

BRUCE LEE: A WARRIOR'S JOURNEY

PRIVATE

AS BROADCAST

TRANSCRIBED BY WARNER BROS. SCRIPT PROCESSING
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FADE IN:

CREDITS MONTAGE

NARRATOR (V.O.): You are watching a master at work. Bruce Lee. Five-feet, seven and a half inches tall. One hundred, thirty-five pounds of martial art dynamite.

MONTAGE

NARRATOR (V.O.): Hong Kong in February of 1973 is a bustling island of modern industry and commerce that plays against a backdrop of culture and tradition that's remained largely unchanged for over 1,000 years. The biggest news coming from within the city these days is the rapid growth of its motion picture industry, formerly an enterprise of no consequence to anyone but local theater owners. The Hong Kong movie industry is now attracting the attention of the most powerful film studios in the world. The reason for this sudden surge in interest is the meteoric rise to fame within the city of a 32-year-old man named Bruce Lee.

Lee's dynamic on-screen presence, coupled with an audience empathy that cuts across all cultural boundaries have resulted in his films shattering box office records. Producers the world over have come to see in Lee the key that will unlock the door to the future of the industry. They begin to flood the young artist with offers that even a year ago would have been impossible for him to have imagined. After years of battling against cultural and professional bigotry, economic and emotional hardship, as well as the exhausting effort required to sustain the integrity of his art, Lee's perseverance has finally been rewarded. He has become the most sought after motion picture actor in the world. With such power now at his disposal, Lee could easily choose to rest on his laurels and play it safe by making the kind of formula pictures that are now being offered him on a daily basis. But the very notion of formulas and methods hold no appeal whatsoever for this young man.

Instead, Lee is presently in the midst of filming the Game of Death, what he terms a multi-level film, in which his personal philosophy of martial art is being presented for the first time.

2.

NARRATOR (V.O.):He's returning to this film after a brief hiatus, having spent the fall of the previous year filming three sequences, the finale (it turns out) of the film. Lee performs the work and assumes the responsibility of eight people in the creation of this film. He's the director, the producer, the choreographer, the author of the screenplay. In addition to having a hand in set design, the cinematography, and the lighting of the film. And, of course, he's the leading actor.

Martial artists who are not accustomed to the camera must be taught how to sell a strike or a reaction for optimal dramatic effect. Again, this falls to Lee to look after. Take after take of precision martial art choreography is performed. Lee will spend in some instances up to four days filming what will turn out to be only a five minute fight sequence. Lee is most demanding of himself. In this shot, involving his handling a nunchaku, an ancient Oriental weapon that was originally used as a rice flail, Lee will shoot no less than ten takes to capture one small sequence that will appear on screen for a mere 3.5 seconds. He wants his films to have the stamp of realism, and believability. Filming of the Game of Death is suspended in October of 1972 when word reaches the set that Warner Bros. is now interested in co-producing his next film. It will mark the first time in the history of East-West relations that a Chinese and American film studio work together on a motion picture. Lee views the co-production as a step toward raising global understanding of Chinese culture. And of having Chinese films accepted into the international market.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO

HOST (V.O.):Did you look at many Mandarin movies before you started playing in your first one?

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Yes, yes, yes, I have.

HOST (V.O.):What did you think of them when you saw them?

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Quality-wise, I mean I have to admit that it's not quite up to the standard. However, it is growing and it is getting higher and higher and going toward that standard that what I would term quality.

MONTAGE

NARRATOR (V.O.): Lee and his business partner, Raymond Chow, fly to Los Angeles in November of 1972 to complete negotiations with Warner Brothers for what will prove to be Lee's last and biggest film, Enter the Dragon. January to April of 1973, Lee gives over to the filming of Enter the Dragon. Again, he will oversee every aspect of its production and post-production. By the time his schedule allows him to resume working on additional ideas for the Game of Death, it's mid-July of 1973, the final week of his life. July 20th, his last day on Earth, he will spend discussing script ideas for the film. On this fateful day, Lee will -- in characteristic optimism -- look ahead to September 20, 1973. He will write in his daytime diary for this date, of his intention to resume filming the Game of Death. These will prove to be the last words he will ever write. Lee's passing hits the residents of Hong Kong like a tidal wave. Disbelief, shock, anger, there was so much more the young man had to accomplish, so much he had to live for, and now, nothing.

Upon Lee's passing, so, too, passes the movement towards realism in Eastern cinema that he had pioneered. Almost immediately, action films will revert to being unbelievable and hokey. Ironically, during an audio dictation that Lee makes only weeks prior to his passing, he comments on this very distinction between his films and those made by other, less dedicated production companies.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): I can tell you that as more Bruce Lee films are shown, the audience will soon realize not only in acting ability but in physical skill as well, they will see the difference.

NARRATOR (V.O.): Five years after his passing, excerpts from the film that Lee had worked so feverishly on during the final months and hours of his life, are edited into a film featuring Lee's title, Game of Death. But the film bears no comparison to Lee's original multi-level vision. Without Lee's choreography notes, script outlines and motif, the producers are uncertain what to do with the 100 minutes of footage they have in their possession.

NARRATOR (V.O.):Moreover, they discover that Lee was such a perfectionist that of the 100 minutes of footage they have in hand, two-thirds turn out to be outtakes and retakes, shots that Lee himself had discarded for sequences in the film that he felt were beneath his standard of quality. They deem only eleven minutes and seven seconds of the footage to be worthy of inclusion in their film. The rest, approximately 21 minutes worth, they discard. Intercutting actual footage of Lee into fight sequences involving lookalikes and even using cardboard cutouts of Lee's head, the end result is viewed by many as an exploitive and grotesque joke played on the great artist's legacy by now even. Lee's most zealous fans are beginning to believe that the original footage is gone and that it will never be possible to see the footage Lee shot in its entirety. Nor to ever learn what his original storyline for the film was. In the fall of 1994, during research conducted for a multi-volume book series based on Lee's surviving writings, Lee's original script and choreography writings for the Game of Death are recovered. The writings confirm what had long been suspected, that Lee had, indeed, shot considerably more footage for the Game of Death than had been seen to date. Another unexpected surprise is discovered in among his choreography writings, his hand-written storyline, twelve pages in length and containing all scene breakdowns and select dialogue passages. The original storyline stands in sharp contrast to the one presented in the film released under the same name. After the discovery of Lee's script notes, a search to find the missing footage is launched. It will last some six years, but then the miraculous happens. The original thirty-five millimeter film footage is located. After having been separated for over one-quarter of a century, Bruce Lee's original footage and script notes are finally reunited. Over the course of this film, you'll see this footage as Bruce Lee had intended for it to be shown, and you'll also come to understand the struggle he had to undergo in order to bring it to the big screen. And perhaps along the way, you'll come to know the real Bruce Lee, the man behind the legend, a little better as well.

5.

EXT. RIVER

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Water is the softest substance in the world, but yet it can penetrate the hardest rock or anything, granite, you name it. Um, water also is insubstantial. By that I mean you cannot grasp hold of it. You cannot punch it and hurt it.

INT. LIVING ROOM

BRUCE LEE:So every kung fu man is trying to do that, to be soft like water and flexible and adapt itself to the opponent.

NARRATOR (V.O.):It is February of 1965 in Los Angeles, California, where a 24-year-old Bruce Lee is in the midst of auditioning for a TV series that will never be made. In 19 months, he will be known to American audiences as Kato, from the Green Hornet. In five years, he'll discover a truth that will forever alter the course of martial art history. And in eight years, he'll be the most famous motion picture actor in the world. But that's all in the future. Today he's unknown.

MAN (O.S.):And you went to college in the United States?

BRUCE LEE:Yes.

MAN (O.S.):And what did you study?

BRUCE LEE:Philosophy.

MONTAGE

NARRATOR (V.O.):Bruce Lee's interest in philosophy, defined by the Western ethos as the love of wisdom, is a passion that will remain with him throughout the remainder of his life. Lee has been teaching Americans about Chinese philosophy and culture for six years, lecturing in the Pacific Northwest on the subtleties of Chinese thought. His great passion, however, is gung fu, an ancient Chinese fighting art, unknown in the America of 1965. Lee's scrapbook from this period of his life reveals brief descriptions of many of the arts and traditions of the venerated masters of gung fu. America's only knowledge of the martial arts in 1965 are by way of judo and jujitsu, two Japanese arts that were taught to her servicemen during the Korean War. Lee regards himself as an ambassador for Chinese martial art, teaching all who will listen about the ways of the Chinese masters.

6.

INT. LIVING ROOM

MAN (O.S.):Now you told me earlier today that karate and jujitsu are not the most powerful or the best forms of Oriental fighting. What is the most powerful or the best form?

BRUCE LEE:Well, it's bad to say the best, but in my opinion, I think gung fu is pretty good.

MAN (O.S.):Could you tell us a little about gung fu?

BRUCE LEE:Well, gung fu originates in China. It is the ancestor of karate and jujitsu. It is more of a complete system and it's more fluid. By that I mean it's more flowing, there is continuity and movement, instead of one movement, two movement, and then stop.

MAN (O.S.):I see. What's the difference between a gung fu punch and a karate punch.

BRUCE LEE:Well, a karate punch is like an iron bar, whaack. A gung fu punch is like an iron chain with an iron ball attached to the end, and it go whang, and it hurt inside.

MAN (O.S.):Okay.

MONTAGE

NARRATOR (V.O.):Lee has studied a system of Chinese gung fu for the past nine years called wing chun. And is considered one of the art's most talented and articulate exponents. His teacher in this art has been an elderly Hong Kong Chinese master by the name of Yip Man. Despite his proficiency in this style of gung fu, his study of philosophy has caused him to question. And now he begins to question why most martial artists, Chinese and otherwise, seem more concerned with preserving tradition, than with looking more deeply into the matter to penetrate through to the ultimate truth of martial art. Moreover, Lee has begun to develop his own method of gung fu, which he describes as non-classical in nature and which takes as its core the principles of economy of motion, simplicity, and directness.

INT. LIVING ROOM

BRUCE LEE:Alright, for instance, you will read it in bulk in a magazine and everything, that when somebody grabs you, you will first do this and then this and then and then and then and then.

7.

BRUCE LEE:Thousands of steps before you do a single thing. Of course, these kinds of magazines would teach you to be feared by your enemies and admired by your friends and everything. But in gung fu it always involves a very fast motion, like for instance, a guy grabbing your hand, it's not the idea to do so many steps. Step him right on the instep, he'll let go. This is what we mean by simplicity. Same thing in striking and in everything. It has to be based on a very minimum motion, so that everything would be directly expressed, one motion. And he's gone. Doing it graceful, not to go, 'Aagh,' yelling and jumping all over him, but to go, excuse me.

MONTAGE

NARRATOR:Both the American and Chinese martial art communities resent his iconoclasm. For such a young man to stand up against thousands of years of tradition and venerated authority, is considered a director threat to the status quo and its entrenched power base.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

LEE'S STUDENT:Prior to Bruce's coming to this country, you know, gung fu was alive in most all the Chinese communities, but there was nothing taught to outsiders basically. And Bruce came along, and with that basis of trying to create equality amongst all people regardless of race, he chose to let anybody into his school regardless of what color race they were. As long as he knew what was, what was in their heart was good and positive, why he he took them in and like when he was down in San Francisco, where the Chinese community was much more like being in China, they, they took exception to it. And he had to fight his way out of it.

LEE'S WIDOW:In Oakland, he received a challenge from the San Francisco Chinese martial arts community. And the challenge read that, Bruce, if he were to be defeated in this challenge, would have to cease teaching Caucasian or non-Chinese students. And the Chinese martial arts artist came over from San Francisco to Bruce's studio in Oakland, and a very formal challenge took place. I was present there. In fact, I was eight months pregnant with Brandon, and James Lee was there. And this fight with this Chinese martial arts artist lasted about three minutes.

LEE'S WIDOW: It consisted of a lot of running, where the Chinese martial artist took off and started running around the room, and Bruce was pursuing him before Bruce finally got a hold of him and took him down to the floor and made him give up. And the, after the challenge ended with the Chinese martial arts artist being soundly defeated and they all went away, Bruce won the right to teach anyone he wanted to.

NARRATOR (V.O.): By February of 1967, Lee has three schools operating in Seattle, Oakland and Los Angeles that teach his own interpretation of gung fu. Based on his own investigations into the ultimate truth of unarmed combat. However, by now the young man is openly critical of the traditions and limitations he sees as inherent in the martial arts as they're currently being practiced in America. He believes they lack a solid grounding in reality, consisting of rehearsed self-defense routines that are employed and predictable and patternized rhythms. He notes that real combat is spontaneous, not rehearsed, and is made of irregular or broken rhythm that a martial artist cannot anticipate, only respond to. Even the championship karate tournaments of the era are non-contact affairs, settled not on knockouts but an accumulation of points, awarded for blows that never touch an opponent. A victory is determined by a team of judges who conclude which combatant would probably have hurt the other combatant the most, had contact been allowed. Lee has no use for such styles of pseudo-fighting, which he calls 'organized despair' and 'dryland swimming.'

Lee's criticism of the arts can be attributed in part to his background in Hong Kong, which consisted not of non-contact karate tournaments, but full contact street fights, and challenge matches fought on Hong Kong rooftops. When not fighting against proponents of different styles of gung fu on rooftops, Lee had also fought frequently against opponents who had been armed with knives and chains. In such real-world encounters, referees and judges were not necessary. Rather than participating in non-contact karate tournaments, which he considers little more than glorified games of tag, Lee instead devotes himself to devising a more scientific approach to unarmed combat.

NARRATOR (V.O.): His research leads him to the science of Newtonian physics, and the techniques and principles of European fencing and Western boxing, where efficiency, not tradition, are the touchstones of both disciplines. Lee's research causes him to understand that the only litmus test of a combative technique's worth is whether or not it can be landed effectively on an opponent. Anything that is ornamental is discarded from his style. He retains only those techniques that he himself has determined to be practical in real self-defense situations. Lee is the first martial artist in North America, if not the world, to have his students don boxing gloves, headgear and body protectors and spar all out. Nothing is rehearsed, no punches are pulled, and full contact reality-based martial art is the order of the day.

In 1967 Lee introduces the concept of full contact sparring at the international karate tournament in Long Beach, California. Defense is not emphasized in his new reality-based method, as this would be allowing one's opponent to set the tone and tempo in a real fight. Instead, the focus of Lee's new approach to combat is on attack, or more precisely, on intercepting the opponent's attack with an attack of one's own. By mid-summer of 1967, Lee has determined that the defining attribute of his new approach to martial art is the principle of interception. As the Cantonese term for unarmed combat is typically represented by a character indicating a fist, Lee christens his new approach Jeet Kune Do, the way of the intercepting fist.

EXT. BUILDING ('LONGSTREET' CLIP)

MAN IN SUIT (V.O.): Now what is this, what is this thing you do.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): In Cantonese, jeet kune do, the way of the intercepting fist.

MAN IN SUIT (V.O.): Intercepting fist, huh?

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): Or foot. C'mon, touch me anywhere you can. To reach me, you must move to me. Your attack offers me an opportunity to intercept you. In this case, I'm using my longest weapon, my sidekick, against the nearest target, your kneecap. This can be compared to your left jab in boxing, except it's much more damaging.

10.

MAN IN SUIT (V.O.):I see. Well, speaking of a left jab.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Oh, this time I intercept your emotional tenseness. You see, from your thought to your fist, how much time was lost.

MONTAGE

NARRATOR (V.O.):Before long, word is out concerning Lee's art, and he begins to attract the attention of America's top martial artists, as well as many prestigious Southern California actors and athletes. Steve McQueen, James Coburn and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar among them.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR:

Bruce was an iconoclast and a rebel in that he thought that the traditional martial arts were way too bound by tradition. People who were not really that effective at martial arts really were not promoting martial arts but their own nationalistic brand of martial arts and their view of the world, more so than a realistic martial arts fighting system. And he wanted to get to the pure essence of the art.

NARRATOR (V.O.):Lee's Los Angeles school, located in the heart of Chinatown, and without any advertising, pulls in not newcomers to the martial arts, but seasoned black belts, all of whom now look upon Lee's art as revolutionary. And upon his talent as other-worldly.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):In the Sportsweek of the Washington Star, printed in Washington, D.C. on August 16, 1970, 'Three of Bruce Lee's pupils, Joe Louis, Chuck Norris, and Mike Stone, have between them won every major karate tournament in the United States. Joe Louis was grand national champion three successive years. Bruce Lee handles and instructs these guys almost as a parent would a young child. Which can be somewhat disconcerting to watch. It's like walking into a saloon in the old West, and seeing the fastest guy in the territory standing there with notches all over his gun, then in walks a pleasant little fellow who says, "How many times do I have to tell you, you are doing it all wrong?" and the other guy listens intently."

11.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):With the top actors and martial artists in America now coming to his home for private instruction, Lee is the toast of the martial arts world. However, by the end of 1969, Lee is growing concerned that his students are looking to his art as containing a secret way, special techniques that alone are responsible for success and ability in combat. To Lee, there is no such thing as a magic system. The only secret to martial art success being a willingness to train hard enough to cultivate one's own innate abilities. Taking matters into his own hands, Lee now does something that's unheard of in martial arts circles. In January of 1970, at the very height of his population and reputation in the martial art world, he closes all three of his chung fan gung fu schools.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

JABBAR:When Bruce closed the schools, he felt he was unburdening himself of having to prove through his students that his system had merit. He didn't want to get into that. He wanted them to evolve and teach, but it was not a thing where you have to teach what I taught you. You have to teach what you learned, and that's going to be more than what he taught. Hopefully, you know, for those students that, that understood what he was doing.

EXT. BUILDING ('LONGSTREET' CLIP)

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

Well, Lee's going to teach me all this.

LEE (V.O.):I cannot teach you. Only help you to explore yourself, nothing more.

MONTAGE

NARRATOR (V.O.):Lee now trains only a handful of students privately. As his art is about personal growth, he feels he must come to know each student thoroughly in order to assist the student in developing the skills and confidence required to free him from the chains of limitation. Whether of physical or psychological origin.

EXT. BUILDING ('LONGSTREET' CLIP)

LEE (V.O.):What is your instinct?

12.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

To pray.

LEE (V.O.): In this position, your arms are useless.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

Yeah.

LEE (V.O.): Can you kick or stomp me?

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

No.

LEE (V.O.): Then if you wish to survive, what do you do?

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

I don't know.

LEE (V.O.): Bite.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

Bite?

LEE (V.O.): Are we not animals? You alright?

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

I can't find much evidence to the contrary, Lee. Bite, huh?

LEE (V.O.): Biting is efficient in close quarters, but don't make a plan of biting. That is a very good way to lose your teeth.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

There's so much to remember.

LEE (V.O.): If you try to remember, you will lose. Empty your mind. Be formless. Shapeless, like water. Now you put water into a cup. It becomes the cup. Put into a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now water can flow or creep or drip or crash. Be water, my friend.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

Yeah. Why don't I just stand in front of Paul and recite that to him. Maybe he'll faint. Or drown.

13.

LEE (V.O.):When is it?

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

Tomorrow.

LEE (V.O.):You are not ready.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

I know.

LEE (V.O.):Like everyone else, you want to learn the way to win, but never to accept a way to lose. To accept defeat. To learn to die is to be liberated from it. So when tomorrow comes, you must free your ambitious mind and learn the art of dying.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

JABBAR:I remember he, he said, you, you know for me. If, If I were going to use like let's say judo style. Imagine me trying to get my hips underneath him, to throw him, you know for a hip throw. You know, you're going to try and do that while I beat you, while I beat you down. You'll be trying to do something else. And you know, he was absolutely right.

NARRATOR (V.O.):Lee is his own best example of the potency of his beliefs. He's detected his own weaknesses and limitations and by the application of intellect and dint of hard work, he alone has overcome them, raising his physical ability to a level that borders on the phenomenal. He routinely performs one-finger pushups on one hand, executes elevated V-sits for extended periods of time. He can cannonade an opponent several feet back from a punch he delivers from only one inch away. And his sidekicks have so much power that in the words of one recipient, they feel like being hit by a car. He trains hard, six days a week, pushing to discover the outer limits of expression for the human body. He finds out with disastrous consequences on August 13, 1970. As a result of an improper warmup while lifting weights, Lee severely strains the fourth sacral nerve in his lower back. It's an injury that will continue to plague him for the remainder of his life. The injury leaves Lee virtually bedridden for a period of six months. His doctors tell him he may never be able to kick again.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

LEE'S WIDOW:For Bruce to be lying down in bed, 24 hours a day, for approximately about six months, is, was an impossible thought, you know, you cannot contain him like that. But he did, because he knew if there were any future, even to walk normally, he would need to give this time to heal. So he spent a great deal of time resting, flat on his back for quite a long time, and then also you know, just sitting, sitting in a chair. But he was not one to just waste time. So he spent this amount of time doing a lot of researching of all of his vast library of books, which were books on the martial arts, all combative arts, all hand-to-hand arts, whether they be Western, Eastern, modern, or ancient, all types of philosophy, psychology, especially in the motivational field now that he was injured and his future was in jeopardy. He felt that he needed to self-motivate himself all the time.

NARRATOR (V.O.):Unable to put his energy to use physically, Lee now channels it mentally. The writings of the Buddha, Alan Watts, Carl Rogers, Laotsha. Frederick Perls, Dyset Sizuki, and Jidu Krishnamurti become his constant companion. Of these authors, Lee is particularly taken by the thoughts of Krishnamurti, who states that truth cannot be organized without invalidating it.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

KRISHNAMURTI:You have to be a light to yourself, not the light of a professor, analyst, or a psychologist, or the light of Jesus, or the light of a good heart. You have to be light to yourself in a world that is utterly becoming dark.

LEE'S WIDOW:I believe that part of the concept that he enjoyed so much about Krishnamurti's philosophy was one of self-reliance and if you're looking for truth, you must look inward, rather than outward.

NARRATOR (V.O.):Lee begins to write about his new insight and its application to martial art. His writings will fill seven large volumes. Slowly, Lee begins to battle back. Although the back injury will prove to be a permanent problem, within six months, he has proven both the naysayers and the medical community wrong.

NARRATOR (V.O.): Not only is he able to kick again, he becomes a better martial artist than he ever was before. Lee's harrowing experience, coupled with his new insight, served to underscore for him the validity of his belief that there is no help but self-help, including help in the form of instruction, in the art of unarmed combat. Even his own beloved creation, jeet kune do, by far the most scientific of all martial arts, is not exempt from his solvent analysis. Lee sees his error in the fact that he had been striving to create the ultimate way or style of martial art to teach to his students. First he thought he had it with the Chinese way of martial art. Then more recently in his newly-created way of the intercepting fist. But Lee has now come to see that the ultimate truth does not reside in ways or styles but within the soul of each individual.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

BRUCE LEE: I do not believe in styles anymore. I mean, I do not believe that there is such thing as like a Chinese way of fighting or the Japanese way of fighting or whatever way of fighting, because unless human being have three arms and four legs, we will have a different form of fighting. But basically, we only have two hands and two feet, so styles tend to not only separate man, you know because they have their own doctrines, and then their doctrines became the gospel truth, you know, that you cannot change, you know. But if you do not have styles. If you just say, well, here, here I am, you know, as a human being, how can I express myself, totally and completely.

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.): Then it's just two people who are being aware of their movements, who are observing the other person's movements and being able to fit in with that person's movements, so that there's no set pattern of movements, no, 'well when he does this, then I do this.'

LEE'S WIDOW: It's just a total freedom to react to what the other person does. In fact, Bruce inscribes it perfectly on the back of this medallion, where he wrote the words that have become his motto, and it says, 'Using no way as way, having no limitation as limitation.' Over the years this phrase has been somewhat misinterpreted. People think of using no way as way to mean anything I do is okay.

LEE'S WIDOW:And anything I do is my way. I don't think Bruce really intended it to mean that way. He just meant not to be boxed in by a certain way, so that you never get into a situation where there's only one response. You adapt to what the situation calls for. I think Bruce had that down pretty well.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):When there is a way, then there lies the limitation.

BRUCE LEE:To me, okay, to me. Ultimately, martial art means honestly expressing yourself. Now it is very difficult to do. I mean, it is easy for me to put on a show and be cocky and be flooded with a cocky feeling and then feel like pretty cool and all that. Oh I can make all kinds of phony things, you see what I mean. Blinded by it, or I can show you some really fancy movement. But to express one's self honestly, not lying to one's self. And to express myself honestly, now that, my friend, is very hard to do.

JABBAR:Now that's the whole key right there. You know, do you know yourself, do you know your skills, do you know your weaknesses, are you able to adjust your life to, to compensate for whatever's happening and take advantage of whatever's happening in terms of plusses and minuses. That, that, that was his approach. And he was an incredible example of that, you know, a walking model of that.

NARRATOR (V.O.):In his critically acclaimed performance on the television series, 'Long Street,' Lee attempts to teach his student, played by James Franciscus, this higher purpose of his martial art.

INT. ROOM ('LONGSTREET' CLIP)

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

Lee, I want you to teach me what you did the other night.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):I already told Miss Sparrow I can't.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

I'm willing to empty my cup in order to taste your tea.

LEE (V.O.):Your openmindedness is cool, but it doesn't change anything. I don't believe in systems, Mr. Longstreet, nor in methods. Without a system, without a method, what's to teach?

17.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

Yeah, but you had to learn. You weren't born knowing how to take apart three men in a matter of seconds.

LEE (V.O.): True, but I found the cause of my ignorance.

FRANCISCUS (V.O.):

Now help me find mine.

MONTAGE

NARRATOR (V.O.): Having discovered the truth of using no way as way, having no limitation as limitation, Bruce Lee's mission now becomes to communicate this truth to the world. The most effective approach, he decides, is not in private one-on-one instruction, but in bringing this truth to the big screen. His quest, to create a new genre of film that will reveal the higher purpose of martial art. His challenge, to overcome the prejudices of Hollywood.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

LEE'S WIDOW: Bruce at that point in his life had decided that he was going to make the film business his career rather than teaching martial arts on a mass basis. And so he tried to pursue the idea of getting roles in film and TV.

INT. ROOM ('MARLOWE' CLIP)

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): Okay.

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.): He had a great deal of trouble securing really leading roles. He had a number of roles in small pictures.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.): But as far as really promoting his career as a leading man, he had a lot of difficulty in America at that time.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): In the United States, I think something about the Oriental. I mean, the true, Oriental, should be shown.

INTERVIEWER #2 (V.O.):

Hollywood sure as heck hasn't.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):You better believe it, man. I mean, it's always the pigtail and bouncing around chop chop, you know, with the eye slant and all that.

NARRATOR (V.O.):A screenplay written by Lee entitled The Silent Flute, which detailed the personal quest of self-discovery of a young martial artist, is torpedoed by Hollywood.

LEE'S STUDENT:Yeah, he was in a kind of a poverty status there. And he was having a tough time, and he would write in a letter and tell me that he was working on a vehicle, and something like The Silent Flute or equivalent to that, and then the letter I got the next month, he would tell me that that fell through, because in one instance he told me that they just felt that a young Asian couldn't carry the lead in something like that.

NARRATOR (V.O.):Undeterred, the young man forges on. He conceives an idea for a television series that will feature martial art philosophy. Originally to be called 'The Warrior,' but later renamed 'Kung Fu.'

LEE'S WIDOW:Even when he conceived the idea of the 'Kung Fu' series, had many, many planning discussions with the eventual producers of the 'Kung Fu' series. When it got right down to it, they did not hire Bruce to play the part of the, the leading part in 'Kung Fu.' Instead, going for a Caucasian man. And the word was that, Bruce, because he was Chinese, was not considered a bankable commodity.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.):

Let me ask you, however, about the, the problems that you face as a Chinese hero in an American series. Have people come up in the industry and said, 'Well we don't know how the audience is going to take a non-American?'

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Well, such question has been raised. In fact, it is, it is, it is being discussed. And that is why 'The Warrior' is probably is not going to be on...

INTERVIEWER (V.O.):I see.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): You see, because unfortunately such thing does exist in this world, you see, like I don't know, certain part of the country, right? Well, like, they think that business-wise it's a risk. And I don't blame them. And I don't blame them. I mean, in the same way it's like in Hong Kong, if a foreigner come and be and became a star. If I were the the the man with the money, I probably would have my own worry of whether or not the acceptance would be there. But that's all right, because if you, if you honestly express yourself, it doesn't matter, see.

NARRATOR (V.O.): Lee now realizes that Hollywood only wants Asians to play grossly inaccurate stereotypes. Despite his dire economic circumstances, he refuses to accept roles that would portray the Chinese race as anything less than equal to other cultures. With a wife and now two small children to support, Lee's dignity and philosophical principles come at a huge price. With money rapidly running out, he now realizes that he is wasting his time with Hollywood.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): Here I am, a Chinese and, I mean, not prejudiced or anything, but really wishful thinking, how many times in film is a Chinese required?

INTERVIEWER #2 (V.O.):

Right.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): When it is required, it is always branded as a typical, you know, 'lung-de-de-lung-dung-dung-dung-dung.' This type, you know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER #2 (V.O.):

Right.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): So I say the hell with it.

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.): With that rejection in mind, I guess you could say that was an overt expression of racism in the film industry in the early 70s. And at that time, we went to Hong Kong, Bruce having decided that if he couldn't make it in the American film industry through the front door, he would go to Hong Kong and come back in through the side door. Which is precisely what he was doing.

NARRATOR (V.O.):At the time, Chinese action films were largely sword play films, or as Bruce Lee so aptly described them, simply one long arm hassle.

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.):He would say he didn't invent the gore in Mandarin films, but that the violence in his films were always with just cause.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):I hope that the picture I am in would either explain why the violence was done, whether right or wrong or what not, but unfortunately, pictures, most of them you know are done mainly just for the sake of violence, you know what I mean? Like, you know, fighting for thirty minutes, get stabbed for fifty times.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.):Well I'm fascinated... let me give you your microphone back. I'm fascinated that you came back...

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Well I just -- I am a martial arts artist.

NARRATOR (V.O.):He's offered very little money to star in his first film. But then money has never been his sole objective. The film is entitled, The Big Boss, and it will become the highest grossing film in Southeast Asian history. Lee follows up the unprecedented success of his first film with a second, Fist of Fury. It proceeds to smash the record set by The Big Boss.

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.):Bruce didn't want to be segmented, in that he could only do Chinese movies or only do Chinese martial arts. He didn't view himself as only a Chinese man. He viewed himself as a citizen of the world, who had a mission that really had nothing to do with what his nationality was. He wanted to bring his views of martial arts and of life and of the culture that he had experienced in his short lifetime to the audiences all over the world.

NARRATOR (V.O.):Lee does just this with his next film, The Way of the Dragon. Which he also directs. In the film's climactic battle, Lee takes on one-time student, Chuck Norris, in a fight set in the Roman Coliseum. Lee's character, using classical gung fu techniques, is losing the fight. Until he begins to employ the formless and adaptive approach of jeet kune do. The Way of the Dragon also affords Lee the opportunity to include deeper elements of his personal philosophy of life.

NARRATOR (V.O.):After reluctantly taking the life of his adversary in the film, Lee's character pauses to make a symbolic gesture of respect to a fellow human being. It was yet another example of Bruce Lee communicating to his audience a piece of his own personal philosophy regarding the brotherhood of all races.

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.):After the first two movies, then Bruce progressed into making The Way of the Dragon, which was his own creation. Then Game of Death, of course, and then Enter the Dragon came along. And I think as you can see, there's a progression in those films where the fighting has even more justification and that there's more material built around the fighting to explain first of all the reason for it. And to also find expression for the philosophy underlying the martial arts.

EXT. BOAT (ENTER THE DRAGON CLIP)

MAN ON BOAT (V.O.):Do I bother you?

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Don't waste yourself.

MAN ON BOAT (V.O.):What's your style?

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):My style? You can call it the art of fighting without fighting.

MAN ON BOAT (V.O.):The art of fighting without fighting. Show me some of it.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Later... Alright. Don't you think we need more room?

MAN ON BOAT (V.O.):Where else?

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):That island, on a beach. We can take this boat.

MAN ON BOAT (V.O.):Okay. Hey, what the hell are you doing? Hey, are you crazy?

NARRATOR (V.O.):After filming Enter the Dragon, Lee is now ready to complete the film that will embody his greatest message, a film Lee calls the Game of Death.

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.):I believe that this background of research and the building of a philosophy of jeet kune do is what Bruce intended to relate through the Game of Death.

LEE'S WIDOW:He had an idea of how he wanted to show the martial arts to the viewing public, these various steps in finding your own way in martial arts, the different styles and what styles mean, and more importantly, what they don't mean. That was Bruce's big message.

LEE'S WIDOW:The style of no style, and Game of Death was going to be the platform for these expressions.

NARRATOR (V.O.):While we may never know how the film would have turned out, had Bruce Lee lived, we do know with unimpeachable certainty, the vision that he had for the movie during the time he was filming its finale. According to Lee's twelve-page storyline, he would play a retired undefeated martial arts champion by the name of Hie Tien, who had been approached by members of the Korean underworld to take part in a daring raid on a five-story pagoda, said to contain a valuable treasure on its uppermost level. When he refuses to participate, his sister and younger brother are kidnapped, leaving him no option but to take part in the raid. At a briefing at the boss's home, Hie Tien is introduced to his accomplices in the raid, all of them highly trained martial artists. The boss screens a reconnaissance film of the temple area, explaining to the accomplices that since guns are prohibited, the pagoda is guarded by martial arts mercenaries. One on each level of the pagoda. Their instructions are to fight their way to the top of the pagoda and retrieve the treasure. Lee selected the Buddhist temple of Pope Jusaw as the setting of the film. The temple's most striking object, the 33 meter high Buddha statue, is clearly indicated in Lee's storyline sketches. Cast in one mold with 150 tons of bronze, it's said to be the largest such standing figure in all of Asia. In front of the Buddha, is the five-story wooden pagoda that Bruce Lee had chosen as the backdrop for the climactic battles in the film.

LEE'S WIDOW (V.O.):Thus the ideas started from there. He took some of the ideas he had been gathering about the levels of martial arts combat in the pagoda, and Kareem came out and I believe that the first scenes that they shot were the fight scenes between Bruce and Kareem.

KAREEM (V.O.):The first day's rushes after we saw those, we had to slow everything down because we were moving too fast and it looked too jerky on the film, and we had to slow it down so the film could follow, so the camera could follow us. And you know, people could see things. 'Course, we were, we were doings like we practiced it.

KAREEM:And you know, practice with Bruce, we'd do several things in a split second. And you know, the audience would miss the subtleties of what he was trying to do if we didn't slow it down.

NARRATOR (V.O.):Of what were to be his accomplices in the film, Lee wanted one to be slightly devious and antagonistic toward his character. This would create an interesting dynamic in the relationship between the two men, not letting the audience know whether or not Lee's partner was actually with him or against him. For the role of the antagonistic accomplice, Lee chose James Tien, an actor who appeared with Lee in two of his previous three films in Hong Kong. The second accomplice was to be a strong but simple-minded martial artist. These would be character attributes that would allow for a different type of dynamic to occur between the accomplices as they fought their way up each level of the pagoda. Lee ultimately settled on Hong Kong stuntman, Chieh Yuan, to play the role of this accomplice. It would be the first time these two had worked together. At the time of filming, the rest of Lee's accomplices had not been decided. Within the pagoda, Lee and his accomplices would have to battle upwards past five levels, each guarded by a martial artist of a particular style. The first level was to be guarded by Won Insik, who was to be portrayed as a master of a kicking style. Wong had worked with Lee before, appearing as one of his opponents in the Way of the Dragon. Lee had chosen his real-life senior most student, Taky Kimura, to play the guardian of the second floor. According to Kimura, Lee wanted him to utilize praying mantis gung fu as well as some elements of Wan Chun, both arts that emphasize infighting, use of hands predominately, with kicks limited to below the waist.

LEE'S STUDENT: And I think it was in October of '71-72, in that era, he called me and said that he wanted me to be in the movies, in that movie, and again, I said, 'Look, Bruce, I said I got two left front feet. You know it and I know it. And there's probably a thousand people living in Hong Kong, that can do it better than I can. I said, just let me sit here and enjoy the fruits of your success. Because I said, you know me, I don't need to be in that. And he said, 'No, he said, 'I want you in it. I'm the technical director and the co-producer.' He said don't worry about it.

LEE'S STUDENT: So I reluctantly for fear that he'd kick my butt if I said no at that point. I said, okay, he'd already sent me an airline ticket. And really, I think at this point in his life, I think he had transcended all the gimmicks that are usually in these movies. And I think that he had, he had gotten to that plateau where you could just simply do, the simple, you know, normal things and yet, create that excitement within that simplicity.

NARRATOR (V.O.): Lee selected another of his real-life students, Dan Inosanta, to be guardian of the third floor, as he was not only adept in Lee's art of jeet kune do, but in addition, was also an advance practitioner in the arts of kempo karate and Filipino escrima. Lee opted to have Inosanta employed methods from both arts, which he believed would add an exciting visual element to the film, and serve to break up the unarmed combat sequences. Inosanta was also a brilliant exponent of the nunchaku, allowing Lee to film the first-ever nunchaku battle between two opponents.

Grappling or joint-locking would also serve to add a fresh, visual element to the fight sequences. For this reason, Lee settled on Korean hapkido grand master Ji Han Jae, who at the time of filming was a seventh degree black belt in the art. Ji would be the guardian of the fourth level of the pagoda.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

GRAND MASTER: Andrews Air Force Base. They are teaching time. Jhoon Rhee, Tae Kwan Do master, Jhoon Rhee, he have international karate championship. I be there like a demonstration. Then at that time Jhoon Rhee introduced me to Bruce Lee. I showed, he looked at my technique and he liked my technique. That's why he come to the Andrews Air Force Base, he learned several techniques. Then, he go back to Hong Kong. He invite me.

NARRATOR (V.O.): Lee decided to have yet another of his students, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, play the role of the guardian of the highest floor of the pagoda. He fights with an unknown style, which symbolized the highest level of martial art. This unknown style was the essence of jeet kune do.

JABBAR (V.O.): I was at the top of the pagoda because, you know, I was the most effective fighter. And I didn't have any style. And I was also in a place where my strengths were enhanced by the environment. So it was dark in there. I was supposed to be light-sensitive. My eyes were light-sensitive, and that was a problem for me. But other than that, I was an incredible human specimen, etcetera. That was the whole idea about it. And he started knocking out the panes, in the walls, so more light came in. I couldn't see. And that's when he got his advantage in the fight.

NARRATOR (V.O.): The fact that Lee's character in the Game of Death would be taking on advocates of different styles on each level of the temple, was significant in a larger context than might be initially evident. For Lee was not just taking on the various exponents of particular styles, but the very notion of styles itself.

LEE'S WIDOW: I think it's evident in the Game of Death how he planned to fight a person of a different style, a very precise style, on each floor of the pagoda. And show how he could fit in with anybody else's style, thus having no style of his own.

NARRATOR (V.O.): In the battle of the third floor, Lee's character makes use of a green bamboo whip. The whip represents flexibility, an attribute which Lee felt a martial artist must possess if he was to be successful in combat. Since combat, like life, is not predictable, Lee held that one must possess applicable adaptability, in order to change with change. Lee has his character dressed in a one-piece yellow track suit to symbolize no affiliation with any known martial arts style.

LEE'S WIDOW: I think the wearing of the yellow track suit was an expression of how he felt about the martial arts, that it need not, you need not be dressed in a traditional uniform in order to be an effective fighter. That yellow track suit is something that's comfortable, it's flexible, you can move without restriction. And so I think that was why he chose that.

NARRATOR (V.O.): With his cast now firmly in place, Lee spends the next three months of his life from August to October of 1972, putting his martial vision on celluloid.

LEE'S WIDOW: Bruce was a perfectionist on a film set. He always choreographed all of his own fights, in detail, writing them down, every movement, every single movement, rehearsing them endlessly with the stuntmen. And having many, many takes so that it was always just perfect. And Bruce was very aware of how camera angles worked in fight scenes. I visited him on the Game of Death set on more than one occasion. The children, Brandon and Shannon and I, were always welcome on the film sets. And we enjoyed going there because he was having a lot of fun with it. First of all, Kareem was his good friend, as was Dan Inosanto, and some of the other martial artists as well, were his good friends. And he had worked with them many times in the past. As you know, Kareem was his student, Dan was his student and assistant instructor and so he had a real fun time working with these fellows and constructing the fight scenes.

NARRATOR (V.O.):The results are three carefully crafted and meaningful sequences that resonate on many different levels as well as the most graceful and dynamic presentation of the human form in hand to hand combat ever captured on film.

What you're about to see has never been seen before in its entirety. It's the footage that Bruce Lee shot for the Game of Death, the takes he had indicated as the ones to be selected for inclusion in the film and the dialogue he had written. The footage, like the film, is incomplete. Approximately two minutes of footage that represented the beginning of the film's finale have been lost to the ravages of time. In that missing footage, Lee's two allies, James Tien and Chieh Yuan, come up the stairs ahead of Lee and enter into the third level of the pagoda, the hall of the tiger. There, they meet the escrima master, whose habit is to beat out a teasing rhythm on his sticks prior to killing his adversary. Chieh Yuan sets out to attack the escrima master with a large heavy club, but is quickly disarmed. The escrima master then casts his sticks aside and battles chieh Yuan, whom he perceives to render unconscious with a series of strikes and kicks, known in kempo karate circles as the dance of death. Now, it is James Tien's turn to battle with the escrima master. It is at this point that Bruce Lee's final, never before seen footage for the Game of Death begins.

INT. PAGODA (GAME OF DEATH CLIP)

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):Do you speak any English?

VILLAIN (V.O.):Of course I speak English.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):I hope you don't mind if we move our man so that the two of us will have more room to groove.

VILLAIN (V.O.):But have your men stay as far away from the stairway as possible.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.):You know, baby, this bamboo is longer, more flexible, and very much alive. And when your flashy routine cannot keep up with the speed and elusiveness of this thing here, all I can say is that you will be in deep trouble.

VILLAIN (V.O.):That we will have to find out.

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BRUCE LEE (V.O.): I'm telling you, it's difficult to have a rehearsed routine to fit in with broken rhythm... You see, rehearsed routines lack the flexibility to adapt. Surprised?

VILLAIN (V.O.): How do you like that?

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): How do you like that? Uh-uh.

VILLAIN #2 (V.O.): As you gentlemen know, red means danger. Therefore, I advise to you people not to step into this warning arena. If you were to go on living, stop here. Go back downstairs. Life is precious...

SIDEKICK #1 AND #2 (V.O.):

(unintelligible)

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): (unintelligible)

VILLAIN #3 (V.O.): Little fellow, you must have given up the hope of living.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): Uh-uh. On the contrary, I do not let the word 'death' bother me.

VILLAIN #3 (V.O.): Same here, baby.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): Then what are you waiting for? (unintelligible)

VILLAIN #3 (V.O.): This tough sonofagun is wearing me out.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): Why continue? Just let me pass.

VILLAIN #3 (V.O.): You have forgotten that I, too, am not afraid of death.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): (unintelligible)

29.

INT. LIMBO SET/MONTAGE

LEE'S STUDENT: You know I've been characterized as the keeper of the grave up in Seattle and I try to make it up there at least once a month, oftentimes during the month I might go up there four or five times, depending on who comes in from you know, other parts of the world or something like that. And I find that there are many many people that come up to. They're not even martial artists, you would just know and expect that the people who come up there are in martial arts, and they want to try to, you know, to have that, some of that ability rub off on them. But I go up there and I make it a point to talk to people when I see them up there. And oftentimes they tell me, 'I'm not even into martial arts. But I just came to try to have him have some of that inspiration of his come in to my life, because obviously I'm in a place where I need something, you know.' And personally, because of Bruce, I've been able to help several young people to find themselves, to get out of the drug scene and things like that. And I don't take credit for that. It's Bruce.

LEE'S WIDOW: I mean I get letters now 27 years after he's been gone, from people who weren't even born when he was alive. And they're telling me how he has motivated them to be a better person, to be, to achieve their goals, to be in better physical condition, to live their own life from their own heart rather than just following or emulating somebody else. So it really does my heart good, and I think that Bruce would be smiling down to know that his work and his art have continued to benefit people all over the world.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.): There are some lines that express your philosophy. I don't know if you remember them or not.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): Oh, I remember that.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.): Let's hear it.

BRUCE LEE (V.O.): I said. This is what it is, okay? I said, 'Empty your mind. Be formless. Shapeless, like water. Now you put water into the cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle. You put water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend.'

THE END

BRUCE LEE -- A WARRIOR'S JOURNEY

CAST

NARRATOR (V.O.)

BRUCE LEE

HOST (V.O.)

MAN (O.S.)

LEE'S STUDENT

LEE'S WIDOW

MAN IN SUIT (V.O.)

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

FRANCISCUS (V.O.)

KRISHNAMURTI

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

INTERVIEWER #2 (V.O.)

MAN ON BOAT (V.O.)

GRAND MASTER

VILLAIN

VILLAIN #2, #3

SIDEKICK #1, #2