confident? You told this guy 6 months.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Because I knew the ability that I had that I didn't do. I didn't do it myself and put myself into boxing when I should've put into it and I got away with it because I was a tough kid so I wanted to show the knowledge that I had, I could give to somebody and that it was teachable. That you could teach other people to do this and I did that and I proved a point to myself and I never walked around and got big accolades for it or wanted to go on television and all that stuff but that was what I did it for. I took them to the title, he won the title, he beat Michael Nunn, he beat Seillier and top contenders and he beat them handedly and then, one day he got too full of himself and he thought he could do this by himself and walked away and that's when he first lost.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's amazing how many careers his ego has claimed.

**Jack O'Halloran:**





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It's sad. That's all it is. His ego. When you take somebody to a threshold and they think they're invulnerable but they don't remember how they got there and one of the traits of martial arts is humility and if you don't have humility, you're never going to master any martial arts ever. I don't care how good you think you are. When I did a movie, Hero and the Terror with Chuck Norris, Chuck and I used to have long discussions and Chuck was very good at martial arts but he was never Bruce Lee.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

What do you mean by that?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Bruce lived, ate and slept his art. He was a believer in it. He created a whole new principle. He wrote a whole new theory out and he lived it every day and every moment of his life. He didn't use it as a step forward in society. He went to China to do all those movies because they jerked his chain with micro parodies. He was supposed to play that guy.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

We've talked a bit about that on this show.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

He was very angry but he went over to China and he did all those movies and then he wouldn't do movies here again. He was kind of a crazy kid and he would go down into neighborhoods and knowing people are going to try and mug him and he would take guns off the guys and everything and I told him Bruce, you can't do all that kind of stuff because these kids will shoot you and he said they're not fast enough. They're not quick enough and they killed him with a mental deal. If people don't believe that they don't have the abilities of entering your head, then they're mistaken. They put a bubble in his head and caused an aneurysm. That's what killed him to stop doing what he was doing.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You're referring to teaching non-Chinese?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Yeah and you know that part when they did his life story, that part's very true. He had that conflict with the elders and there are some people over there, they guard that stuff. They don't want certain things let out. People watch movies and they see people disappear in front of these stuff. Well, they actually have an ability to do so and every person's eye has a blind spot. You understand? The oriental mind, for some reason, has the ability to focus and catch that and these ninjas used to disappear right in front of you because your blind spot, and they'd move and they weren't there and people got very confused on that and it was a reality that they could do it but they had the ability to leap up into a tree and have



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things on the ground that they already had or disappear in front of your eyeball. You understand? And I knew a couple ninjas that were very, very clever guys and they couldn't live in society because there's too much negativity. These guys are so positive thinking and they are so pure and the movements of their bodies and their conditioning and the way they eat and the way they live so they live in the woods and they lived in places where there's not a lot of people around. That's why they live in these compounds like the shaolin monks and stuff and some of those purists, they can do amazing things. I've seen them do some crazy, you just shake your head at and say whoa. How does the human body do that but it is possible because it's mind over matter.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You told some pretty incredible things already, I wonder if you can be more specific. I think anybody who's made it this deep into this episode and our conversation has suspended some disbelief. If you wouldn't mind indulging me.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

It's a matter of how much you want your mind to be free. How much you want to believe in you. How much you want to understand that if you put a discipline and it's a discipline, there's no 2 ways about that. What you put in your body, I'll give you a good example. I was asked into the service. I didn't want to go, going to Vietnam. I went to do a special forces thing. It was either that or go to jail. I spent time with this ninja guy that I knew from Washington and he said let me tell you why soldiers in Vietnam and places like where there's hate and stuff, why they get in trouble and why they get caught is because of their diet and their sweat and the stink that comes out of their sweat that they don't smell. Other people have the ability to smell you a mile away. I said you're kidding. He said no. I ate certain foods and put it into my system and stopped eating meat and stopped eating and I ate things that the same people that they ate over there and there was a snake called in Vietnam called the hook snake that would kill you. If it bit you and you didn't have a stick in your arm with a repellent for it, you were dead. They killed a lot of people and it happened if you're in the jungle. It was one of those little things that crawl in your boot or something so I took snake venom a little bit a day and built my immune system up. I got sick as a dog the first week but it built my immune system up so if that snake ever bit me, I was never going to die but you have to discipline yourself to do something like that. How much you want and how much you care about your life, what length are you willing to go to to protect you as an individual. How much of yourself were you willing to give or would you just want to read something or listen to a man teach you something and take what you feel you want to take and then put a limitation on yourself when there is no limitation if you don't want it. That make any sense to you?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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That sounds like the common thread through everything you've talked about that you've done. I'm going to guess that even now, if someone posed a challenge to you, if you wanted to tackle it, if you believe it, you could tackle it and succeed. Is there anything you're working on?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

You take it to heart and do it. I have a script I was working on 40 years ago and there was a film, there was an Oscar winning film they called The Informer. It won 4 Oscars and when I first got into business, I didn't have an agent so when My Lovely came out, I got an agent and the guy sat me down and said what is it you want? Where do you want to go and I said I like [00:56:50] the kind of pictures he did. He said they don't do movies like that anymore. Well, I will re-do The Informer and he said wait a minute, you're not an actor 6 months and now you're going to be a writer/producer? I said yeah so, I got a hold of Liam O'Flaherty who wrote a book called the Informer that they made the movie out of and he lived in England and I went to see him and sat down with him and he told me where the characters came from and everything and then I sat down with Robert Mitchum and I told him what I wanted to do. He said my advice is to go to a library, get 10 or 12 Oscar-winning scripts and look at the format, read them and learn how they put them together and I did that and I wrote a script and I've turned down several deals for it because I didn't like the way the studios were going to control it so we're now getting into the mode of I'm going to do the film as soon as all this stuff lets up and we're getting ready to go to Ireland and do it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

The script that you're talking about, this exposé, not the right word, these sharing of truth, these stories, that's what you've been holding on to all these years?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I like to do it right and it's in my Oscar and I won an Oscar. I will win the Oscar.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It reminds me of, if you know the story behind the Avatar and off-camera, waiting and for the audience, if you haven't looked into this, you might want to, that the original ideas came right around the time of Star Wars and it fully wasn't until 3D was really viable that he moved forward with that picture because he wanted to tell it right. You say you wanted to make sure the story is told the right way.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Timing is a lot to do with it and the cast and stuff like that. Like the music, I've already done. I've wrote a song for the script back in the 80s. I was getting ready to do it and I wrote a song called Simple man and Elton John recorded it. You look up Elton John's recording, you'll find the song called Simple Man. I was the kid that wrote that. His writer was a good friend of mine and we were sitting down one day I said I



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want to put music down for this film and I created a song called Ballad of the Simple Man and he said I'm going to take this to Elton, do you mind? I said no. He got his name on it and he got the credit for it but I knew that it was me and when I was going to do the film and I went to Elton and we got permission to do it and it fits the script to a T. This song is about Frankie and so, the music is already done and the guy's a pretty prominent guy that recorded it so I put pieces of the puzzle already.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I see that and you're not afraid to play the long game.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

No. Patience is a virtue.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Martial arts movies, that's kind of the intersection of if we were to kind of take all the things that we talked about today, we'd be talking about martial arts movies and it's funny when we have actor guests on this show, they're either really passionate about martial arts movies or they're really, really not. There doesn't seem to be much middle ground and I'm curious if you'll either be the first person to break that dichotomy or if you'll fall into one of the two.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I'll give you a funny story. Back in the 60s, when martial arts was becoming a big deal in America and they were opening up all these schools everywhere and teaching kung fu which is a very raw martial arts because it's very forward and aggressive so there was a guy from Cherry Hill, New Jersey who had a couple schools over there and he wanted to prove like the interface boxing and martial arts and he wanted to prove that how martial arts is so much better than boxing and how it could be implemented and there was a champion by the name of Joey Giardello who came up who was a middle weight champion of the world and a very, very good fighter and we were sitting in a restaurant one day in Cherry Hill and there was this guy who came up to Giardello and he said I would like to challenge you in a gym and show you how martial arts could prevail over boxing and Joey looked at me and he said are you joking? No, no, no, he said, I would really like to get in a ring with you so Joey's in his suit and he just cut some deals with some people and he said ok, let's go. Guy said what? Right now? Yeah, let's go over the gym in South Philadelphia and we went over to the gym in South Philly and Joey took off his coat, his shirt and got a pair of boxing shoes and put them on and didn't even change his pants. He got in the ring and this guy thought he was going to display his wonderful talent coming straightforward at Giardello and Joey, being a very clever boxer, took a half step to the left, hit him with a left hook and knocked him out and walked out the ring, put his shirt back on and he said well, I guess, you got your lesson for the day, huh? And he bet the guy \$200 and he had a bet and he took the \$200 and we left.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Good, got your money back then.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

This guy wanted to make a point so he could publicize it for his school. His ego ran away with him. He was going to use this to say that he went to the ring and could go two rounds and that was the deal. That he would be able to last 2 rounds with Giardello in the ring and Joey was the middleweight champion of the world at that time. He took a half step and he got by him and he hit him with a left hook and went boom, see you later. In fact, we moved back to the restaurant.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Before we talk about the book and start to wind down here, there's one more subject I kind of want to tackle and, bear with me as I choose my words carefully, I think it would be really easy for someone to listen to the stories you're telling and hear ego in them but that's not what I hear. I hear confidence and we talked a little bit about ego before and ego is a subject that comes up constantly on this show especially when we start talking about martial arts and grandmaster and stripes and all these.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Ego blinds people. Somebody said to me one time when I was younger, oh, you should go get involved with that group over there and get a black belt. I said I was taught by masters and Bruce Lee was one of them and I said belts are for holding your pants. Did you hear what I said?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I did and it's almost becoming a cliché. It almost feels like we're pulling back from rank and, in some respects, it's become so devalued and I'm not going to point fingers at anyone or anything and I think we all know what I'm talking about that there are schools where rank means a lot less than it does than in other places. Certainly, the people in the times that you're talking about saying that not to worry about rank, it's ahead of its time, the way I'm seeing it, maybe it's more par for the course, but what I really want you to talk about is this line between ego and confidence because I don't know if we've had anyone on the show that has brought this up in this way and I think you have the opportunity to teach us, to share with us because I think, it would have been a very simple roll of the dice for you that the way you're telling these stories now today would have been filled with a lot of ego.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I'll give you a good example: mind over matter and mind over matter is through discipline and you can't have ego if you're going to control your own destiny. Ego is for children. When I had the operation to remove the tumor in my head, they did it at Mass general and they were very advanced and there was a doctor there, Raymond Shelburne, who couldn't believe that I was a boxer when I went to see him because the pituitary controls a lot of things in your body and it controls your growth hormone and the



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normal rate of growth hormone out of this is like 10%, mine was pumping out 150 so the arthritis in my body and stuff because of the growth hormone and caused rheumaty arthritis and the guy said to me how could you possibly? Long story short, so they had this procedure where they both have the tubes in the machine and how they got rid of the tumor was a proton beam which was a laser that didn't burn but it caused an inner explosion of the tumor and knocked it out and I was one of the thousand for the first time that did it. I was very fortunate but I was in the hospital with Mass General for 4 days. They prepared me for the operation, had the operation and I was supposed to stay there for another 2 weeks while they evaluated how the growth hormone deteriorated, how things, how my body changed because you're going to go through a lot of mental changes and I checked myself out of the hospital and drove down to Baltimore, Maryland and fought the Number 2 heavy weight, Larry Middleton, in the world in a 10-round fight because I had made an obligation to do that. I still had the scabs in my head where they had bolted this thing to my head and I trained 2 days for the fight. I went to the gym and loosened up in 2 days, did no sparring and wound up, I think the fight went 9 rounds and they stopped it because I just ran out of gas. I shouldn't have been in the ring at all but I did it because I made an obligation that I would do it and I handled myself very well for 6 rounds. I had him hurt at times. I should have knocked him out but I just couldn't get the push to finish certain things but I had enough ability to not get hurt. I could move and I made people miss me and stuff but I learned a serious lesson but you do things and you allow yourself to do things and when the doctor found out, are you out of your mind? You just had a serious operation and a serious gland in your head and you're just going to take blows to the head? What is wrong with you? Mind over matter. You know what I mean?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I do. Not the way you do but I have an understanding.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

You have to live with who you are and what you are and what your abilities are and can we stretch that? Of course, we can. Did I know that I was taking a chance to doing something? Yeah but I knew I couldn't get hurt all that bad because I knew how to take care of myself. It was just one of those things.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Let's talk about this book. You've talked a little bit about it, there's a script, there's a book. I assume there's some overlap in there.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

The book is called Family Legacy and if you go to a site called [familylegacythenovel.com](http://familylegacythenovel.com), it takes you right down where it's at and it tells the story of it, why I did it and I wrote the book because it was time for people to understand how a group of people were thrown under the bus. The government just didn't want partners any longer. When I was a boy growing up, you're a young fella, when I was a boy growing



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up in the cities of Philadelphia in the streets, children went out to play in the streets from sun up to sun down. You never went home. You're always out on the street playing and there was never a problem. There weren't any drive-by shootings, you could leave a baby pram outside of your house without someone stealing the child, we didn't lock our front doors, neighborhoods were protected because La Familia, they ran their neighborhoods very well and it was a different way of life. Today, you wouldn't think of living that way. It was like where I live, I don't lock my front door. Somebody comes in my house, they better come to play. That would be a bad mistake and there were people that ran the areas around that I live know that I live there and I don't bother them and I don't want them to bother me. If they want to go rob somebody, they robbed the guy next door if you want. That's up to you. if you bring that to my front door, then you're bringing it to the wrong front door.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I can see that. I feel sorry for anyone who breaks into your home.

**Jack O'Halloran:**

I'm 77 years old now but life is funny. You have to believe in your own self and your own abilities to do certain things to make your life work the way you wanted to work and could I have done a hundred other films and different things? Yeah, I could have but I did what I wanted to do. It showed the ones that I wanted to do and what I did with all, I did well. If you looked at the genre of pictures that I did, you'll see that every picture I did, what I did in them, I did well and that's not ego, that's just the way. I've been applauded for everything I've ever done.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I ask every guest to choose how we end our conversation, whether that be some advice or it could be another story, it could be anything so how would you want to end our conversation today for the audience?

**Jack O'Halloran:**

Life is a never-ending journey. Every day is another day and it's up to the individual to live in which you're doing and where you're going and how much do you believe it. Do you have the ability to be 100% honest with you? Can you look in the mirror, eyeball to eyeball, with that person in that mirror and say I really like you today, I like what you're doing, I like where you're going, I like who you are. I believe that people can do that.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I told you that this was going to be a great episode, didn't I? And it was! I know, I say that about every episode and I'm going to continue saying that about every episode but it's because we get the best guests. We have so much luck. We're fortunate, we're blessed so Mr. O'Halloran, thank you for sharing



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these amazing stories. This is one I'm going to have to go back and listen to it a couple for times myself. If you want to see more, if you want to see more, if you want links and photos and all that, go to [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). Check out the notes for this episode 506, maybe find the transcripts and consider supporting our work. You could make a purchase at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com), use the code PODCAST15 to save 15% or leave a review, buy a book on Amazon or help out with the Patreon, [Patreon.com/whistlekick](https://Patreon.com/whistlekick) and if you see someone out in the wild wearing a whistlekick shirt, maybe a hat, make sure you say hello. If you have guest suggestions, let us know and you should be following us on social media @whistlekick everywhere. My personal email address, [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com). I love hearing from all of you, keep it up. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day!