



**"I never regretted a single thing I've done in my life. I believe you go on the trail, see what you have to see, and you either learn from it or you die from it. Fortunately, I learned that love is more important than violence."**

love teaching. That's what I was trained to do. Like the actor Peter Strauss...I trained him for a film called *Brotherhood of the Rose*. I went to New Zealand with him to do the film. Afterwards, we became close friends and I still train him now. All my actors that I train, they stay with me.

**IKFP:** Who are some of the other actors you have trained?

**Vendrell:** Richard Chamberlain, Farrah Fawcett, Timothy Dalton, Pat Morita.

You know, people ask, "What level [of kung-fu] are you?" I'm a student. I've been a student my whole life. And I'm really kind of disgusted by the martial arts right now because of the approach of some people. You see guys on the cover of these magazines in these wild-ass poses and stuff. I've been asked to do interviews before and [this is one reason] I don't usually do them. I'm doing this interview for [the benefit of] *Kung Fu*.

What I try to promote as a martial artist is different. If you're totally secure with yourself and you're not afraid of anybody, then everyone's your friend. So, no matter what opposition I come up against, I always try to make things passive.

For instance, on the show I'm also the second unit director. We were out on location in a kind of rough part of town. It was late, like 1:30 in the morning, and we just finished wrapping. One of my cameramen was walking down an alley and this car came zooming down the alley and he hollered, "Hey, slow down!" and he knocked against the side of the car.

The car screeched to a stop. There were four guys inside. The cameraman explained that they had almost run him over. Well, about halfway through the argument another van

pulled up with, like, another fifteen guys in it. All these guys started piling out of the cars.

I would say that there was probably a total of sixteen or seventeen guys standing around all screaming at this cameraman. It looked like it was a fight with a Chinese gang.

I was standing up at the corner watching the whole thing. I waited until just about the part when I thought they were going to start throwing blows and I stepped in. I pointed out the leader and said, "I want to talk to you." This guy really wasn't leading the argument, the guy complaining the most was the guy whose car got hit.

Well, within fifteen seconds, he said to me, "Well, have a good night. See you later." And they all left.

The crew was more impressed by the fact that I could passively calm things down as opposed to fighting. I totally just calmed the situation down.

I think that's really what the arts are about. Not combat. Combat's easy. When I was streetfighting, I got into a thing called "bloodlust" where I liked hurting people. That was a good part of my life because I realized the destructive power of the human body. What you can and can't do.

I'll watch a film and know when it is bullshit because the guy [on screen] is cooperating with the guy who's throwing a punch. When you're in a streetfight, people don't throw perfect punches and they don't always do exactly what you planned.

My teacher always taught from a non-set form. He believes that each person is an individual. Just like a tree grows differently, so does a student. You let the student grow at his own rate and at his own abilities. You nurture it

and culture it so it grows perfectly in its own form. Instead of trying to make every tree look exactly alike or every person move exactly alike.

Every person moves different. Look at Arnold, look at David. Every one of my students looks like he's from a completely different form. My goal as a teacher is that I want my students to be individuals, not copycats.

**IKFP:** How do you feel about the grading system in the martial arts?

**Vendrell:** I don't believe in grading systems.

**IKFP:** You believe it has no place at all?

**Vendrell:** None whatsoever.

**IKFP:** You think it's just promotionalism?

**Vendrell:** I hear kung-fu guys say, "I have a black belt in kung-fu." I say that's a complete contradiction to what kung-fu's all about. Get down to basic facts: If your system works, good. If you want to say you're a dancer and you want to do Wu Shu, go ahead. That's an art form. If you want to fight, fight.

The grading system is a way for people to be connected to a club. A long, long time ago, in the early seventies, I had a school, and I realized that a school isn't a place to learn. The best place to learn is one-on-one.

To me, what the art is all about is to be able to express yourself, whether you're fighting against somebody or fighting against an imaginary opponent. I also believe in fighting; I believe you have to fight to get good.

We get a lot of people coming in now who want to work on the show. And they're either a European champion, a world champion or a North American champion. There are so many champions [it's hard to know who is and who isn't].

I can't go to tournaments because I get headaches. The energy is so negative there. The feeling of competition isn't good in the martial