

Filipino Martial Arts

Digest

Majapai Derobio

Special Edition
2009



Derobio, Escrima

Arnis 63 Generals

Kali

Sphinx Karate

Kuntao



Grandmaster Dan Medina

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Filipino Martial Arts Digest is published and distributed by:

FMA Digest

1297 Eider Circle

Fallon, Nevada 89406

Visit us on the World Wide Web: www.fmadigest.com

The FMA Digest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

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From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

Grandmaster Dan Medina has over 36 years of experience in the martial arts, such as Derobio Escrima, Arnis 63 Generals, Kali, Kuntao/Arnis Batangas and Sphinx Karate along with the traditional arts of Aikido, Silat, Kobudo, and Western sword fighting. He has combined and molded them into a single art which he calls Majapai Escrima.

Being in the US Navy Grandmaster Medina was fortunate to spend time in the Philippines, in Hawaii where he was a personal student of Great Grandmaster Pedoy, and in San Diego, CA. where on the USS Belleauwood he became a student of Grandmaster Babao. This is not to mention so many more accomplished Filipino martial arts practitioners he was able to train with.

The FMA Digest would have to fully agree with the statement of Guro John Kovacs that one of the most refreshing aspects of Grandmaster Medina's outlook on the martial arts and life in general is his humility. He never claims to "know it all" despite having been involved in training and teaching martial arts for over thirty years. He has shown himself to be a good friend and trust worthy. I can only see his popularity and notoriety grow over time. Anyone who can experience some time on and off the mat with him should not miss out on the opportunity...

Maraming Salamat Po



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Majapai Escrima

By Grandmaster Dan Medina

Majapai Escrima is the culmination of 36+ years of studying Philippine martial arts such as Derobio Escrima, Arnis, Kali, and Sphinx Karate along with the traditional arts of Aikido, Silat, Kobudo, and Western sword fighting. I have blended the best of what each had to offer. But it had to flow together and not just be a hodgepodge of techniques. It all had to work as one whole.



A Healthy Appetite

As I have traveled around the world, I made it a point to stop at martial arts schools in each country and try to exchange ideas with the schools there. Some were very inviting and open minded others were not so. I remember going to a Wing Chun school in Australia, I was there only for a few days and I asked if I could make arrangements to train. They could not show me the door fast enough. But I guess things happen for unknown reasons and as luck would have it, I just happened to walk into the school of Jan De Jong who was responsible for training the British SAS. He was also a Silat instructor. When he found out I was with the US Navy he went to the back and came out with knives, pistols and Uzi's. He offered me the same training he gave the SAS and proceeded to instruct me on disarming weapons, hitting hard and fast and how you can quickly turn the weapon on the attacker. I enjoyed his training. How I wish there had been more like him, those that are willing to share.

I had this insatiable appetite for martial arts and could not get enough. In those days, you could go to a theatre, pay one fee and watch martial arts movies all night long. I was in heaven as I watched every move and technique. I was hooked. I lived, ate and slept martial arts. The Navy gave me what I wanted; a ticket to the world; Hong Kong, Singapore, Thai Land, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. I was a martial arts junkie and I was getting my fix.

In The Beginning

In the beginning, my enthusiasm for the martial arts was displayed in my hard core training schedule. Students often endured two hour classes and those with the same passion often stayed for an additional three hours. These classes were not for the faint of heart. I tried to teach the same way I was taught in the Philippines but this often grueling method of instruction was not well received in the US.

I remember opening a free class on my ship. We had a crew of 999 Sailors and 2000 Marines out of which I actually had about 60 eager students sign up. Half of them dropped the second day and by day three I was down to 15. After one week, I was left with six dedicated and serious students. Those 6 remained with me for my whole tour on that ship. Those who dropped out started with a lot of enthusiasm. You would think they were trying out for the Navy Seals, or something like that, but the truth was they could not handle the real training like it was taught in the country of origin. So sadly they really

missed out. I had a lot to give and I wanted to share all I knew. But I was not done training or learning and this has continued until today. I have many high ranking students in the martial arts today and they call me Chief, Master, and Grandmaster. But I still see myself as a student with a very open mind.

Origins of Majapai

Now I need to get back to the origins of Majapai. While all this training was going on I had great teachers that continued to urge me to learn. Two of these were Punong Guro Ricardo Mendoza (Sphinx Karate and Arnis 63 Generals) and Grandmaster Narrie Babao (Kuntao/Arnis Batangas) acquaintances who were aware of their co-teaching status. Back in those days, in the late 70's and early 80's you did not study more than one style of martial art, much less have more than one teacher, this was frowned upon. If your teacher found out that you were taking classes from someone else they would automatically kick you out of their school.

These two teachers were secure in their knowledge and encouraged my education without competition and politics. It was these two teachers who opened my eyes and opened the doors to other Filipino martial arts Masters for me.



Grandmaster Narrie Babao



Front Row: Punong Guro Ricardo Mendoza
and Shihan Manny M. de Leon

Unfortunately, there are still teachers today who don't feel the same way. I had a couple of young ladies come and watch one of my demos about 3 years ago and they actually got suspended when their teacher found out. I believe that a teacher who feels challenged by a student seeking knowledge in other venues displays his own insecurities and is doing his students an injustice.

This was how I grew up in the Filipino martial arts.

Meeting and exchanging ideas with mostly Filipino masters and on occasion with Japanese, Korean, Dutch, Hawaiian and US Masters. I can honestly say I was very lucky. I would like to thank the following masters for contributing to my growth both as a martial artist and human being. Listed below, in order of their coming into my life, are the instructors who have had the greatest influence, whether small or large, all have contributed to my growth; some technically and spiritually others taught me how to see things differently for which I will be forever grateful.

- Punong Guro Ricardo Mendoza (Sphinx System)
- Grandmaster Gingco (Kyokushin/Kuntaw)
- Grandmaster Narrie Babao (Kuntao, Arnis Batangas) Lakan Pabalinas (Modern Arnis)
- Grandmaster D Canete (Doce Pares)
- Great Grandmaster Pedoy (Derobio Escrima)

- Batikan E.J Pedoy (Derobio, Langaw)
- Great Grandmaster F. Villabrille (Kali)
- Master J. Bunch (OKKF)
- Master S. Sanchez (Intra Morro)
- Maja Guro G. Alland (Pekiti Tersia)
- Shihan Ray Barrera (Swanda Kobudo)
- Sijo A Emprado (Kajukenbo)
- Master R. Harris (Kalipunan)
- Master J. Tacosa & B. Alback (Serrada Escrima)
- Master E. Sulite (Lameco)
- Pandekar P. De Thouars and W. De Thouars (Silat, Kuntao)



With all the incredible instructors and the martial arts they shared, there is so much to take from and so much to give. In the evolution of Majapai, I have taken drills that were taught to me and rejuvenated them which streamlines training by adding disarms, take downs, sweeps and throws as well as substituting strikes or adding extra angles and strikes. I've also added multiple attacker drills, moving away from the traditional one on one technique. Having a student defend against multiple attackers teaches strategy while on the move. I start them off defending strikes that come in a sequential order but from 3 or more striking individuals who are constantly moving around the defender. As the student progresses, the strikes become random and the attacker numbers increase along with the intensity. The more advanced student is also expected to perform disarms, throws, and opponent manipulation at "real time speeds". I tell all my students that if you have to think about what you're going to do, it's too late. You have to train the body and the mind to work as one. Movements should be instinctual. If the techniques aren't an instant response to the action, there is a lag between mind and body. My job is to eliminate that lag or reduce it. Students often ask why my actions seem so effortless while theirs feel awkward and slow. I tell them that it's all a matter of training and understanding the principles and theories behind the movement. Knowing and understanding how things work or don't work and how they fit together. Repeating that movement until it becomes natural like breathing, walking or swatting a fly.

Derobio Escrima: Passing Techniques, and Smooth Flow

I'm very lucky to have had teachers like Great Grandmaster Pedoy who at the time had 80 years of experience and who saw in me something special. Sometimes the favoritism which he bestowed upon me didn't go over well with peers. It did offer me

experiences, extra tutelage and long conversation in which he shared his wisdom, guidance in life, religion and many other life altering things. I will always treasure the time I spent with Great Grandmaster Pedoy and his son Batikan Edwardo Pedoy.

Some times Derobio is misunderstood, people believe that this is a single bolo style and that it's all just passing but in reality it does both. We include Sa Gang Sa Gawas (Outside) and Sa Gang Sa Sulud (Inside) blocks as well as a la contra (force to force). The style encompasses the use of double weapons along with the use of the staff and spear as evidenced in our demo done at the Neil Blazedale Arena in Hawaii at the Hawaii Martial Arts Extravaganza which featured Hawaii's most prominent martial artist. This included Dan Inosanto, Richard Bustillo, Raymond Tabossa, Joey and Mike Delmar, Snooky Sanchez, William Chow, Wally Jay and many more. It was a who's who of the martial arts event.



It was great to see my good friends Mike Delmar and Snooky Sanchez in addition to a host of many others. The talented instructors and demonstrators made international news shedding a new light onto the Philippine martial arts.

In the history of Deobio Escrima, multiple influences/weapons have always been present and a part of the training. Many who are somewhat familiar with the history forget that Great Grandmaster Pedoy traveled Island to Island for many years learning as much as he could from many instructors. This was the wish of General Faustino Ablen (a veteran of the Spanish American and Filipino American wars and the teacher of Great Grandmaster Pedoy).

Great Grandmaster Pedoy fostered this tradition of innovation and growth which I continue today.

Black Masters Sphinx Karate: Empty Hand, Inner Strength and Weapons

Grandmaster Jimmy B. Galez, founder of the Black Masters Sphinx Karate Clan of the Philippines and co-founder of the Philippine Karate Association has also had great influence in my empty hand training. Those students who have felt the grabbing hand techniques of Sphinx will attest to the terrible pain and nasty bruises filled with blood that these grabs will produce. The flesh is literally torn right off the muscle. This is sometimes referred to as Kino Mutai. This school is also known for its Arnis 63 generals, which has its roots in the art of "Kin Adman", known as the art of the Gods. This ancient art is believed to have descended from the Iloilo Royal bloodlines. In addition to the famed Tiger, Crab and Eagle Claw techniques, breathing



Grandmaster Galez demonstrating Arnis 63 Generals

and meditation exercises are used as a means of purification and strengthening of the body. These arts assisted me in forming the strong inner base that serves as the foundation of Majapai. The honor and title of Rajah was bestowed upon me by Grandmaster Jimmy B. Galez and Rajah Jimmy Galez II when they promoted me to 6th Dan Red & White belt this year.

Arnis Batangas/Philippine Kuntao: Speed & Full Contact Fighting



Dan Medina getting ready to fight, coached by Grandmaster Babao

The speed at which I execute my techniques comes from the family art of Grandmaster, Narrie Babao. The precision, speed and timing of this system of Arnis Batangas focus on no wasted movements. The strike comes from the next closest point or from the stopping point of your last strike. Pallitan or “changing hands” and the art of Engaño or “faking” are also part of this intricate style. It was during my time with Grandmaster Narrie Babao that I was first introduced to full contact weapons fighting which included but was not limited to stick fighting. This offered me the opportunity to use my skills against other weapons arts such as Kendo, Nunchaku, Staff and Spear.

And everything in between....

In addition to the previously named styles and instructors, other martial arts have also influenced the art of Majapai: I have incorporated Swanda Kabudo and pressure point striking which I learned from Shihan Ray Barrera at Karate 1 International in Albuquerque, N.M.

The art of body and hand conditioning came from Kyokushin/Kuntaw instructor, Lakan Lima Reynaldo Ginco.

The concepts of working close and on the inside of the attacker’s personal space were reinforced by the art of Serrada as taught by Master Jimmy Tacosa and Guru Bruce Albach.



Shihan Ray Barrera



The advanced principals of movement and direction were already ingrained in me by the Sphinx system but were re-enforced and given a new direction by, Pandakar’s Willem and Paul de Thouars.

In Majapai, students quickly realize the importance of a strong yet sensitive checking (non-weapon) hand. These skills of opponent manipulation between strikes are strikes in and of themselves. The effectiveness of proper use of the checking hand cannot be underestimated

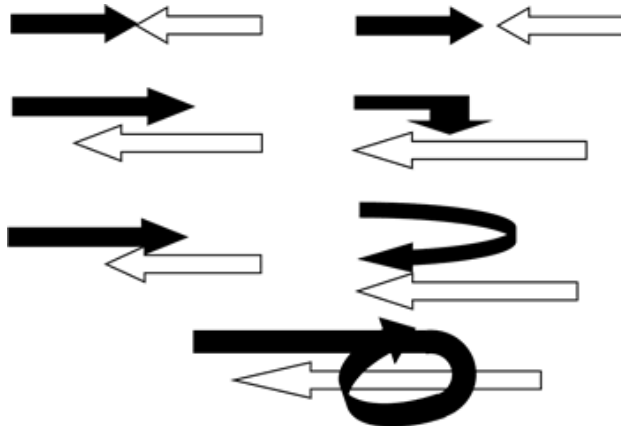
and I credit these skills to Grandmaster, Dionisio “Diony” Cañete of the Doce Pares Escrima.

Basic Overview of Majapai

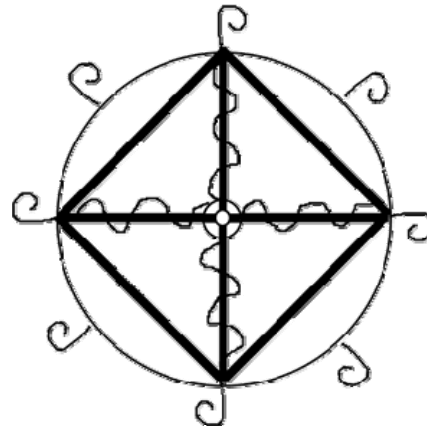
Majapai is unique in its movement due to its absorption and redirection of energy. Majapai is not exclusively a passing system, it also incorporates force to force or uses force to force to redirect to a passing response. This is confusing and unpredictable to an attacker. It also allows you to redirect your opponent’s strength and energy to your advantage and momentum. Let me use the following example; A strike comes at you from angle #1 (downward, right handed strike to the collar bone or head), you stop the forward momentum on the inside in a force to force action, then re-direct it either over your head or downwards placing you on the outside of your opponent. If the strike comes from the left, this same maneuver will put you on the inside for closer attacks.



The use of constant change of direction from inside to outside (Sa Gang Sa Gawas and Sa Gang Sa Sulud) and vice versa, is coupled with the use of nerve strikes, joint manipulation, sweeps and throws. This keeps your opponent totally confused and unable to predict your next move. In addition, the constant redirection of movement will disorientate the attacker and leave them feeling much like a rag doll caught in a hurricane.



System of attacks and counter attacks



Principals of movement

“Majapai is a living art that is constantly growing and evolving.”

Over the years, I’ve demonstrated my system and many were surprised to see the use of empty hand and kicking techniques used in conjunction to the famed locks and counter-locks. Many assume that Philippine martial arts are a stick only martial art. Majapai is a living art that is constantly growing and evolving. Students learn concepts that can be applied in force to force situations as well as passing because it’s the concept of the application that is important. As advanced student become more aware of the overall concepts of joints, movement, and angles, then the individual techniques begin to ebb and flow with the movement of the attacker. No longer is one technique tied to a certain type of attack or a certain angle. The advanced student is able to adjust the technique to the attack and either manipulates the opponent or the technique to fit the situation with split second timing. In many arts techniques or defensive movements are set in stone and taught as a response to specific attacks. Often the student becomes focused on footwork, or hand placement or body orientation and can no longer see the forest for the trees. The essence of the technique is lost and becomes unusable in a time of need.



In the classroom, techniques are applied during fast moving drills. A student must recognize openings using sensitivity and visual cues, decide on which technique to use and apply it while executing a technically difficult drill. This trains instinctual and habitual reactions in addition to removing the stagnant environment of action and reaction set movements. The drill moves around the classroom and often multiple opponents are used. These fast passed training methods re-enforce the skills and push them to the reflexive part of your brain.

Because of the various martial arts that influence Majapai and the way the system is taught, many instructors view it as a compliment to what they are already teaching. Incorporating the Majapai system into their curriculum has infused their instruction with new life and brought with it a mixed martial arts environment. It also offers the students a bridge between hard and soft styles allowing them to flow from one to the other without conflict.

Majapai has been very well received in the martial arts community. It has been recognized by many famous and high ranking martial arts instructors throughout the country as a very effective and dangerous martial arts system. This is evidenced by my induction into the International Karate & Kickboxing Hall of Fame in 2001, and by my recent induction into the USA International Black Belt Hall of Fame in November of this year. I have also recently been nominated to the Action Martial Arts Magazine Hall of Honors in Atlantic City in January of 2010. I have also earned a PH.D for my contributions to the Philippine martial arts.



2001 Induction - Albuquerque NM.



2009 Induction - Pittsburgh PA

“Dan, you have created a whole new animal” - **Richard Bustillo**

It is my hope to continue this legacy given to me by my many instructors and to represent the Philippine martial arts with respect, honor, and loyalty.

“Wherever you go, you should always acknowledge where you came from and give credit to those who came before you.” - **Grandmaster Dan Medina**

The Locks and Counter Locks of Majapai/ Derobio Escrima

By S. Colby

Technical advisor: Professor Brandon Jordan

In an ongoing effort to find new and more defined martial arts, a trend is moving towards the notorious Philippine fighting styles. These disciplines (Derobio, Kali , Escrima, etc) have proven themselves to be highly effective in competitions and “real-life” situations. Based on weapons fighting, pressure point techniques, joint locks and counter locks as well as bone crushing efficiency, these styles are quick, and deadly.

I have just recently been exposed to this world of sticks, staffs, swords, and the such by Chief Maestro Dan Medina in Albuquerque, New Mexico in an empty warehouse appropriately called the “sweat shop”. After watching a few of his intensive training classes, I was awe struck by the lethality of this fighting style. The defensive reactions and offensive techniques are not only accomplished with very little movement but with an almost ruthless efficiency. Maestro Medina very quickly disarms his opponent and renders him/her harmless or in the Maestro’s complete control (in which the victim... uh, opponent) very closely resembles a rag doll. No motion is wasted, and the opponent often receives several blows from one strike. Much to the student’s embarrassment, they usually find that the blows were delivered with their own weapon. The chief’s students are quick to discourage the timid new comers, stating that this class is not for the weak at heart or body. Needless to say, I was fascinated!

Many people are familiar with Escrima, as it has become very popular in recent years. Originating in the Philippines, Escrima is more of a way of life than a sport. Filipino children learn martial arts at an early age and most often have to use it in actual

situations. Bruce Lee has been credited for much of Escrimas popularity in the United States with his JKD concepts influenced by the Guru, Dan Inosanto.

“The counter-locks in Derobio are the most intricate I’ve ever seen”

- Dan Inosanto

(Bruce Lee’s training partner and one of the foremost practitioners of Filipino martial arts)

The Derobio style of Escrima is a relatively unknown martial art system that works with, and in many ways, surpasses other methods of Filipino martial arts. Derobio incorporates the most intricate movements and breaks it down to the most basic elements. Based on 12 angles of attack, the student is taught to defend/disarm using bare hands, sticks, knives, swords and in reality anything you can get your hands on. Maestro Medina, (affectionately called “Chief” by his students) even tells a great tale of a student who fended off an attack with a rolled up magazine.

With 144 counter locks (unique to Derobio) the system is very complex but looks so simple to perform.

Derobio uses the methods of passing all weapons strikes to their zero point of power, which is taught to student from the very beginning. This allows the student the advantage of not relying on force to force methods of dealing with attacks. At the onset of an attack, students pass the strike first and then close the distance into close range quickly, which smothers and confuses the attacker and allows Derobio practitioners the opportunity to safely deliver multiple strikes with the weapon or empty hand simultaneously. From this close range, a number of trapping, joint locking elbow strikes, limb destructions and low line kicking techniques can take place.

Many other methods of combat use joint locking and teach that the applications of certain locks are impossible to counter. That’s where the counter locks of Derobio begin. These locks are normally done with the weapon, though they may also be done empty handed with some modification. When applied with the weapon, locks are applied to joints, bone, muscle and tendons as well as nerve pressure points. They often have the effect of shutting off one’s ability to think about anything but the pain. (This is often evident throughout the class as one student or another either screams or taps out as these locks are applied). This knowledge is generally reserved for the most advanced practitioners of this style due to the amount of control required to practice these methods, as well as the amount of pain experienced during practice.



Chief Medina demonstrates some of the painful locks in the Derobio system on student Corwin Drakus



Chief Medina demonstrates some of the painful locks in the Derobio system on student Corwin Drakus

Chief's style of Derobio (in which he holds a 8th degree black belt equivalent) is that he seems to have a counter movement for any attack or defense you throw at him. This old system was so well received in Albuquerque, the news quickly spread, and within a short period of time almost eighty percent of the local teachers studied with Maestro Medina.

Guro Richard Bustillio, one of the world's leading martial artists, was quoted as saying *"Maestro Medina has taken Derobio to new heights and created a totally new animal"*.

Unlike a lot of disciplines, Maestro Medina starts his beginning students defending against weapons instead of working up to them. The Derobio rattan sticks can reach speeds of up to 100 plus miles per hour, and if a student can defend against that, a punch or kick would almost seem like slow motion.

"Medina's command of the style is total" - Action Martial Arts Magazine

Master Dan Medina is one of a handful of personal student of Great Grand Master Pedoy that received full instruction of these locks. Until recently, few outside of the Derobio Escrima school branches have seen these locks, much less known of their existence. The most impressive aspect of the



Chief administering one of the famed counter locks on Professor Brandon Jordan

After talking to Medina, you get a feeling of the "The old school" with a new twist. The Chief proudly tells the blessings he received by the two oldest living Escrima Masters at the time; Grandmaster Braulio Tomada Pedoy asked Medina to kneel down in front of the setting sun of Oahu, Hawaii as he prayed over him to continue on, in perpetuating the Filipino martial arts. Master Floro Billabrille spoke a similar blessing over the Chief while facing the setting sun of Kapaa, Kauai. Medina retells some of the spiritual lessons he received as well as physical ones and hopes that they will mean the same to his students. It's a pleasure to talk to this "old style" Master of his art who has brought Derobio into the 21st century.

"You don't have to be a wizened old 5th degree black belt to know that "New" martial arts systems crop up with the regularity of the winter flu. And to often, the lofty promises of a new system evaporate as soon as the trusting student signs a school contract and forks over the first month's tuition. But it doesn't take long to see that what Medina is teaching is radically different from the syllabus of the average dojo."

The Albuquerque Journal 10/22/90

Maestro Medina brings into his style the influences of several disciplines such as Arnis 63 generals, Modern Arnis, Arnis Kuntao, Kali, Aikido, Kobudo, Sikaran, and Philippine Karate along with several other systems that he holds multiple level black belt standings in. Medina has traveled the world over several times while serving in the U.S. Military which included an extended stay in the Orient. This allowed the Chief to obtain a well rounded and unique style which he calls Majapai.

As impressive as his list of instructors is, his list of students is equally impressive with some very well known celebrities and current popular martial artists. With this kind of impressive resume, I had to ask, “*Why teach in an empty warehouse, dance studio or city park?*” “*Where’s the fancy school with the expensive equipment and store selling school paraphernalia?*” “*If you’re serious about learning, it doesn’t matter where you do it. Besides, it keeps everyone grounded and focused on why they’re there*”. Medina Said.

While getting to know this enigmatic martial artist, I distinctly got the impression that he teaches the art as part of a promise given to his masters and because he genuinely loves teaching. I don’t think money or even fame is a motivation for him. Give him a few serious students who give their all and he’s happy to teach anywhere.

Finding Purpose in Practice

By: Professor Brandon Jordan

“A man must be prepared to give 100% to his purpose, fulfill his karma or dissolve it, and then let go of that specific form of living. He must be capable of not knowing what to do with his life, entering a period of unknowingness and waiting for a vision or a new form.” –David Deida (The Way of the Superior Man)

My own experience in training and practicing martial arts began 25 years ago, first being instructed in Okinawan karate from a cousin as a boy. This initial exposure ignited a growing thirst for knowledge that would lead me to many teachers and methods spanning a wide spectrum of cultural expressions of combative, healing, and meditative practices. My vision and inner mission has seen me teaching for well over 12 years now, including having spent the last 3 years traveling the country, cross-referencing my knowledge and experiences with that of others, following the advice of my spiritual mentors to understand what it truly means to ‘serve as a teacher’. This approach has helped me to appreciate that teaching the martial arts isn’t solely about me or my personal abilities, but rather it’s about my role as a teacher to develop others and help them to face and overcome their own personal challenges through the medium of



martial arts practice while also honing the combative skills that may save their lives or the lives of others, should the need arise. It is this view that informs the unique approach to practice that I in turn share with my own students.



Growing up, I was exposed to a great deal of violence. From fighting off bullies weekly over lunch money, or being assaulted by other teenagers due to being the only minority in high school in the Midwest, exposure to gang violence with the local Hispanic gangs during initiations in the Southwest, experiencing extreme poverty, and family drug abuse. These were just a few of the things that would form my character and approach to training. It was these types of experiences that informed my perspective on the realities of violence that were far different from what most potential students would encounter before joining a local martial arts school seeking

instruction in self-defense. As a young man growing up and traveling frequently with my family, I would take these lessons and the training that I received from other instructors along the way to develop strategies of his my own for when I would have to face these types ordeals that would serve to test not only my fighting spirit but more importantly my will to prevail in spite of the odds.

I would spend much of my waking hours, when not focusing on school, reading up on any and all information about the martial arts that I could find. This supplemented the times that I didn't have a formal teacher to practice under. In many of the stories I would read, I learned that it was not so long ago, when Asian and Pan Asian martial arts schools were very closed communities. They would primarily teach relatives and/or family friends. With the few exceptions when they did admit an outsider, he/she probably wasn't a minority. Notable pioneers such as the late Grandmaster Dr. Moses Powell, Grandmaster Ron Van Clief, and countless others broke through these barriers paving the way for the next generation. Encouraged and strengthened by the many examples of courage and perseverance, I was determined to follow in their footsteps and one day become a Master as well.

As fate would have it, the late Great Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy's school was the first school in Hawaii to openly accept students of all backgrounds and ethnicities. In the early 90's under the teachings of then Chief Maestro Dan Medina (one of Grandmaster Pedoy's protégés) at his school in Albuquerque, NM, my own journey into the Filipino martial arts would begin.

One day while walking home from my work, I happened to stumble across an out of the way school and saw a sign in the window offering instruction in 'stick-fighting'. It was extremely rare in New Mexico, as most of the schools I had trained at only offered instruction in karate, taekwondo, or kung fu. At the time that I met Grandmaster Medina, his classes were very selective, with only 2nd-3rd degree black belts or higher being accepted into training, due to its severity. After inquiring about classes and seeking an opportunity to learn this art I was accepted as a probationary student for the first 3 months of my training, much to the chagrin of my classmates at the time. Needless to say,

the next 3 months would prove to be very enlightening and would fill in the blanks on many of the questions that I had from my own experiences with fighting. One of the lessons that really stuck with me was a quote from Great Grandmaster Pedoy, who stated that 'one learns the art so as not to use it'. I believe he meant that one should always look for other ways to de-escalate a violent encounter when at all possible. This is similar to the lessons that my cousin gave me when I began studying karate. This and many other lessons in my personal life taught me about the importance of showing humanity to aggressors whenever possible. It was early on in my martial arts career that I realized that there was a profound difference between being a martial artist and walking the path of a warrior; they weren't the same. A warrior could be a father, a husband, a counselor, and a protector when needed. Whereas only being a martial artist would put one into a box, that few are able to liberate themselves from. Sometimes offering a hand to one's adversary can do more than raising one's fist or the tip of one's stick.

In the times when fighting is necessary, it is equally important to be able to show mercy. This is more difficult than it sounds. This is one of the most important lessons to learn and live by, and requires real courage.

From the beginning of my training in the Filipino martial arts, I would not only learn fighting applications and techniques, but also the history and etiquette of these fighting arts. One such lesson that I was given has served to protect me in a situation where I could have faced serious harm had I not have been educated in the customs of respect that are observed. The meaning and different manners of saluting with a weapon to other Eskrimadors or Arnisadors if you will, is very important. This is what I was taught...

In the Philippines, traveling through different parts of the islands is common, and just as common, is not speaking the same language. The Philippine archipelago is home to many different ethnic groups and local dialects; as a way around this communication barrier, the salutation is used as a universal way to convey one's intentions, as well as to identify what style you may practice. Intentions can be anything from a friendly exchange between strangers to a death match all-dependent upon non-verbal communication with the weapon.

For instance, after having trained Derobio for several years, I took a job opportunity that required relocation to Virginia Beach, VA. There were no other schools offering Derobio and I ended up contacting several instructors in the area, to look for schools offering Filipino martial arts to cross train in for the time being until I could make another trip out to continue training in Derobio. After searching for a few weeks, I found an instructor of mixed Filipino and Chinese heritage, who taught a variant of Filipino martial arts along with Chinese kenpo and a shaolin based 5-animal style. The head instructor cordially invited me to his school to speak and watch his class. After class had ended, the instructor asked me about what Filipino styles I had trained in and if I wouldn't mind sharing and demonstrating on his most senior student who was a 2nd degree black belt, I was merely a 4th level white shirt (the equivalent of a green belt) at the time. Before I knew it, the instructor locked the door of his school, which surprised me, considering the school was still supposed to be open. Suddenly, what was supposed to be a demonstration of techniques became a sparring session in a locked school. It could have ended badly for me.

The instructor's senior student points the tip of the weapon to floor, and places his hand palm-down on the butt-end of the stick, representing your opponent's blood running down the weapon, essentially a death match as I had been taught from my studies of Derobio. I responded with a "friendly match" salutation, weapon pointing up with the palm under the punyo or butt end of the stick, which means 'no blood will be spilled'. The student again bowed the same way, weapon facing down. At this point, his salutation had outlined his intentions and there was no room for hesitation so I immediately hit him with a horizontal strike across the nose, breaking it instantly, followed by a redonda strike to the base of the skull hurling him into the wall and unleashing a barrage of strikes that bounced the senior student off the wall over and again. It was seconds before the head instructor jumped in and stopped the fight, looking at me as if I had lost my mind, which I may very well have in that split moment considering the circumstances. Given the situation I feel that I was justified and so did Grandmaster Medina, after laughing when I shared the story with him.

I proceeded to explain to the head instructor why I reacted that way, sharing the stories I had been taught about how the stick is used to communicate and convey intent to either have a playful exchange or a death match in the Philippines. The head instructor later explains to me that he had made a synthesis of a Chinese shaolin bow, where the right hand cups the left fist, and blended it with holding a stick in your right hand, resulting in what appears to be a death match salutation, unbeknownst to the young students and the instructor himself. Being that he is half Filipino and I obviously have no Filipino ancestry, this was a nearly fatal fact and it was difficult for him to believe/accept that I was, in fact, correct. Grandmaster Medina came out shortly afterwards to assist me with a fundraiser for the Make-a-Wish Foundation and we both sat down with this instructor, educating him about the history and cultural heritage of these arts. This understanding had been left out of his training, as he had learned primarily through seminars and workshops focusing on techniques only.

Needless to say this experience left an indelible mark upon my memory and really drove home the importance of understanding the cultural reasons why things are done a certain way so that if you make changes, which is not wrong in and of itself, you do not dishonor the arts, or worse, say something you didn't mean to say, with no way to repair an error. It also was a stark lesson for the master and student about the importance of non-verbal communication in the Filipino martial arts.

After this test of bravery Grandmaster Medina, seeing that I upheld the teachings well and defended the honor of the school, upgraded me to a 2nd level black shirt, which was a 3rd degree brown belt equivalent, and allowed me to begin teaching.

I moved back to Albuquerque, NM and as the years would go by, I rapidly climbed through the ranks, eventually becoming the first African-American to become a full instructor 1st level Red and eventually a Master instructor 3rd level Red in Derobio. I have gone on to become the highest-ranking instructor to date in the Majapai branch of Derobio. I achieved this rank at a relatively young age compared to most, however



Grandmaster Medina emphasized to me that it's the skill and the maturity behind the skill that matters most, not merely how many years one has shown up for class. Mastery is how one strives for perfection and puts honor first within their own lives.

One of the more important insights I gained from my experiences and training with Grandmaster Medina is the necessity of having a solid foundation in a primary discipline before branching out and studying other arts. Many practitioners today move in and out of arts so quickly, that they never have the opportunity to explore the depth of their foundation art, in my personal opinion this is a real hindrance and sets the learning curve back considerably. With the emergence of McDojos and video instruction, much of today's training is more geared towards ego driven, self-gratification rather than unbiased learning. Without a teacher or someone who can transmit the energy and emotional content behind a technique, or simply convey a principle through touching hands, students today are at a real disadvantage.

I remember well during my earlier years of training with Grandmaster Medina he would often say to me, "we can learn all these techniques and styles, but at the end of the day where does it all fit in?" Every so often he might spar with me using movement from another style in order to help me learn to trust my art and adapt its movement as needed when sparring against another style. We would often use a basic drill for us called "pak sao", which is a slap, parry, check drill to field test various techniques. It was important to be able to take any given technique or movement and use it in real time with a partner in order to refine motor skills and develop sensitivity. This was an important key to practice of not only one's primary art but also for finding a way to blend in and out of other styles while still using your root art.

Of course to be fair I should also state that many of the core concepts and principles that he helped me to unlock and appreciate were basic for us but oftentimes were very advanced perspectives from other art forms. Later on, when I did seek out further training, the keys that were shared with me, coupled with my own desire and passion for learning, made it possible for me to grasp other methods at an extremely accelerated rate, often to the dismay of other instructors. Some teachers were quick to end training with me due to this fact. It is amazing that what is often taken for granted and freely shared in one art is so jealously guarded and hoarded in another, keeping students still under a master 20 plus years later, with teachings that cripple their own creative process, is unnecessarily burdensome, and solidifies dependence on the teacher.

Within many of the martial arts of the Malay Archipelago there is a Sanskrit word used to designate one who is a teacher and that word is, "Guru" which often has a spiritual connotation as well. The word "Guru" is a contraction of two smaller words, "gu" meaning darkness, and "ru" meaning that which dispels. In other words a guru is one who turns darkness into light or dispels ignorance or lack of knowledge through diligent and patient teaching. The role of the guru is to provide guidance; teachings and honorable conduct for the murid (student) with the goal of helping them find their own keys to personal freedom rather than fear, control, and subservience.

Of course there are as many methods to achieve this, as there are "gurus." The objective is to eventually realize that the true guru or "Sat Guru" (root teacher) is already within you. This doesn't require external validation.

Thankfully this inner realization from training came early and guided me as I sought continued education in these arts. There is a saying that if you give a man a fish

you feed him for a day, whereas if you teach him how to fish you feed him for a lifetime. Among the many fishermen selling their catch, I am fortunate that I learned not only how to fish, but also how to teach others this skill as well for their own benefit.

Upon successfully completing my training in Derobio, I was encouraged to seek out training under the tutelage of Mr. Willem de Thouars, the Grandmaster of the famed KunTao-Silat system. Grandmaster Medina had met him many years prior and felt that he would be a good fit. I set out in that direction after graduating from Chinese Medicine School. I had seen and heard of some impressive things about him and was determined to see for myself.



In my first class with Grandmaster de Thouars, I worked out with the other senior students, all masters in their own right. I would be exposed to their expertise in styles ranging from monkey KunTao, Ba Gua, preying mantis fist, to cimande silat. One of the senior students, who showed up for this class, that I would have the fortune to train very closely with at a later time, was Guru George Morin. Grandmaster de Thouars watched my exchange with his students and graciously accepted me to come up and train with him. Over the next 6 months, I made the necessary preparations to move. In that time, I made regular trips out to train privately. In one session, he brought out what he called his 'practice knife', which turned out to be a kitchen cleaver! This knife was so sharp that he used it to take chunks off of the shed. I remember very well Grandmaster de Thouars asking me to throw my fastest punch at him, and when I very hesitantly did, he flicked the knife off of my forearm, into mid air, caught it in reverse grip, and stopped the tip of the blade at my throat. He told me, 'this is the old bladed art Mr. Jordan, if a man claims to be a blade expert, ask to see their scars'. He showed me a few of his that day. Needless to say after training I checked my body for any holes after that humbling experience.



When I finally did move to Colorado, as fate would have it, I ended up training with Guru George Morin, who was one of Grandmaster de Thouars' first 3 disciples. I was fortunate enough to be accepted as a private student and training partner with George, since he had no one to workout with, and he took me under those conditions. I trained with Guru George, 4 or 5 hours at a time, 3 to 4 times a week privately over the course of several years. He shared a lot of insight into various internal training methods, as well as what distinguishes Kun Tao from Pentjak Silat. The next understanding was the various differences between each style of silat, such as the defining characteristics. One lesson I learned from Guru George time and time again is that 'your hands will protect you, but your footwork will

save your life.’ I also had the good opportunity to engage in teacher training with Dr. Conrad Bui in Pentjak Silat Pukulan Pa Sera, as well as Lao Shr Wayne Welsh earning the rank of Sifu in his Ying Pao Long Hsing KunTao system which is an internal method of BaGua and Hsing-I coupled with the strike impact methods of the old hand KunTao that he learned with Grandmaster de Thouars and many others. A truly brilliant style of combat and health preservation, it was Lao Shr Wayne, or ‘Uncle’, as he prefers to be called, who encouraged me to formally develop my own system after training with him for many years and initially approved of its formation in September of 2004 giving me his blessing to teach this and his internal method as well.

While living in the San Francisco Bay Area I also had the opportunity to work closely for a time in Los Angeles with Bapak Cliff Stewart, a student of Pendekar Paul de Thouars in his personal style of Pukulan Kilat Silat Sera. From Guru Cliff, I learned the importance of energy transfer, marma adi (dim mak), and accurate target selection, as well as an even deeper understanding of the geometric structures used in the footwork of silat. I think he is the



first person I have practiced jurus with while listening to Earth Wind and Fire! Guru Cliff would often jokingly say to me ‘this is Afro-Indo silat and your Silat is out door! But you can take it indoor if you listen to your own inner spirit and let your ancestors speak through you.’ Talk about taking one’s practice out of the box and making it your own. This was a very important lesson indeed, and one I will always cherish.

I have also greatly benefitted from friendship and cross-referencing with Grandmaster Shelley Millsbaugh of Kombatan and the founder of Kadena Kruzada. Grandmaster Shelley was generous enough to invite me to teach at his school in Kansas City, MO. When I first introduced Derobio to him he immediately recognized its origins and proceeded to share some additional refinements on blade usage including some of the ‘lost Pulahan footwork methods.’ This was a great experience and exchange of knowledge.

On August 15, 2009, I received the rare honor of formal recognition of my own system and the official sanctioning of Mandala Mandirigma Kali-Silat with the title of Punong Guro/Founding Master, awarded by long time friend, mentor and colleague Grandmaster Darrell Sarjeant, and his Silent Warrior Arts Organization. This recognition reflects not only my contributions to the martial arts, but also my continued commitment to serving and educating the community. Also I hold a 3rd level Red Senior Master Rank in Derobio, Master rank in Majapai, Sifu in Ying Pao Long Hsing KunTao from Lao Shr Wayne Welsh, 2nd degree black belt in Blackmaster Sphinx Karate, Recognized member Lakan Dalawa of the Kapatiran Mandirigma brotherhood of Grandmaster Shelley Millsbaugh, Maestro rank in Filipino KunTao, and a Graduate diploma in Tui Na Chinese Structural Massage.

My experience in healing traditions has acted as a sounding board for and informs the base of my teachings. The wisdom of the old masters has been that understanding the healing is fundamental to understanding combat. Many of the best fighters were also great healers. Great Grandmaster Pedoy was in fact a master of Hilot Massage and had vast knowledge of herbology and spiritual matters. It is increasingly the case that the combative side; is overly trained, often to the demise of those who years later are unable to keep up with their practice and have to retire early, if years of training leave you still unable to defend yourself or your loved ones because of injuries, and subsequently, in poor health, then it has served no lasting benefit. The essential ingredient to balanced martial arts practice is balanced maintenance of health.

Currently I teach a small group of dedicated students and provide seminar instruction in Mandala Mandirigma, a balanced, three-dimensional martial art inspired from the fighting traditions of the Philippines and Indonesia and conceptualized in the United States. Mandala Mandirigma covers weapons, stand-up fighting, ground grappling, healing arts and much more... Mandala Mandirigma is defined as “essence preserving practices of warrior arts”. This system is geared towards the goal of not only training in combative application, but also acting as a sustainable and enjoyable practice for individuals of any background and skill level. My experience and background has allowed me to teach this art to men and women of all backgrounds, from civilians to athletes, the elderly to children and everyone in between. The only requirement is an open mind. In my personal journey and path, it has been a blessing to have trained with the many gifted teachers I have crossed paths with along the way. The task set before me is in developing the next generation and seeing their practice bear fruit as mine has.



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Derobio Escrima in My Personal Safety Strategy

By Franko Piratea

For years my martial arts training and my combative experiences never overlapped. It was almost as if my martial arts study was an academic pursuit while I always fell back on the tried and true techniques taught to me by a rowdy bunch of bouncers, boxers, bar fighters and even a prison guard. It wasn't until I had a brief exposure to the Filipino martial arts (FMA) that I found a



way to bring my academics together with reality. Unfortunately for my training I moved away as soon as I began to gain any proficiency and I could not find an instructor to continue my training. I was fortunate to find a Brazilian martial arts instructor and immediately fell in love with the art. Back in the early 1990's mixed martial arts was just gaining popularity and it was still really difficult to determine which arts had true self-defense value. While I love BJJ and continue to train today I often have flashbacks of being on top of an opponent in a bar, a favorable position except for the undetermined number of his friends stomping to the back of my head. Fortunately for me a friend happened to be nearby and peeled them away sending one of their heads through a nearby gumball machine. Submission fighting has an important place in my training but am I keenly aware that in life there are no rules and rings. Aggressors often travel in packs and bring toys.

While I was unable to find an instructor I did read everything I could on the Filipino martial arts and spent countless hours watching Dog Brothers videos. It wasn't until I moved to New Mexico did I try once again to find a Filipino martial arts instructor. For a summer I traveled to various schools, seminars, and exhibitions on my search. The answer was always the same, "Oh we don't do that, the person you need to talk to is Dan Medina." While the illusive Dan Medina may have been the right answer he was a little difficult to find without a flashy facility in a strip mall. One lucky and completely random day my wife and I stopped for a small exhibition in a local high school gym and I was lucky enough to track Master Medina down and begin training.

After training for a while Dan requires each of his students to research the art and document what Derobio Escrima means in their life. This gave me an opportunity to revisit my question from my previous martial arts experience and my inability to call upon it when needed. I thought a good method was to try and determine the best course of action for a variety of situations. The US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs compiles a National Crime Victimization Survey annually. From this survey it is possible to determine statistically what the opportunity for success is in resisting various crimes such as rape, robbery, and assault. The survey clearly demonstrated that resisting a crime helps the situation on average 63% of the time and it only makes situations worse 9.2% of the time. A similar question I considered was what happens when a third party observes a crime and decides to intervene. While nearly 50% of the time aiding a situation had impact a significant 36% of the time the intervention helped the situation. I was surprised that in less than 10% of the situations did a third party assisting the victim actually hurt the situation.

With a 43% chance of avoiding injury all together or at least not making it worse resistance is clearly beneficial in many cases. Resistance helps the situation six times more often than it makes the situation worse. For the 10% of situations in which resistance made the situation worse the aggressor became more aggressive 70% of the time but the resistance only increased the injury level by less than 7% and caused others to get hurt less than 3%. Statistically the victim who resists has a much better chance of improving the situation while only slightly increasing the risk of additional injury. By now I was sold on the fact that submission to crime wouldn't be my first choice but I wondered about weapons. It turned out that approximately one quarter of all crimes include the use of weapons, the use of hand guns and the use of knives if roughly the same at 6%.

The research was interesting and only furthered my passion for the arts but it wasn't until I began to contrast the reality of the statistics to the sterility of many martial arts. With Derobio we trained against many opponents with and without weapons. Class



moved beyond the traditional preconceived attacks to the randomness that multiple simultaneous opponents provides. The movements that Great Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy had described as part of a style of fighting that is a no-nonsense with no wasted movement had become muscle memory. The drills were not canned and the techniques flowed into realistic situations. While I hadn't been in a fight in decades I could tell these were my new fall back techniques.

My reckless youthful years had left me with skepticism towards martial arts so I always sought to test my new knowledge under the duress of real situations. Of course I wasn't going to look for trouble but I wanted to know what worked and what didn't. To me one of the best parts of submission fighting, boxing, and even paint ball is that in order to be effective you must apply the skills under simultaneous mental and physical opposition. Few students and instructors are all that interested in taking to training to that level of full contact where anything goes. It leads to injuries, requires a great deal of conditioning and preparation, it is hard to find the right kind of training equipment, and is just generally dangerous.

It was here that I truly gained the respect for Master Medina and the very impressive Derobio lineage. Despite bruised knuckles and a few pretty severe injuries Master Medina is always willing to go all out and let an aggressive 200 plus pound former bouncer and bar fighter with twenty years of prior martial arts training bring all he has. It is humbling as edged weapons completely change the equation while strength and force only work against you. It is enlightening to be defeated by the effectiveness of a basic Filipino martial arts technique applied with subtlety of a true craftsman. The tranquility of mind found in the "eye of the storm" of full contact is one of the most peaceful experiences I have found. Of course it also reminds me that humility is the best policy because no matter how hard you try there are always people out there a lot better than you!

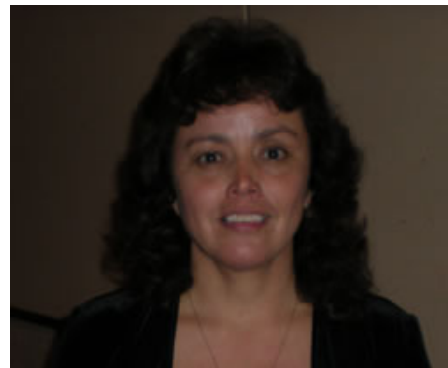
Martial Arts a Way of Life

By Master Antionette Chavez

B.S. Marketing

MBA Masters in Business Administration

I was born in Grants, New Mexico in 1967. In 1978, at the age of 11 I started taking martial arts classes at the recommendation of my cousin who was taking classes at our local college with Shihan Ray Barrera. He taught Shoto-Kan and Tae Kwon



Do at our Community College. From the very beginning, I really enjoyed the classes; it seemed like the right thing for me. When I turned 15 my parents allowed me to ride the Grey Hound bus to Albuquerque 140 miles round trip on weekends so that I could take more classes. I loved every aspect of martial arts especially competing in sparring and forms. By the time I was 14 years old I was assisting in the University classes, when I turned 17 Mr. Barrera could no longer make the trip due to work constrictions so he let myself and another Instructor take over the classes, by my senior year of high school I was teaching the classes on my own.

In 1985 I moved to Albuquerque New Mexico to attend the University of New Mexico, I had received an academic scholarship to the University. Once in Albuquerque, I started studying Shorin-Ryu karate under Sensei George Pullen a well known competitor and instructor who had just moved to Albuquerque, what amazed me about him was his amazing fighting skills, he was a big man 6'4 225 lbs yet his movements were very quick and efficient. I once remember seeing him fight in a karate tournament and kick his opponent so hard he flew into the next ring. Since Sensei Pullen had just moved to Albuquerque from Clovis he did not have a school at that time, so we used to train in his back yard. He emphasized how important it was to have good technique if you wanted to be a good fighter. He was a very tough teacher and felt if you endured enough pain, spent enough time fighting and learned through your mistakes eventually you would learn how to fight. Later that year, I was at a local car wash wearing a karate tournament t-shirt, a lady started asking me questions about martial arts, it turned out that she owned a dance studio in a nearby community, called Cedar Crest. She asked if I would be interested in teaching martial arts in her studio. I put up a flyer the next week in her studio, and started classes the next month with only eight students. I continued my classes with Sensei Pullen, and my classes continued to grow. Within a year, I was teaching at two dance studios and at a blue ribbon private school. In 1990 I decided to rent my own space in a shopping center, with a five hundred dollar advance on a credit card and income from existing students I opened a full time martial arts studio, in Albuquerque New Mexico. In 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, I was women's AAU National Karate Champion in both black belt forms, and black belt sparring. In 1985 I was inducted into the AAU Karate Fighters Hall of Fame.

In 1995 I met Grandmaster Dan Medina. I had a friend at the time who was studying under one of Grandmaster Medina's senior student's Lee Davis, he told me how practical Escrima was, and how his Instructor learned from Dan Medina who had a school in Albuquerque. A friend recommended that I visit Grandmaster Dan Medina's School directly and watch a class. Many well known school owners were all ready taking classes with Grandmaster Medina. Many talked about how rough the classes were and how experiencing pain was an important part of learning escrima with Chief Medina... I finally decided to see for myself what his classes were like. I could not believe how amazing and effective the techniques were. He was able to inflict so much pain with joint and wrist locks, it was amazing. As I



Grandmaster Dan Medina and
Antionette Chavez

was watching his classes he came over introduced himself and invited me to his next class. I immediately enjoyed his classes. Yes they were very painful at times but somehow I survived and even looked forward to every single class... I was fortunate that I could attend his afternoon and his evening classes, as well as private lessons two hours per week... He taught us many of the styles he learned while he was in the Navy. We studied Derobio Escrima, Kali, Arnis 63 Generals, Kuntao, and Sphinx Karate. All of his Sr. Students are registered members of the Black Master Sphinx Karate of the Philippines. The Seminars Chief Medina gave were unbelievable. I remember at one seminar he was demonstrating how to use an elbow against a punch. The technique looked the same as if someone was bringing their arm up to fix the side of their hair.

One of the participants a bigger guy stepped up, not quite certain if the technique would work. He came in with a hard right cross; Chief Medina caught him with the elbow right into the Brachial Plexus Tie in part of the shoulder, dropping him before the punch could be executed. That guy screamed so loud and rolled around on the floor for several minutes due to the excruciating pain. It was amazing to see Chief Medina in action, he always chose the biggest guys to demonstrate with so that we could all see how effective the techniques were. He would teach us how to apply locks, how to counter these locks, and how to counter the counters to these locks, simply amazing.

The angles we learned in our training worked quite well in our point fighting. They moved the fighters off the line and in position to attack. I had my students apply some of the principles used in escrima in their fighting skills. Because of this, in 1998 I was honored to receive an award for 1998 Instructor of the year USTU (United States Tae Kwon Do Union). The classes we took with Grandmaster Medina were never boring, there was so much to learn, it seemed like there was never enough time to learn what he wanted to teach us for the day. It was like trying to take a drink from a fire hydrant. The more experienced we became the more we learned. Classes were always exciting, and the challenge was in trying to remember everything that we learned. He had so much knowledge that the classes which were 1 ½ hours long just flew by. It seemed like he never ran out of new things to teach. Many times we would have to ask him to please repeat the previous lesson which always led to more techniques. I would try to write as much as I could remember after each class as a means of trying to remember as many techniques as possible.

We enjoyed and studied many aspects of the Filipino martial arts and its culture. Grandmaster Medina would take us to a local restaurant that served great Filipino food. He also made us learn the body parts and other vocabulary words in Visayan as well as the history of his teachers in order to get promoted to different shirt levels of our system. He enjoyed doing Escrima demonstrations whenever possible. I remember participating in the local chapter of the Filipino American Association Celebration. It was a great experience, our



Adam Wolf, Gene Wolf, Antionette Chavez, Grandmaster Dan Medina, and Gathen Garcia.

school did a demonstration showing empty hand forms, stick forms, sinawali, and various disarms that we learned in our training.



Antionette Chavez and Grandmaster Dan Medina doing Gunting and Sinawali defense at Local Chapter of the Filipino American Association Celebration.

killing everyone on board and many others working in the buildings. Both buildings collapsed within two hours, destroying nearby buildings and damaging others. The hijackers crashed a third airliner into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C. The fourth plane crashed into a field near Shanksville in rural Pennsylvania, after some of its passengers and flight crew attempted to re-take control of the plane, which the hijackers had redirected toward Washington, D.C. There were no survivors from any of the flights. As a result of these attacks Grandmaster Medina ran a free self-defense Seminar for Albuquerque based airline employees. I was honored to help him with the classes he offered, I as well as other senior students Gene and Adam Wolf, and Gathen Garcia helped teach over 60 airline employees' techniques that could help prevent future attacks. Over the course of three months from October through December we had pilots and airline flight attendants taking classes every weekend. This class focused on disarming, subduing or immobilizing attackers and surviving. In the classes Grandmaster Medina taught these employees how

to use basic items such as a newspaper or magazine as a weapon for disarming assailants. In 2001, I was announced 2001 women of the year by the Women's Association of New Mexico, for outstanding service to our community and the state of New Mexico.

Not only is Grandmaster Medina one of the best martial arts Instructors I have been honored to train with, he is also a great friend. He would attend and help grade at my black belt testing's from time to time and would also attend all of our Christmas parties. He has a great personality and is loved and admired by all of his friends, students, and peers of the martial arts community. In the State of New Mexico many school owners have studied with Grandmaster Medina through the years.

On September 11, 2001, there were a series of coordinated suicide attacks by Al-Qaeda upon the United States. On that morning 19 Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners. The hijackers intentionally crashed two of the airliners in the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City,



Albuquerque Journal Article written Oct 12, 2001

This article featured Grand Master Dan Medina teaching free Self-defense seminars to Albuquerque based airline employees.



Here is Grandmaster Medina dancing as the Indian to the YMCA at one of our Christmas Parties.

I continue to train with Grandmaster Medina to this day. I am one of his Senior Students, I am a second level red shirt under his Derobio Majai Pai System. I am a certified teacher of his system and have been teaching his style of Escrima in my school, Takai Mine Karate since 1998. I teach his system in my school to students of all ages. I am also a sixth degree Black Belt Kukkiwon certified in WTF Tae Kwon Do as well. I have been a full time martial arts instructor in my own school Takai Mine Karate/Tae Kwon Do since 1985. I have a B.S. degree in Marketing and have recently graduated with my MBA. I feel blessed that I have never had to work another job, other than teaching

martial arts. I am also the New Mexico District Chair for AAU Tae Kwon Do.

Grandmaster Medina often conducts Escrima seminars in Albuquerque and continues to train many of his New Mexico Branch Sr. Students that still reside in Albuquerque.



Grandmaster Dan Medina with Master Antionette Chavez and the Takai Mine Karate Escrima class in Albuquerque after Sept 26, 2009 Seminar in Albuquerque.

For more information feel free to contact Antionette Chavez at: takaiminekarate.com



A Teacher of a Different Kind

By Maestro Mike Wanke

I was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1969 and grew up in the countryside outside town. While I did not really know anything about martial arts while growing up, being a soccer goaltender I had plenty of experience with falling and getting hit hard - mostly by feet or shins, but also by knees, elbows, fists, foreheads and the occasional soccer ball. At the age of 18, I went to California to attend Pomona College (in the LA area).

During my years at Pomona I stopped playing soccer competitively, but missing the physical abuse I began dabbling in martial arts (fencing, Aikido, and Tae Kwon Do). However, due to a few old soccer injuries and the rather transient lifestyle of being a student and living in different cities every summer, I didn't become seriously involved with martial arts at the time.

When I graduated in 1992, I moved to Santa Barbara to pursue a Ph.D in physics. The University had a recreation program that offered Tae Kwon Do, which I had been studying for the past year, and I started taking classes from Jonathan Morrow-Jones. For the next two years I basically studied physics, slept and ate - in that order - except for my religious attendance to TKD classes. These classes served as my physical and mental outlet until we left Santa Barbara in 1998. In 1996, I went to Los Alamos, NM to test for and receive my Black Belt in front of the Grandmaster of the World Tae Kwon Do Association, Duk Sung Son.

In 1994 the University offered a new class - Kali - taught by Antonio Casas, a former student of Sifu Guro Dan Inosanto. My wife, Amalie, and I joined this class as well, and I immediately fell in love with it. Antonio finished getting his degree a couple of years later and left to join the Military. Fortunately Mike Rayes (a student of Guro Ted Lucaylucay), who helped Antonio teach the classes, continued to teach some of us. I continued to work with Mike until I blew out my shoulder, which had been severely weakened years before in a soccer game. The shoulder injury also prevented me from testing for my second degree black-belt in TKD.

Shortly thereafter, Amalie and I received our Ph.D.s in physics and moved to New Jersey to do postdoctoral work at Exxon and Bell Labs, respectively. While I was fortunate that my shoulder surgeon was incredibly good, it still took a long time until I was ready to re-start my martial arts endeavors.

We left New Jersey and moved to Albuquerque in February 2001. Actually, Amalie went 5 months earlier than I did and when she was looking at houses for us to rent, the landlord that we eventually rented from showed up in a Ghi. After my wife mentioned Kali to her, she told us that there was an excellent teacher in town named Dan Medina but that he didn't advertise. Fortunately she gave us his phone number. A month later we had started taking classes in from Chief Medina. The style he mainly taught me in the beginning was Derobio Escrima, but this later expanded to include material from Arnis 63 Generals, Kun Tao, Sphinx Karate and Majapai.

While all my previous teachers had been really good, working with Chief was a whole different experience. Not only did he have the highest skill level of anyone I had had the privilege of being a student of, it was also immediately obvious how much Chief enjoyed his art, and teaching it to others. He takes teaching very seriously, but is always smiling and laughing and generally having a great time. This enthusiasm was infectious and within a few months I was hooked and I started taking all the classes he offered. This was not enough, so even though my real job required much more than 40



Back Row: Master Gene Wolf, Chief Medina, Master Adam Wolfe, Master Antoinette Chavez

Kneeling: Masters Mike Wenke and Amalie Frischnecht (still Blue shirts at that time)



Chief Medina finishing me off after quickly disarming my attack.

hours a week, I found the time to start taking private lessons once a week. Although every week I left bruised, sore, and feeling like I had been mentally drinking from a fire hose for 4 hours, I always thought lessons were too short. Even after hours of counter locks when my hands were a nice shade of purple and hyper-sensitized, and I wasn't sure there was still a solid bone left in them, I would still be asking for more.

One thing I liked about these private lessons was that many were in Chief's yard. Chief always liked to work outside and be exposed to the environment since any real (unplanned) fight was unlikely to take place on a nice flat mat.

Therefore I got used to dealing with leaves, snow, potholes, wet grass, tree roots, etc... I also learned to not always back away, when he forced me to stand on a tree stump that rocked and defend against a Katana (which was not dull). The days we worked in the front yard I also got used to people occasionally staring at us.

Of course, working outside has the potential to attract others. During one regular class at a park a car pulled up to the curb and one of the two occupants got out and challenged Chief on the spot. Chief was very polite and pointed out that he was running a class. When the interloper insisted, Chief calmly offered the man to use any weapon that Chief had on hand. He chose a staff. The man was seriously outclassed and every move he made was immediately blocked and countered, but instead of demolishing the guy, Chief's counterstrikes were to non-sensitive places and only hard enough to make the guy feel it, but not be broken by it. After many attempts and a few solid raps to his shins, the guy finally figured out that Chief could finish it at any time but preferred to show humanity. Part of our creed is to show humanity against aggressors who cannot defend against our art, and this event proved that he took this very seriously.

Chief is truly an amazing teacher and martial artist. Often when we were playing, he would do something that I had not seen before. When I asked him to do it again, something else would frequently come out. It took me a long time to realize that if I wanted to see it again, I needed to do exactly the same thing that I had done, since Chief responds so quickly to changes in energy. Even though I wanted him to do the same technique I would subconsciously adapt since I partially knew what was coming and he immediately flowed into some other technique.



My wife, Amalie and Master Medina working the Bolo Drill during a demonstration for the Filipino Heritage Society in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

While I was taking lessons from Chief in Albuquerque, he became very involved in the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), where he quickly learned western style fencing (what kind is this called?). He was just like a kid with a new toy again, and quickly incorporated it into his other techniques and started using it and teaching it to his students. For Chief Medina the art is never static, there is always something else to learn and incorporate.

Unfortunately, after I had been taking lessons from him in Albuquerque for only 2.5 years, Chief moved to Florida. I felt a great loss. By this point I had reached the level of Blue Shirt but I wanted to learn more. Therefore, every time I have a chance of going to Florida I fly out and continue taking lessons. I have now reached the rank of first level Red Shirt and am teaching my own students. Following Chief's example and encouragement I have also recently started learning Balintawak to broaden my knowledge. But I still miss the days of dodging katanas while standing on a stump.

Grandmaster Dan Medina's Quest for Excellence

By Zena Sultana Babao

If you are on a quest for excellence, you keep yourself busy day by day, constantly finding and creating new hurdles to jump over. One of the traits that you possess is an unquenchable thirst! You believe that if you don't have these hurdles to cross - then there's nothing to reach for. There's nothing to stretch to, and so you keep on stretching until that excellence you desire is within your grasp.

And when you believe in yourself, in your personal potential, and in your own future - you have no choice but to go on with your search. Quitting is not an option! There's nothing to do but continue. Though there are times you may want to give up, you can't. Something deep inside you just won't let go. So you take the next step and keep on going ... and you take the next step ... and the next.

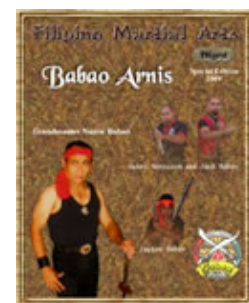
This is true with Grandmaster Dan Medina, a martial artist whose search for excellence took him a few decades to do. And it also took him to almost all corners of the globe! His search was so fruitful that it afforded him the opportunity to accumulate knowledge and prowess in several styles of martial arts, and finally to start his very own.

Grandmaster Medina is the Founder of Majapai, a blending of several martial arts systems he studied, and which is the culmination of his martial arts training and experiences. But that's not all! Aside from being the Grandmaster of Majapai, Dan is the Regional High Chief in Derobio Eskrima under the late Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy, Rajah (6th Degree Red & White Belt), and Florida Vice-President for Sphinx Karate and Arnis 63 Generals.

And not only that! He has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Euro Technical University for his contributions to martial arts. But because Dan is a martial artist who is devoid of airs or ego, he doesn't use the title of "Doctor" before his name as others with honorary doctorates do.

Dan Medina is humble and kind, consistent and very persistent. If not for his persistence, he would not have been a student of Babao Arnis, our martial arts school, because my husband, Grandmaster Narrie Babao is so famous for being so selective in accepting students. That is why Babao Arnis is not a commercial school, but a kind of club, limited to 10 students and no more.

In the FMA Digest Special Edition on Babao Arnis, Grandmaster Medina wrote an article entitled "My Quest for Excellence" and in it, he described how he met my husband and how he became our student. Here's what he wrote in part: "Around 1980, I found myself stationed on the USS Belleau Wood (LHA-3),



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a marine amphibious carrier. The ship finally got underway and was heading towards San Diego when one day I spotted someone

on the flight deck that looked strangely familiar.

After confirming my suspicions by checking my copy of Dan Inosanto's book "The Filipino Martial Arts", I could hardly believe my luck! Grandmaster Narrie Babao, the first Full-Contact Stick-Fighting Champion of the United States, was on my ship! I mustered up the courage to approach him and introduced myself which was instantly followed by asking him if I could become a student.

My expectations were crushed, however, when Master Babao graciously refused and informed me he wasn't accepting any new students at this time. I wasn't one for giving up so a few days later, when I found out that Master Babao was in quarantine with the chicken pox, I knew it was my opportunity to change his mind.

Chicken pox is not something most Filipino people are exposed to as children and it can be quite severe when you catch it as an adult. Master Babao's Filipino friends wanted nothing to do with catching the chicken pox so they stayed so far away as they possibly could in the ship. I already had chicken pox as a child so I quickly became his only link to the "outside". I brought him martial arts magazines, shared news and goings-on from the ship, and generally just kept him company.



Master-At-Arms Narrie Babao
on board the USS Belleau Wood

When the ship pulled into port, Grandmaster Babao was still in quarantine, so he threw his car keys to me and asked me to take his car to his wife, Zena. "While you're there," he said, "tell her that you are my new student." I couldn't believe my ears. I don't remember the drive to the Grandmaster's house, but I do remember Zena telling me how lucky I was and that it was a rare thing indeed for her husband to accept new students. He had turned many away over the years and she was almost as surprised as I was.

That's true! A lot of people have expressed interest in joining our school, because of their desire to learn Arnis. But my husband only wants to teach a few, so he could pay special attention to each and every one's lessons and progress. Once we have the requisite 10 students, nobody else is accepted unless someone graduates or leaves.

Here is my husband's recollection on how he and Dan Medina met: "*I met Dan aboard the USS Belleau Wood (LHA-3), a combination amphibious-helicopter landing ship, whose primary mission was to establish a fast beach head for the United States Marines anywhere in the world. I was assigned as one of the ship's Master-at-Arms, which is equivalent to a police officer on board. At that time, I was the Defensive Tactics instructor for the ship's Master-at-Arms force as well as the designated Shore Patrol personnel. The class was usually composed of both Navy and Marine Corps enlisted men. Dan Medina happened to watch one of the classes where I was teaching a modified version of the police baton techniques. He asked me if he could become my student. I refused since he was not a Master-at-Arms, nor on the Shore Patrol list.*"

Anyway, Dan Medina's persistence in becoming my husband's student paid off. He started learning our style of martial arts! When Narrie wrote a booklet for the ship's Master-at-Arms' Defensive Tactics course, he used Dan to act as the "bad guy" for the

instructional photos. His training under my husband ended when he was transferred to a Construction Battalion based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Photo shoot for the ship's MAA Instruction manual. Babao and partner confront "suspect" Dan Medina.



Suspect's right punch blocked with the steel "Maglite".



Suspect's left punch blocked with the drawn straight baton.



Follow up jab with the Maglite to the solar plexus.



Push strike with the baton to suspect's left shoulder.



Suspect in custody.



Narrie Babao (right) with fellow Kali Guro' Snookie Sanchez

Before Dan was transferred, he asked Narrie's assistance in finding an instructor in Hawaii so he could continue his studies in the Philippine martial arts. Narrie recommended his fellow Kali guro, the late Snookie Sanchez, a disciple of Kali Grandmasters Floro Villabrille and Ben Largusa. Sanchez was a Master of the bull whip and he could extinguish a lighted candle from a distance of 30 feet.



Kauai park luau honoring Kali Grandmaster Floro Villabrille (seated). (Front row) Braulio Pedoy, Zena Sultana Babao and Joey Del Mar. (Back row) Richard Bustillo, Ben Largusa, Lucky Lucay-lucay and Dan Inosanto.

Medina was cautioned by my husband that the Villabrille-Largusa Kali practitioners are the most exclusive group in the Filipino Martial Arts community. They jealously guarded their art from outsiders, and would carefully screen potential students. Grandmaster Villabrille was the Founder of Kali, and at that point in time, nobody yet in the Philippines has heard of this art. After a few years, other martial arts groups started identifying themselves as Kali practitioners.

My husband instructed Dan that in the event he could not study from a Kali group, he was to contact Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy of the Derobio Eskrima System of martial arts.

Back in the 1970's, Narrie and I have met Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy and his son Eddie Pedoy. We interviewed both father and son for an article in TALIBA, a Filipino-American newspaper in San Diego wherein I was the Editor. My husband and Eddie Pedoty hit it off from the get go. Both studied from their fathers, and both challenged their fathers to a fight, just to find out that they would not fare.

Narrie was a Karate black belt at that time, and Eddie was in Aikido. Narrie laughingly recalled how many times he landed on his back when he attacked his Dad with his karate moves. Eddie, on the other hand, could not explain how he would always end up under the bed whenever he attacked his own Dad using his Aikido techniques.



Father and son - Great Grandmaster Braulio and Batikan Eddie Pedoy



Great Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy and late student Adam Veloria

I think both Narrie and Eddie found out to their amazement that their karate moves are nothing compared to the Philippine martial arts practiced by their fathers. So both of them ended up carrying on their fathers' legacy!

I often made business trips to Honolulu during the time that Dan and his family was stationed in Hawaii. My job then was to conduct training seminars for the company I worked for at that time, and whenever I was in Honolulu I stayed in the Medinas' residence inside the Military housing.



Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy
with Zena

I often visited Grandmaster Pedoy when I was in Hawaii, and in one of my visits, Grandmaster Pedoy gave me an anting-anting (an amulet). He said that a lot of martial artists come to Hawaii for the purpose of asking for the anting-anting, but you could only count on your fingers the very few who received them. I considered myself so blessed, because I never asked, and I was given.

Dan Medina studied under Grandmaster Pedoy himself, and he also studied with a lot of other instructors over the years while he was in the service. Once in a while, whenever he has the time, he comes back to our school for a visit, and for a refresher

course in our Babao Arnis style of martial arts.

It is my and my husband's ardent wish that Grandmaster Dan Medina continue his excellent work in the teaching and propagation of the Philippine martial arts. Dan is a complete embodiment of a true martial artist! And we are indeed lucky to be a part of his quest for excellence!



San Diego, CA. demonstration in November 1, 1975
with Ted Lucaylucay, Richard Bustillo, Dan
Inosanto, Zena Sultana Babao and Narrie Babao.



At our old San Diego Kali Academy.
Standing left to right: Joe Abueg, Dan Cepeda, Fred
Cepeda, Guro Narrie Babao, Zena Sultana Babao, Mike
Gomez and Fernando Pahuriray. **Kneeling third and
fourth from left:** Narrison and brother Jack Babao.



Zena Sultana Babao: a professional journalist, writes the columns "Light and Shadows" and "Making it in America" for the Asian Journal U.S.A, San Diego Edition, and now also writes for the prestigious "Elvis International" magazine circulated worldwide. She is also the "Vegas and Around the World" reporter with www.ladyluckmusic.com, a website in Canada that features Elvis impersonators and fans from around the world. In the Philippines, she wrote for the Philippine News Service (now Philippines News Agency), and still contributes articles for Manila Times and Sun Star Manila.

A Female Perspective

By Stephanie Medina



Bullies, Beatings and Taekwondo

As a German immigrant child growing up in an all Hispanic neighborhood I made an easy target for bullies, gangs, and girls that just wanted to show off to their friends by picking on the little nerdy red-head. Later, as a pre-teen I became the victim of a man that had been breaking into homes and exposing himself to the occupants. A few months later, another tried to abduct me from the park as I walked my dog. In both of the later cases I managed to escape with no physical damage but the psychological damage would haunt me for a long time.

Of the predators I experienced at school, in the park and even at home, the worst were those in my own family. A series of abusive step-fathers added to the emotional and physiological breakdown of trust and in a couple of cases landed me in the hospital.

Because I was so often the target of bullies as a child, my mother had enrolled me in a Taekwondo school but after a year of learning Kata's and kicking at shields, the bullying didn't get better, in fact, it was worse! After the kids at school found out I was taking martial arts they felt obliged to test my progress and laugh at my poor attempts. Even in the Taekwondo class, my presence was resented by the male students and I was keenly aware of the message behind the punches that were harder than usual or the kicks that were intended to knock me down. This introduction to the martial arts left a bitter taste in my mouth.

All the Right Things for the Wrong Reasons

As I became a woman, I was all too aware of dangers that lurked behind every corner. History had proven to me that everyone is a potential predator and any situation can turn bad very quickly. I, like many women scheduled my life around these situations and tried to pretend I was a strong, independent professional woman. I did all the right things; never talked to strangers, scanned the parking lot with keys wedged between my fingers before proceeding to my car and avoided getting gas on Friday nights. I always locked my car doors and the doors of my home. I never showered when no one was home for fear of not hearing an intruder and never, ever used a walkman or ear plugs of any kind.

All of these precautions gave me a slight feeling of being "in control" but usually it was accompanied by a secondary feeling of helplessness. Sure, my awareness made me less of a target (or so they tell you at those trendy self-defense courses) but in my mind, that just meant I'd see them coming... Then what? Did I really remember all those little tricks I did in that high school gym two years ago? Would they work? What if my attacker took the same class and knew what I was trying to do? What if it was too late? The questions always haunted me. I once read that women would do what no other creature on earth would do: A woman will walk into an enclosed area such as an elevator or dark hallway with a known predator (man) when every hair is standing on end and every instinct in her body is telling her not to simply because she doesn't want to appear rude, weak, or fearful.

With all my safety precautions and attempts at self defense training, I tried to regain the control I had lost somewhere along the way. These “Band-Aids” helped stop the bleeding but didn’t heal the wound. The nightmares came more often as I entered my 30’s. They were always the same; I was being attacked or chased by some unknown attacker whose face I could never see. My efforts at escaping were often a heart pounding chase through knee high mud in slow motion always just out of reach of my pursuer. Then, when I could run no more, I would bravely make my stand. Turning to face my monster, I was ready to fight. Fists clenched, I prepared myself for battle. As the man came within reach, I would pull back my fist with tremendous effort, and with all the intention of a major league batter I swung at my demon only to hit him with a tap that wouldn’t make a baby cry. It’s this moment that I would be startled awake with a terror that filled my entire body and a sense of utter vulnerability.

The Beginning of a Beautiful Relationship

When I was 32, I met Master Dan Medina. In the beginning, it was our romantic relationship that took center stage. We dated and were soon engaged to be married. I often accompanied him to his classes, sitting quietly on the side lines while he worked with his students. At the time, I could see the difference in what he taught but I was still quite a skeptic. We had long conversations after his classes about the techniques and training with sticks, knives and other weapons. At some point curiosity got the best of me and I approached my husband to show me a few things. “Just for self defense” I quipped.



Mr. and Mrs. Medina

Dan spent one afternoon showing me how to not only escape from someone who grabbed me but break his arm in several places in the process! I spent the next week applying the technique every time he tried to hold my hand or just give me a hug. Not only did the technique work but it didn’t take much strength on my part. My husband had given me the tiniest taste of what the Filipino martial arts had to offer and I was ready for more! He showed me how passing the attack and using joint locks didn’t require a lot of strength. He spent hours telling me about the history of the Philippines and how the people overcame larger, more armored adversaries using what little they had available.

A Challenging Student

I tentatively started attending classes not knowing what to expect. At that time Master Medina was teaching at Taikai Mine Karate which was owned by one of his senior students Master Antoinette Chavez. She, along with Masters Gene and Adam Wolf, and other senior students welcomed me warmly into the class. In an effort to “not show favoritism” my husband left much of my education to these skilled instructors. I still remember Master Wolfe Sr. striking at me then continuing the assault with his free hand which quickly taught me the value of a well placed check. Master Wolf Jr. spent hours working with me on Florete defenses and striking drills. Master Chavez often showed me how to alter techniques so they worked better for women who might have less upper body strength or a significant size difference. She would whisper the changes

then smile and say loudly “but Chief wants us to learn it this way so that’s how we’ll do it!” Master Chavez knew of the challenges women face in this world and wasn’t one to back down from a fight. When she was competing, she often fought against male competitors and come out the champion. Something I couldn’t even accomplish in my dreams. Her strength was an inspiration to me then and still is.

The more I learned about the Philippine martial arts the more I wanted to learn. I have to admit though; I wasn’t then and am still not the model student. My unfortunate past always makes me doubt the efficiency or effectiveness of a technique and I seem to question everything. More times than not, I end up in a painful position and a question answered. I’ve learned over the years to keep the questions to myself until after class. It’s easier to swallow your pride when you don’t have an audience.

A Change Within...

As my training progressed, something very subconscious began to happen. I found myself walking a little more upright, my attitude slowly shifted from a victim to someone who “might” have a chance. I was really quite unaware of all this until one night when the same old dream reared its ugly head but this time it was different! This time.... When I stood to face my captor, he grabbed me and I not only fought back with a vengeance, I won! I woke up feeling energized and triumphant. I immediately woke my husband and shared the great news with him. Since it was about 2:30 in the morning, he felt less energized about it.

Little by little I learned the techniques and theories behind a martial art designed by and for people who are smaller in stature and possessing less strength. In Derobio Escrima, the attacker’s energy is used and the strike is passed by the defender rather than met force to force. This almost revolutionary concept is not only more efficient for a female defender, but it also makes more sense, psychologically. There is always the exception to the rule (Mrs. Chavez being one), but most women would avoid going toe to toe with a much larger male opponent. Generally when faced with this situation, most women would prefer to immobilize the attacker and get out of the area as soon as possible or as I like to call it “hit-n-git.”

Master Medina starts by teaching his students the twelve angles of attack which I’m sure you’ll read more about in the other articles but what amazed me was the concept behind this principal. In one of my early questioning sessions I challenged this by saying “you won’t always have a stick with you, then what?” My husband quickly demonstrated that it didn’t matter if the attacker was using a stick, a baseball bat, a knife, his bare hands or even kicking, the strike would come from one of those 12 angles and if you know how to respond to each angle, it doesn’t matter what’s coming at you. Again, I had to see this done before I believed it so I spent the next hour attacking my husband with rolled newspapers, broom sticks, butter knives and anything else I could throw at him and watched him effortlessly defend using the same passing movement followed by simple disarming techniques that seemed so obvious that I wondered why I hadn’t seen them before.

Don't be a monkey



I quickly took to the weapons training and loved sparring with my husband. He's the most patient teacher and puts up with my constant challenges in a way that I always learn something new. In the beginning when we sparred, I would try to "wrestle" the knife away from him or struggle against his disarm. He always chided by saying "*don't be a monkey*". I guess in some parts of the world monkeys are caught by cutting a small hole in one end of a coconut and a slightly larger hole in the other end. A rope with a knot is threaded thru the smaller hole. The monkey will put his hand in the larger hole and grab the coconut meat. With a full fist, his hand no longer fits thru the hole and he's trapped. He could easily get away if he'd just let go of his prize. This lesson hit home one day as we sparred with schlagers (A heavier, wider style of fencing sword) in the park. A few other students were participating as we all challenged the master and more times than not walked away with our pride in tow. It was my turn and I knew my teacher was enticing me to attack by holding his hands wide apart in a "come get me" gesture. There are always those times when that little voice in your head tells you not to do something stupid. There are also times when we just don't listen. This was one of them. With a guttural yell I attacked my husband. I had every intent of making him pay for his cockiness. Bad idea! He quickly countered my attack by locking up my weapon hand along with my free hand into a big tangle of limbs. It was at this time that the little voice in my head suddenly said something I **WOULD** listen to... Don't be a monkey! Without hesitation I let go of my weapon and punched my loving husband dead in the face. He reared back a few steps regained his footing and after inspecting the new dent in his fencing mask give me the biggest smile and a thumbs up. "Good job" he said, "I'm proud of you". There was a small twinge of fear that his ego would need revenge like in the old Taekwondo days. Often, when I got a lucky shot in on a guy or had the audacity to kick higher, I was instantly knocked down or hurt to soothe a bruised ego. But Dan Medina is different.



Aiming for the Master - Stephanie Medina throws a kick as Master Medina inspects the form.



Fencing at a renaissance event



Taking up a challenge

The Bigger they are...

On another occasion, while sparring with an opponent much larger than myself (he was 6'4" and about 200lbs). My sparring partner was entertaining himself with tapping me in the forehead every time I tried to come in on him. After the third time, my temper just barely in check, I had had enough. I slipped in under his massive reach and came straight up under his chin giving him a bloody lip and new opinion of me. Again, my husband was proud of my skill but I did get a lecture about the Rocky style victory dance I performed.

A Woman's Perspective

The reason I'm sharing these stories with you is not for entertainment value or even as an insight to a softer side of my husband. The purpose is to share an important discovery. Throughout my martial arts education, I have questioned my husband, Master Medina, along with his students who have patiently taught me. *"Will I really be able to do this in a serious situation?" "Does this technique REALLY work against someone who is trying to harm me?" "How do I know that I'll be able to execute it correctly?"* My endless questions continue till today but perhaps that is a needed part of my education. In some small way I think it's also shown my husband the difference between a male and female perspective. A man may study martial arts for discipline, for fitness, for ego, or even, if he works in a dangerous environment, for self defense.

A woman will study a martial art so she can avoid being raped, killed, or beaten by a spouse... a big difference.

The History of Grandmaster Dan Medina

By Grandmaster Dan Medina



I was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1953. At the age of 17 I enlisted in the US Navy and spent the next 22 years circling the globe 2 ½ times.

My first real martial arts training started in Puerto Rico around 1973. The U.S. Navy introduced me to a combination of Judo and the Navy Seal Quick Kill method as part of my training. This was not only the spark that ignited the flame but the beginning to an intensive martial arts career.

In 1977 I was assigned to the USS Hitchiti, an ocean going tug. It was during this assignment that I was introduced to the Black Masters Sphinx Karate Clan of the Philippines by Master Ricardo Mendoza. It was a very eclectic style of martial arts that looked like a combination of Karate, Kung Fu and Filipino martial arts.

Ahh but getting into this class was not so easy, you could not just walk in and say you wanted to train. I was first put thru a test, which now days most students would just walk away. The sun was at about a 45 degree angle and I was put into what my teacher called a sumo stance, sort of like a horse stance. I was told to watch the sun go down and of course after a few minutes my legs started to tremble. I started to get up and was told to get back down or it would hurt even more, and I tried to stay there, but now the pain was really intense. I attempted to get up again. This time I was told if I got up I might as well go home and that I would not be able to be part of the class. So I stayed by now my whole body was trembling and the pain could clearly be seen in my face. The sweat was pouring and I could not hold the tears back. After the sun went down I was told that was it for the day's training. The next morning when I woke up I jumped out of bed like I always did, but this time I did not land on my feet I did a full body slam to the floor. My legs could not bear the weight. Every muscle hurt, it took all I had to stand up my legs and thighs hurt so bad that I actually had to use my hips to walk. That night much too every one's surprise I showed up to class, the rest is history.



Master Ricardo Mendoza



Olongapo training group

After about eight months of intensive training, Master Mendoza took us to Baguio which is in the northern mountainous part of the Philippines. The local Sphinx group prepared a grueling training session that lasted several days. Starting from 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM, the training was intense and the Masters expected 110%. We were taught breathing exercises while at the same time conditioning our finger tips on the concrete gym floor, as well as conditioning our bodies to take punishment. While we performed our breathing the teachers would go by and either punch or kick us while we exhaled and if you did not do the breathing right you would end up doubled up on the floor. It was also here that I was

introduced to Arnis 63 Generals the art that started me on my road to FMA. On our last day, a martial arts tournament was staged just for us. We were expected to fight and use our new skills. Thanks to the excellent instructors, we fought and none of us ended up with any serious injuries. It was an experience I will never forget!

In 1978 I was reassigned to the City of Olongapo in the Philippines. Sphinx Karate did not have a presence in this part of the Philippines so I joined P.M.A.S. (Philippine Martial Arts Studio) where I studied Kyokushin and Kuntaw under Master Reynaldo Ginco.



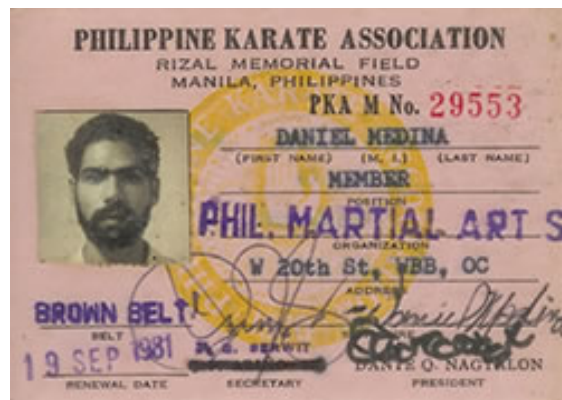
Reynaldo Ginco crushing a bedrock stone with his bare hands

I still remember the pain those hands of steel could inflict. He was known for his ability to crush bed rock stones with his bare hands! It was also something I got to feel. One day while sparing, I had thrown a front kick and he showed me why the intense conditioning of the hands and feet was so necessary. His response to my kick was a back fist combined with a open hand block to my shin. I limped for the next few weeks, with a small hairline fracture to my right shin bone. From then on I was conditioning my hands on the “makiwara” (A wooden post wrapped with rope

for hand and foot conditioning).

Around 1981 Master Gingco took us to compete at the Karate Tournament at Clarke AFB in the Philippines. These tournaments were pretty rough; no pads or protection of any kind. It was bare knuckle fighting. This would prove to be a day I will never forget. One opponent fractured my ribs and I returned the favor by breaking his ankle with a sipa kick. I was out of commission for about 2 months. The funny thing was that I did not feel the pain right away. After I got back home to Subic Bay and took a nap, the adrenalin had time to wear off. When I tried to get out of bed that's when it hit me! Pain shot through my body like a jolt of electricity. Luckily, when you're young, you heal fast and I was back in full health within two months. --

In the Philippines, I had the opportunity to put my skills to use and define what was practical and what wasn't in “real time” street situations. On loan to the Provost Marshall during a time of Martial Law, I was required to enforce the law without the aid of a firearm. This was a really dangerous time and we really got to learn the “sleeper hold” well. We used to keep tally as to who choked out the most people in one night, but that was not my thing I would only use that as a last resort. We even had a saying in the AFP (Armed Forces Police) “When in doubt choke them out” we actually had T-Shirts made with that saying, but we were soon told we could not wear them. Even then political correct-ness was evident. I really felt at this time that martial arts had to be practical and no-nonsense so I continued my search for more training. In addition to



ID Card when I was Living in the Philippines

practicing Arnis 63 Generals, exchanging techniques with my roommate who was taking Aikido, I also continued my tutelage with Master Gingco whenever possible. You could say I was breathing, eating and sleeping martial arts. I just couldn't get enough.--

Around 1980, I found myself stationed on the USS Belleauwood LHA-3, a marine amphibious carrier. This is where I first met Dan Inosanto while the ship was in dry dock. We hit it off instantly and I got an autographed book from him entitled "The Filipino martial arts". The ship finally got underway and was heading towards San Diego when one day I spotted someone on the flight deck that looked strangely familiar.

After confirming my suspicions by checking the by now well read- book about the Filipino martial arts, I could hardly believe my luck! Grandmaster Narrie Babao, the first full contact stick fighting champion of the U.S. was on my ship! I mustered up the courage to approach him and introduce myself which was instantly followed by asking Master Babao if I could become a student. My expectations were crushed however when Master Babao, graciously refused and informed me he wasn't accepting any new students at this time. I wasn't one for giving up so a few days later, when I found out Grandmaster Babao was in quarantine with the chicken pox, I knew it my opportunity to change his mind. Chicken pox is not something most Filipino people are exposed to as children and it can be quite severe when you catch it as an adult. Grandmaster Babao's Filipino friends wanted nothing to do with catching the chicken pox so they stayed as far away as you possibly could on a ship. I already had the chicken pox as a child so I quickly became Grandmaster Babao's only link to the "outside". I brought him martial arts magazines, shared news and goings on from the ship, and generally just kept him company.

When the ship pulled into port, Grandmaster Babao was still in quarantine, so he threw his car keys at me and asked me to take his car to his wife, Zena. "*While you're there,*" he said. "*Tell her that you're my new student.*" I couldn't believe my ears! I don't remember the drive to Grandmasters house but I do remember his wife Zena telling me how lucky I was and that it was a rare thing indeed for her husband to accept new students. He had turned many away over the years and she was almost as surprised as I was at the news.

For the next four years I trained diligently under the watchful eyes of Grandmaster Babao. To say he was a perfectionist would be an understatement. As a student of Grandmaster Babao's, you repeat a technique over and over and over again until it is perfected before you're allowed to move to the next.

I remember one time, when I was a black shirt under Grandmaster Babao, he sent me and his young son, Jack to Singletons Karate Tournament under the guidance of his wife Zena. That day I took 2nd place in forms and Jack Babao took first place in the Black Belt Weapons divisions. This was also the first time I fought in the full contact weapons division, which proved to be quite interesting. Right at the get go, I destroyed my opponent's shinai (Bamboo Sword).

I stopped, not wanting to hit a defenseless man. My opponent got another weapon and again I destroyed it in the first few seconds. This continued



Dan Medina being coached by Grandmaster Babao

for several rounds. I probably could have won that fight but keeping my honor and not hitting an unarmed man was more important. My second fight that day, was with a skilled nunchaku fighter. It was over before it started as the nunchaku flew off into the crowd and I was again left with an unarmed opponent. I was awarded with third place since I never “finished” the fights.

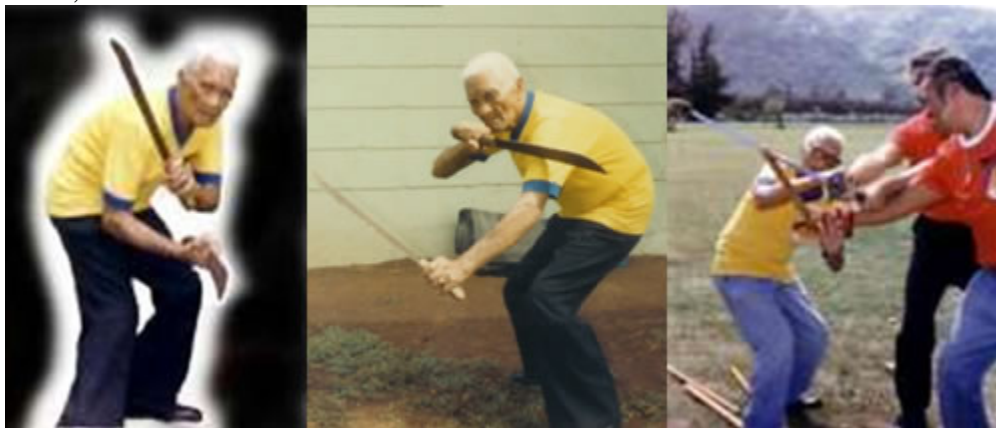
After the tournament was over, I was instantly surrounded by spectators and other martial artists curious about the type of martial arts I practiced. I simply replied “Its Arnis-Kuntao/Batangas-Narrie Babao’s Family Style. They all agreed, if the fights had been “real-life” situations, the winner would have been the one still holding his weapon.

As I traveled with the Navy, I continued to study with Grandmaster Babao and Master Ricardo Mendoza. At every port, I looked for classes and instructors to continue my education and broaden my experience. From Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Singapore, to Sri Lanka, and of course the Philippines, I sought out anyone who could give me more to learn, more to experience and more technique!

In 1984, I was assigned to the Sea Bees (PhibCB1) as a small arms and combat instructor. It was during this time that I met Philip Pabalinas who, in exchange for being taught Kuntao, taught me the Ocho system and Modern Arnis Ernesto Presas Style.

Later, in 1986, I found out that my next assignment would take me to Hawaii. Grandmaster Babao instructed me to do two things when I arrive there. The first was to seek out Snookie Sanches, a famous Escrimador who had studied with Floro Villabrille, the full contact champion of the Philippines, as an instructor. The second was to visit and offer his and my respects to the Great Grandmaster Pedoy who was retired and no longer teaching.

My plane landed, I checked into my hotel and per my instructions, I wasted no time in calling Great Grandmaster Pedoy. To my surprise, I was invited to come see him that very night. I’ll never forget meeting Braulio T. Pedoy for the first time. He was already 89 years old and small in size. His heavily wrinkled face had a quick smile and steely eyes. His son, Eduardo J. Pedoy, was also there and the three of us had a great time talking about the martial arts and how much I wanted to learn Escrima. I’m not sure exactly what I did to impress him but that night, he told me that if I really wanted to learn Escrima he, himself would teach me.



Great Grandmaster Pedoy and Son Batikan E.J. Pedoy

For the next few years, I absorbed everything I could about the secrets of Derobio. One night Batikan Eduardo Pedoy who was then Chief Instructor, surprised me by saying

“You don’t know how lucky you are! You’re getting stuff I wasn’t even taught!” Batikan Eduardo Pedoy often worked late in the evenings and missed many of his father’s classes.

Great Grandmaster Pedoy also realized this and felt the need to pass on his 144 counters or they would be lost forever. With his new mission in focus we started on an intensive regimen of training that not only included the techniques but also the history of the Filipino martial arts. This time period was taxing, physically (my wrists hurt for weeks), mentally and even spiritually.

Hawaii in the 1980’s was a variable Mecca of Martial Arts. I was like a kid in a candy store and it didn’t take me long to develop strong friendships with the leaders and founders of the most prominent art forms. Bobby Lowe, James Miyaji, Pat Nakata, Ken Funakoshi, Tomu Arakawa, Sung Au and Joe Bunch were just a few of the great people I came to know and admire.

I was both surprised and honored when Joe Bunch, then president of the Hawaii Karate Congress, sponsored me as an instructor. After a secretive, closed door voting process, I was accepted into the Organization. For me, this was an incredible honor since many hopeful instructors, some I even knew, were turned away. To this day, I contribute a lot of my knowledge about general martial arts history and culture to these gentlemen and will forever be grateful to them.

Joe Bunch was an old time instructor who trained with some of the founding fathers of Karate. Shimabaku, the founder of Ishinryu and Sensei Odo of the Okinawa Karate Kobudo Federation Master decided to take me under his wing and share his knowledge with me. At night, we would train at the Arizona Memorial away from all eyes. I wish I could remember more. I think that I have forgotten more than most people know.

During this amazing time, I skippered a small ocean going Navy vessel that traveled between Honolulu and Kauai. This was where I met Greg Lontayao and had the opportunity to visit the original Kali Grandmaster Floro Villabrille in Kapaa. He showed me the certificate that was issued by the then Governor General Murphy proclaiming Villabrille the champion of the Philippines in stick-fighting. As if that was incredible in itself, before leaving his house he had me kneel down and face the sun. He placed his hand on my head and proceeded to place a blessing on me. I had only been blessed like this once before (by Great Grandmaster Pedoy upon being promoted to full instructor in Derobio) and the memory will stay with me always.

My next military assignment took me to Albuquerque, New Mexico. I contacted a local school with hopes of being able to teach. As luck would have it, I got a hold of Shihan Ray Barrera, who was an International Karate and Kickboxing and International Martial Arts Hall of Fame instructor. He asked me to show him what I did and after giving him a brief demonstration of my skills, he marched into his office and began calling all the other martial arts schools in Albuquerque. This part of the country had never been exposed to the Philippine martial arts and I was treated like the new “hot commodity”. I received offers from many schools to teach and many others to do seminars. I had spent



Shihan Ray Barrera

years accumulating knowledge and I was ready to share it with anyone who wanted to learn.

As a result of this firestorm, today there are close to 1000 Escrima students in the Albuquerque / Santa Fe area. Of these students, I am proud to have taught some who are quite well known. Arlan (Salty Dog) Sanford, my protégé Professor Brandon Jordan, (now teaching in the Miami area), Chief Instructor Antionette Chavez, Owner of Takai Mine Karate, who continues to represent Majapai in New Mexico, and Chief Instructor Melchor Chavez, just to name a few. Then there are those that made instructor and will only teach privately and not in a commercial setting, Chief instructors Gene and Adam Wolf, Gathan Garcia, Mike Wanke and Amalie Fritshnecht are some of these.



World Class trainer
Melchor and Margarita Chaves



World Hall Of Fame Inst
Antoinette Chavez and Hung
Gar Sifu Frank Rivera

Many skilled and well known instructors call New Mexico their home. This offered me the opportunity to train in Serrada with Bruce Albach, and exchange ideas with Jimmy Tacosa and one of the most famous MMA instructors in the USA today, Greg Jackson.

At one time, during a summer camp in New Mexico, I demonstrated how to defend against multiple opponents. Seated among the audience was Richard Bustillo. After my performance, he told me, "*I know Derobio, and what you did was create a new animal.*" To me that was a great compliment, coming from the mouth of one of Bruce Lee's training partners.

Currently, I am the Founder and Grandmaster of Majapai, the culmination of my martial art training and experiences. I am Regional High Chief in Derobio Escrima under Great Grandmaster Braulio Pedoy, and Rajah (6th Degree Red & White Belt), Florida Vice President for Sphinx Karate and Arnis 63 Generals under Ricardo Medoza and the Father of Sphinx Karate Jimmy B. Galez. I hold a 3rd Dan Kobudo under Shihan Ray Barrera and have recieved an honorary Doctorate for my contributions to the martial arts from the Euro Technical University. Grandmaster Sam Allred also awarded me an honorary Black Belt for my contributions to the art of Kajukembo.

In August of 2001, I was inducted into the International Karate and Kickboxing Hall of Fame by Dan Sword, Shihan Ray Barrera made the presentation of the plaque. In July of this year, I was nominated to the Eastern USA International Blackbelt Hall of Fame for my outstanding contributions to the Martial Arts by Shihan John Kovacs. In my martial arts journey, I have truly been blessed by the many individuals I had the honor of studying with, befriending and teaching.

I currently reside with my wife and two children (all students) in Kingsland, Georgia. After having taught at several schools in the area, I have recently opened my own school in Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island (near the Florida/Georgia border) and hold classes in St. Mary's, Georgia as well. My seminar schedule keeps me traveling quite a bit but always offers me the opportunity to see old friends.



Michael Medina following family Escrima tradition



For more information please visit my website:



www.medina-escrima.com

A Final Comment

I have known Grandmaster Medina since living in the Jacksonville, Florida area. We contacted each other off of facebook... a wonderful tool... we have since traveled together to various venues teaching our different systems of Filipino martial arts. Grandmaster Medina has a wealth of knowledge in various Filipino martial arts systems not often seen in the states. He has had rare opportunities to train with many of the legends in Filipino martial arts as well as other arts such as Hawaiian based Kenpo. Grandmaster Medina has perhaps one of the most diverse systems of counter against counter methods I've seen in the Filipino martial arts. I believe this is the influence of the teachings of Great Grandmaster Pedoy of the Derobio Eskrima. Grandmaster Medina has had the distinct privilege of training directly under Great Grandmaster Pedoy and received his notarized certificate directly from him in Derobio Eskrima. Grandmaster Dan is also well schooled in the Western method of swordsmanship as well. One of the most refreshing aspects of Grandmaster Medina's outlook on the martial arts and life in general is his humility. He never claims to "know it all" despite having been involved in training and teaching martial arts for over thirty years. He has shown himself to be a good friend and trust worthy. I can only see his popularity and notoriety grow over time. Anyone who can experience some time on and off the mat with him should not miss out on the opportunity...



John Kovacs and Grandmaster Medina, after a workout

John Kovacs, M.A. Shihan/Guro



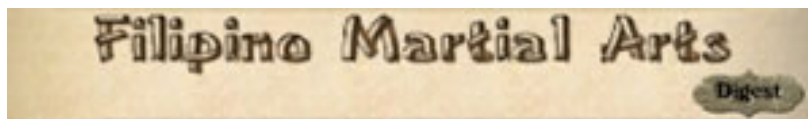
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