

ADAM JAMES

The Rainbow Warrior

By Jose M. Fraguas

Rainbow Warrior Martial Arts was Founded in 1998 by actor, writer and martial arts expert Adam James, an instructor of Wei Kuen Do, Escrima, Kempo, Karate, Kung Fu, Ju-jitsu, Muay Thai Kickboxing, Boxing, Wrestling, Kenjutsu and Kobudo (weapons).

Adam's mentor is Leo Fong, action film star, writer, director, Black Belt Hall of Fame member, Bruce Lee's friend and training partner and author of numerous books including the brand new book "Beyond Kung Fu". Adam will be the successor for Grandmaster Leo Fong in the styles of Wei Kuen Do, Modern Escrima, and Chi Fung and holds the highest black belt possible in Hawaii Shin Kan Okinawan Kempo Karate under Professor Michael Dela Vega.

Adam is also the creator of the Martial Arts Conditioning Specialist Certification for the National College of Exercise Professionals and is certified for the National Academy of Sports Medicine, USA Gymnastics and Hawaii Special Olympics. He specializes in martial arts conditioning, power lifting, Olympic lifting, plyometrics, speed and power training, gymnastics, sport specific training, running technique, flexibility training (basic to advanced stretching) and mental fitness/sports psychology (meditation, positive affirmations, visualization, psychoneuroimmunology and peak performance).

As an actor, Adam performed in the films "Under Siege" with Steven Seagal and "Steal Big/Steal Little" with Andy Garcia, and has worked as a martial arts film consultant and fight choreographer.

Adam can you tell us about when and how you met Leo Fong?

I first met Leo at the Warner Center Club in Woodland Hills, California in 1993. I had moved to the mainland to open schools for the Hawaii Shin Kan Okinawan Kempo Karate Dojo and pursue my career goals as a writer and actor. I was working at the Warner Center Club as a personal trainer and teaching martial arts. When Leo and I met, we immediately hit it off and became friends as well as business associates. We started working on a television show concept and producing the show. Then over the years we started training together and I've been very fortunate to assist him in the changes and developments he's made to his original style of Wei Kuen Do as well as the creation of his new style Chi Fung.



Contact Adam James at (818) 269-4548 for classes & seminars.



The Rainbow Warrior



Can you give an overall view on Wei Kuen Do? The principles of the art?

Leo created Wei Kuen Do in the early 1970s and wrote a book on it in 1976 called "Wei Kuen Do: the Psycho-Dynamic Art of Free Fighting." In the book, he describes the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of the style and shows how to integrate boxing punches, Korean style kicking and grappling with an emphasis on mobile, free fighting. It was one of the first books ever written on an eclectic approach to the martial arts – however, it is not just a system based on combining different techniques but rather how to blend them together into one complete approach. Wei Kuen Do means "the Way of the Integrated Fist" and this is the key to style – to truly integrate the techniques and develop your inner self. Then, over the last ten years Leo has developed

an amazing set of combinations and training drills after a spiritual experience that changed the course of his life. During this time, he and I were training on an almost daily basis and each time we would get together, he would have a new combination or subtle adjustment to work on. Over these years, the combination sets were created and perfected.

Leo Fong created the five sets of combinations for Wei Kuen Do called - The Angles of Attack, The Circles of Destruction, The Trapping Combinations, The Quick Counters and The Faking Combinations. Can you breakdown the theory behind each set of combinations and how each would be a factor in its use as a fighting tool?

All of the sets consist on 10 combinations that work cohesively with each other as well as the other sets. When Leo created the combinations, he had just retired from his career as a minister and during this time, he went through a spiritual experience that gave him a new perspective. He now had the free time to sit and contemplate his life's journey in the martial arts and the techniques that were truly effective. As I previously mentioned, he had created the style of Wei Kuen Do back in the 1970s but now he had the opportunity to crystallize his thoughts and perfect the techniques. He was inspired by the free fighting approach of boxing, by his friend Bruce Lee and the principles of Jeet Kune Do and also by his experience in FMA. In particular, his friend Angel Cabales had a big influence on the creation of the new Wei Kuen Do combinations because Leo was very impressed by the way that Angel had organized the combinations for his style of Serrada Escrima. Angel had all of his techniques and combinations organized in sets of twelve and Leo designed his in sets of ten. Also, the V-step that Angel taught Leo is the basis for the footwork in all of the new combinations as well as the quick, light free fighting footwork of boxing. In addition, the strikes are based on the natural response of fighters and the possible ways that they will attempt to block and counter certain attacks.

The Angles of Attack: The Angles of Attack are the foundation for Wei Kuen Do and all of the basic strikes are contained within these combinations. They are primarily the offensive techniques but they can be executed from a variety of defensive deflections.

The Circles of Destruction: These combinations are the foundation for the defensive fighting skills and contain the core of the Angles of Attack strikes based off of specific deflections. In Wei Kuen Do, we don't believe in blocking

hard but rather in using parries to deflect and diffuse the opponent's attack. It's like the saying to use four ounces of pressure to stop four thousand pounds of force. In many ways, Wei Kuen Do is like Aikido with striking – we strive to use the opponent's aggression against them. Also, the name contains circle because all of the movements are based on circular motion and this builds the energy and power of the techniques.

The Trapping Combinations: These combinations are based on the opponent's attempt to block the core attacks and then to use the principles of Wing Chun and Jeet Kune Do trapping. However, we don't attempt to overly grab and get caught up in trying to control the opponent's arms and instead we trap with a boxing structure. We use a "touch and go" approach that leads us to the next strike – in essence it's "trapping without trapping" because we don't grab the opponent.

The Quick Counters: The Counters are combinations that we use based off the opponent's attack and lead to specific quick strikes. In essence, these are the basis for counter fighting and they are extremely effective against an aggressive opponent. All of these combinations contain the V-step, quick footwork and Angles of Attack strikes.

The Faking Combinations: The Faking Combinations, as well as the new sets of combinations called the Expressions, the Double Strikes and the Footwork Angles are all for the fourth stage of development. We start with 1- Developing the Tools, then 2- Polishing the Tools, next comes 3- Dissolving the Tools and finally we reach 4- Expressing the Tools. All of the advanced combinations will come naturally and spontaneously after the practitioner has trained at the Angles of Attack, Circles of Destruction, Traps, and Counters

Can you give some insight on how it is to train with Leo Fong?

Wei Kuen Do is a process of personal development and every person is different. When we train someone we work with them on an individual basis – to see where they are at currently, what are their personal strengths and what is the area that they can improve upon the most. Ultimately, we work on the inner self – to develop relaxed focus and the ability to remain calm, composed and extremely effective. As we've already discussed, Wei Kuen Do is a free fighting style that combines boxing punches, street fighting kicks, and grappling techniques with a foundation based on the energy of Kung Fu, the footwork of Escrima and the principles of Jeet Kune Do. This unique system combines the energetic training approach of Kung Fu with the physical structure and spontaneous explosiveness of western boxing. Also, Leo has taken the principles of his friend Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune



Do and given them new life and energy. He has gone deeper into these principles and created specific combinations and techniques that allow the practitioner to bring these skills to full development. We work on the four stages of martial arts skill – 1: Developing the tools (learning the techniques), 2: Polishing the tools (perfecting the techniques), 3: Dissolving the tools (eliminating rudimentary execution of the techniques), and finally 4: Expressing the tools (spontaneous and natural execution of the techniques). To accomplish this, we've created the Five F's for training – Form, Footwork, Flow, Feeling and Freedom. The core skills of Wei Kuen Do are simple but take great devotion to go to a higher level of ability. They are the basic strikes of boxing – the jab, hook, cross and upper cut as well as the light, quick and explosive footwork he has gleamed from boxing, Kung Fu, JKD and FMA. Also, there are kicks, joint locks, chokes, etc but the most important skill is relaxed focus – the ability to move quickly and adjust to the opponent. Wei Kuen Do can also be defined as the Art of Detachment, which has physical, mental and spiritual implications. We believe in keeping distance physically and moving laterally to create angles and striking opportunities. We also believe in remaining mentally detached from the feeling of anger and staying poised. And finally we believe in remaining spiritually detached from the material world and keeping ourselves focused on God and the higher calling.

What is the connection between FMA and Wei Kuen Do? What is Leo Fong's stick and knife fighting system Modern Escrima?

The Rainbow Warrior

As we've discussed, Wei Kuen Do is deeply influenced by FMA – from the V-step footwork, to the emphasis on a flow of techniques as introduced to Leo by Remy Presas the founder of Modern Arnis and also the organization of the curriculum based on Angel's Serrada Escrima. In addition, while the strikes are gleamed from boxing, Wei Kuen Do is not a sport martial art and like FMA, it is a combat art for street self-defense. The jab we execute has the same elusive, spontaneous, non telegraphic and explosiveness as the boxing jab, but we can perform it as a finger jab to the eyes and like a knife it can be lethal. Therefore, our approach is to maintain distance and use our skills to inflict serious damage rather than get caught up in grabbing and getting entangled with our opponent. It is also why we have a strong ethical and moral foundation for the art and we teach in side by side with the philosophy and principles of character development.

In regards to Modern Escrima, Leo created his own personal weapons style by blended the free fighting approach of Wei Kuen Do to the stick and knife fighting techniques he learned from Remy Presas's Modern Arnis and Angel Cabales's Serrada Escrima. Leo's Modern Escrima has it's own 12 Strikes and a system of Counters similar to those in Serrada Escrima but it's performed with a short strike delivery and with a free fighting approach - it's very similar to

boxing with sticks. We don't emphasize a specific positioning of hands or feet, but instead we focus on quickness and hitting the target. The end result is a weapons system that perfectly complements the foundation of Wei Kuen Do and the free fighting philosophy. How did you get started in martial arts? Who is your first teacher?

There are there people that stand out in my martial arts journey. First there is my father, David James and then my original sensei in Hawaii Michael Dela Vega, and now Leo Fong, my friend and mentor who has assisted me to reach even higher levels. I was born in the New York City area and then moved to Hawaii when I was nine years old. My father had been an officer in the Navy and he taught me the principles of the US military. Then, growing up in Hawaii, I trained in a variety of martial arts and I was fortunate to learn from many excellent martial artists. My close friend Scott Morimoto was the personal assistant to a man named Mito Uehara, who had owned Black Belt Magazine and O'Hara Publications before retiring to Hawaii. Mito had worked closely with Bruce Lee on several books and he would give Scott copies of them. We studied the books and we were all deeply inspired and influenced by Bruce. I also learned the principles of martial arts greatness through other endeavors like playing team sports, Hawaiian culture, military history and just being in the ocean and land of Hawaii. I played multiple sports in high school but I showed the most potential in football and was offered a scholarship to Northwestern University in the Chicago area. Although many people told me that I would go on to play in the NFL, I didn't stay at Northwestern and left during my junior year to go back to Hawaii to focus on writing a book. The main character of my story was a Vietnam Veteran and martial arts expert and I wanted to get back into my training to do research. I reconnected with my friend Scott and he told me that I had to come train with this amazing martial arts instructor he was met. The school is called Hawaii Shin Kan Okinawan Kempo Karate and the founder is Sensei Michael Dela Vega. Sensei Mike is a descendent of Chojun Miyagi and learned the Miyagi family system of Okinawan Kempo growing up. He also trained in the original Kajukenbo School in the Palama settlement under Joe Emperado, the younger brother of Adriano Emperado, one of the five original founders of the Kajukenbo system. Now, the story behind Kajukenbo is very interesting – in many ways it is the first mixed martial arts but it was designed as a style strictly for combat and street fighting situations. There were five top martial arts experts in Hawaii who were all close friends but





came from different styles. They decided to train together and combine their techniques. One was an expert in Karate, another in Judo/Jujitsu, Emperado was the Kenpo master of the group and there was also one from Kung Fu also known as Chinese Boxing. They would explore the different possibilities of how the different styles would attack and defend each other and they looked for the best techniques. The final outcome was a hybrid system called Ka (for Karate) – Ju (for Judo/Jujitsu) – Ken (for Kenpo) – Bo (for Chinese Boxing). Anyway, Sensei Mike joined the school during the early days when no women or children were allowed to train and Emperado would say - “practice was not over until there was blood on the floor”. At the time, Mike was a teenager and he went down to the school with his close friend Kenneth Funakoshi, who was a relative of Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of Shotokan Karate. Because of their family history, the boys were allowed to join the school and were part of that first generation of students. Later, Sensei Mike decided to enlist in the US Army and was accepted into the officers training program. He then went to Vietnam and became a long-range reconnaissance officer. He spent his time there venturing into enemy territory to gather information and call in air strikes. Sensei Mike would train everyday and make his men train with him before they would set out on their missions. He was asked to teach the Green Berets and other Special Forces units in martial arts and at one point

was asked to train an entire base of soldiers. Then, he returned to Hawaii and officially opened the Hawaii Shin Kan Okinawan Kempo Karate Dojo but he often points out that the school originally started in the jungles and battlefields of Vietnam. Now, I've been training with Leo Fong, who has become my close friend and mentor. Also while growing up in Hawaii, I trained in a variety of martial arts including Karate, Judo, Sumo, Aikido, Muay Thai, and various styles of Kung Fu, as well as western wrestling and western boxing. Now that I'm living in Los Angeles, I've had the honor to know personally and professionally many of the greatest martial artists in the world such as Kam Yuen, Bill Ryusaki, Sid Campbell, Tadashi Yamashita, Bob Wall, Gene LeBell and many others.

Now you have your own business and website Rainbow Warrior Martial Arts (www.rainbowwarriormartialarts.com). Can you describe what it is about and what the program or program's consists of?

Rainbow Warrior Martial Arts is my own personal expression of martial arts wisdom and is a culmination and continuation of my martial arts journey. Our mission statement is building bridges and aiming for excellence in the martial arts and the world. We bring people together through private lessons, seminars, consultation, writing and film. Our motto is that no matter what your goal, style or experience

The Rainbow Warrior



we can assist you to reach your full potential. We teach the progressive training system of Wei Kuen Do that I helped create and perfect with Leo Fong as well as the martial arts styles of Kempo, Karate, Jujitsu, Kung Fu, Muay Thai Kickboxing, boxing, wrestling, Escrima, Kobudo, Chi Fung and JKD principles. I also include mental fitness training/sports psychology and martial arts conditioning through functional resistance training.

I chose the name Rainbow Warrior because of my roots in Hawaii and in recognition of all of the great martial artists that came from Hawaii. However, I also chose it because of the legend of the Rainbow Warrior that exists in several numerous Native American cultures. It's an amazing fact that this legend can be found independently in several different tribes and yet there are phenomenal similarities. The legend is that there will come a time when the earth will be sick and that the animals will be dying. Then there will appear the Rainbow Warrior – that people of all colors and faiths will unite and rise to meet the challenges with dignity, humility, honesty, caring, sharing, and respect. The first Greenpeace ship was called the Rainbow Warrior and it sailed to end whale hunting and nuclear testing.

How have your teachers influenced you?

I've been very blessed to be able to train with Sensei Mike Dela Vega back in Hawaii and now to be working with Leo – they are both very religious men and they are both great

martial artists. With Sensei Mike, the entire basis for Hawaii Shin Kan is the Development of the Mind, Body and Spirit Through Positive Mental Attitude and Faith in God. He created five Dojo Kuns that are very unique and special. Actually, he always says that he didn't create them but rather that they are from the Bible. They are 1 – To always have a Positive Mental Attitude in everything that we say and do, 2 – To always maintain proper conduct, good manners, dignity, humility and honestly towards others, 3 – To seek self-awareness aiming towards self-perfection of the Mind, Body and Spirit, 4 – To always maintain strong will-power, strength, courage and self-confidence and 5 – To always have unwavering faith in ourselves and God, our Heavenly Father. He's an amazing man and has had a huge impact on my life. Then, with Leo, he's also simply incredible and has become my friend and mentor. Leo infuses Wei Kuen Do and everything he does with faith in God and Sports Psychology. In fact, Leo shared with me an experience that he had with Bruce Lee that changed his life and then, this in turn has impacted me. Leo told me that when he met Bruce, he was already an accomplished boxer, having boxed in the Golden Gloves and AAU Championships, and was still boxing with the Sacramento State Boxing team. He was also training in a variety of martial arts styles – he had a black belt in Moo Duk Kwan/Tang Soo Do, he was training in Judo/Jujitsu, training in Choy Lay Fut Kung Fu with Low Bun, in Sil Lum (Shaolin) Kung Fu with T.Y. Wong and also training with Bruce and Jimmy Lee in Wing Chun Kung Fu and the beginnings of Jeet Kune Do. Then one evening, Leo and Bruce were hanging out together and Bruce asked Leo, "Why are you running all over town training in all of these styles?" Leo replied, "I'm looking for the ultimate." And Bruce said, "The Ultimate is inside of you." Immediately, Leo felt a moment of inspiration because it reminded him of the verse in the Bible that "The Kingdom of God is within you." The philosophical implications were grand because it suggested that the knowledge of martial arts are inherently and intuitively inside you and that another person can not teach you how to know your own truth. Bruce also went on to explain the physical aspects of his view and that Leo had the ultimate already. Bruce said that with the boxing skills Leo already possessed and the kicks of the Korean style, the grappling from Judo/Jujitsu and now the trapping from Wing Chun that was all a man needs. These words influenced Leo's life journey as a man, a minister and obviously as a martial artist and then in turn this has been a lantern to my path.. 