

Fight 911

BY LESTER "SURF DOG" GRIFFIN



To Legit to Quit

With MMA becoming so popular these days it is becoming increasingly hard to find a legitimate instructor who really knows what they are doing. MMA schools and fight teams are popping up all over the place with names like "Team Real Mean" "Team Crooked" "Team Bash Your Head," Team "I Will Kick Your Butt," and so on.

After judging MMA for over ten years and over 1,000 fights and being involved with martial arts for over 30 years and teaching jeet kune do for 20, I've started to wonder if some of these fighters are getting the proper training? Are they legit or just an opportunists with two or three years of training who have jumped on the MMA bandwagon?

Are people getting their training from a person who trained at a legitimate school, or from some guy who just got a blue belt, or wrestled in high school, or watched some tapes, and decided the time was right for him to open his own MMA school and start his own fight team? Do these people have integrity or are they just thugs and bullies who will give the sport a bad name? Perhaps they are fans who are so desperate to be part of what they see on TV that they will do anything to be part of it? They get some money and open a training center with a cage, Thai pads, focus mitts, heavy bags and all the right equipment but they are lacking the most important thing: knowledge and experience. For those who worked hard for years and trained legitimately under known experts this trend is very troubling.

To be of true benefit to your students, you should have at least five black belts or their equivalent. I tell my students that you can buy a cop badge, a cop car, a cop uniform, a cop gun but that will not make you a cop! (And you definitely get you into trouble!). The problem with MMA right now is that anyone can claim to teach it and the public will not know the difference unless they do their research

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Don't get me wrong, there are a lot of great MMA schools and teachers out there, but just be careful and do your research. Some guys will cagefight once or twice and think they are ready to teach the world or start a fight team. Promoters will let fighters compete with little or no experience just because they can sell a lot of tickets.

MMA is so new that the public cannot really tell the difference between real and poser. People come into my school all the time to check things out (we have a great gym) but I never lie to them. We are



Lester Griffin getting ready to judge a cage fight for the California State Athletic Commission.

not about the glamour but rather about the training. I'm certified to teach everything I claim or have a black belt or equivalent rank. Sometimes with all the fraud I've seen over the years it makes me want to quit teaching and let all the phonies take over; but I keep telling myself that I am to legit to quit.

My instructors always told me to keep my integrity, and I in return tell my students to not take martial art for granted, as it might save their life some day.

There are no shortcuts to getting black belt-level knowledge or to becoming a cagefighter. In both cases you should train in many different martial arts styles for a period of time with a competent instructor. I have been very lucky to have trained with some of the best in the world.

If you've been training in the martial arts for as long as I have, you get to see all the different changes that it has gone through. From the Bruce Lee kung-fu days to the ninja craze, to the Billy Blanks tae bo fad, and now to MMA. A large number of the people who are involved in MMA now, if you had asked them about cagefighting five or ten years ago, would have made fun of it or said they hated it. But now here they are acting like they are the ones who are experts and who built the sport. It really disgusts me. If a new craze were to come along like underwater knife-fighting you would see them leave MMA and jump to that in a second. So remember, just because someone knows first aid it does not make them a doctor. Make sure your instructor is legit. [G](#)

For information on original Dog Brother Lester Griffin, and to get information on his complete like of kali, JKD training methods, and DVDs visit www.lestergriffin.com.