

Andrew Linick: Getting Decked by a Sensei in 1958

TURNING
POINT



BY HERB
BORKLAND

IN THIS INSPIRING
MONTHLY COLUMN, WE
EXAMINE THE PIVOTAL
POINT IN A PROMINENT
BLACK BELT'S CAREER
THAT TOOK HIM OR HER
ONTO MAJOR SUCCESS
IN MARTIAL ARTS
BUSINESS, SPORTS
OR FILMS.

Hanshi Andrew S. Linick, Ph.D., began training in 1958 and is a widely-acknowledged expert in karate and Okinawan self-defense weapons. He won over 250 tournament championships from the mid-Sixties to mid-Seventies. His best-selling book, *Nunchaku: Karate's Deadliest Fighting Sticks*, has reportedly sold over 225,000 copies worldwide.

Linick has co-produced and/or appeared as a featured demonstrator in martial arts shows around the world, including four times on ABC's *Wide World of Sports*. In 2011, the American Karate and Tae Kwon Do Organization awarded Linick a 10th-degree black belt certified by first-generation legends Allen Steen, Keith Yates, Michael Procter and James B. Toney.

Herb Borkland: Where did you grow up, and what did your father do?

Andrew Linick: My father, Eddie Linick, manufactured hats and gloves and successfully sold them to the armed forces during World War II. I grew up in the Bronx, NY. In the late '50s, many times, in order to cross the street, you would have to know somebody in the [neighborhood street] group. You had to carry an illegal blade of choice, or a baseball bat, tire iron, brass knuckles, or know boxing and "Garbage-Can Ryu" (laughter).

HB: How did you first hear about martial arts?

AL: The Judo Twins in Queens, NY had an ad [for their school] in the newspaper, and later, from Jerome Mackey [judo champion and concert pianist] of Imperial Dojo in NYC and Long Island.

HB: Turning point?

AL: It was 1958; I was twelve and living in West Hempstead. I read an ad that said something about "the mystical Oriental martial arts." At that time, I was the Police Boys Club boxing champ and very interested in finding out about this one-hundred pound, five-foot-two Asian challenging the American public to [matches against him and] the new art of karate.

I went to the Imperial Dojo with four wise guys and myself. We had a fifth guy at the door as our lookout, because we were going to beat up the teacher and run like hell. We went downstairs and the sensei on the mat asked for volunteers. So, he challenged all four of us. We circled around him and, in broken English, he said, "Anytime you ready."

We had [a plan] to take out every part of his body, from his throat to his groin. I remember giving the command [to attack] first. [So] I was the first guy thrown in the air. As I hit the mat, dazed, I got up thinking, "We better get out of here before they call the cops." I looked around and saw all my buddies sprawled on the mat! Nobody was moving! Sensei was in the center, saying, "Want to try again?" *That* was my turning point! I had to learn this awesome knowledge.

HB: What does the future hold?

AL: I fear for the future of traditional martial arts. Today, anyone can hang out a shingle claiming to teach anything: "*Gitchi-Goo—Five Fingers of Death*." The classical arts have been so watered down. And what are students *really* learning in forty-five-minute classes? Will they be able to defend themselves in a real-life encounter?

My philosophy, in a nutshell, is: The cost of a thing is the amount of life you must change for it. The more I learn about the intrinsic wisdom of our Asian forefathers, the more I realize I am a perpetual student, honing what little I have learned as I try to attain satori. 🏆

