



trying to hurt somebody intentionally.

Even if his worst enemy was up against him, his objective is not to hurt him. His idea is to avoid violence. That's what kung-fu is to him.

One of the reasons why I took [the job on] this show is that this is a chance to do, twenty years later, what *Kung Fu* was. It is not one-hundred percent like the old show because, obviously, Caine lives in the 20th century and he has a son who is a cop. But Caine still remains the passive, nonviolent spiritual guide.

The challenge for me on the show is to make the fights different. I don't want to see the same moves over and over and over. And I try to show different aspects of kung-fu. Sometimes we'll do a northern system, sometimes a southern system. I'll do a lot of China-na, you

know, wristlocks and arm-bars and throws.

Most of the kung-fu you see today is Wu Shu, which is dancing and not really fighting. There aren't that many kung-fu men that fight. So it's kind of hard to say how a kung-fu man fights.

For years, kung-fu has gotten a bad rap because kung-fu guys are saying they're not really fighters, but dancers. But good kung-fu men *don't* fight; usually, they just dance. And dancing *is* fighting, if you know what you're doing.

That's why, when I was [street]fighting, I never got hit in the face. I got stabbed a couple times, but I never got hit. Because the idea is not to fight with your opponent, but to dance with him.

Now the [fighting] concept with Caine is that he's the eye of the hurricane. Everything moves around him. No matter how fast someone's moving, the key is how fast Kwai Chang Caine is moving, and how little does he

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have to do to get out of the way. The concept with Caine is that he's the eye of the hurricane.

IKFP: Isn't there a mystique surrounding Caine in this show?

Vendrell: Yeah. The question is, is this really Kwai Chang Caine from the Old West, and he just happens to live this long? Or is he the great-grandson of Kwai Chang Caine? Because he plays the character the same way.

You have the sensation that he's the same guy. He dresses pretty much the same way. His philosophy is the same. The only difference, I think, between the old Caine and the new Caine is that, if anybody was to age twenty years, how would his philosophy change? You know, you take someone who's thirty-five compared with someone who's fifty-five, their way of looking at life is different.

This Caine is even more centered than the first Caine. He doesn't have the threat of the emperor's nephew after him constantly, like in the first show. He's a man of mystery now...we don't know where he came from. We do know he's a relative of Kwai Chang, but he just wanders into town one day and discovers his son.

Caine's profession is teaching kung-fu. He opens a school. He doesn't accept any money for his teaching, so we don't know how he lives. He's kind of a mythical hero. The show itself is really about the people in his life and how he deals with their problems. How he helps them out.

IKFP: How did you get involved in films?

Vendrell: In two ways, actually. I started teaching Buddy Ebsen. He had phlebitis [inflammation of a vein] and they were going to amputate his leg. At the time, I was working as a truck driver in the motion picture business. I had a little gym set up in the truck.

I was working out and Buddy said, "I'm really sick. I'm gonna have to go to the hospital. They might take my leg off."

I said, "Well, why don't you train?" So I started teaching him tai-chi. And within six weeks he had a clean bill of health.

We became real good friends. He asked me, "Why are you a driver? Why don't you get into stunts?"

I said, "I don't know where to go." So I got into [the TV series] *Barnaby Jones*. I met David through Jeff Cooper, a mutual friend on *Barnaby Jones*. Jeff was the star of [the martial arts film] *Circle of Iron*. David and I became good friends. I trained him on a couple of his films. (Rob Moses is his trainer on this show.) David said, "If we ever do *Kung Fu* again, I want you to do the choreography and the stunt arranging."

I trained Brandon [Lee] to be a choreographer because I knew I wouldn't be able to be with him all the time. So when he did *Rapid Fire*, most of that stuff he did was his, even though Jeff Imada was involved with it. Brandon had spent a lot of time with me with videotapes and things like that to hone them up.

What I try to do with my students is teach them that, if I'm not there, they know what looks good and what doesn't look good.

IKFP: Is Chris Potter learning kung-fu quickly?

Vendrell: Yeah, he's a very good athlete. Without giving too much of the show away, he has flashbacks, just like they used in the original show, to him as a kid. It happens throughout the show. David has more martial arts fights and Chris is slowly, as the show progresses, learning martial arts. Each week he progressively gets better.

So if the show goes for a few seasons he'll eventually be a good martial artist. He's eager to learn. I think he'll be very good.

IKFP: When you choreograph shows like this, do you usually end up giving Sunday classes to anyone?

Vendrell: I'm a compulsive teacher. I