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SEAGAL

INTERVIEW **NICK DE SEMLYEN**



STATS

BORN: April 10, 1951 in Michigan, USA
FIRST SEEN IN: *Nico* (1988)
LAST SEEN IN: *Flight Of Fury* (2006)
AKA: Casey Ryback, Jonathan Cold, Mason Storm
KILLER ONE-LINER: "I'm gonna take you to the bank... The blood bank." (*Hard To Kill*)
SAMPLE TAGLINE: "Either you're with him or you're dead." (*Shadow Man*)
DID YOU KNOW? A white dog once saved his life in Japan, by waking him up when his dojo was on fire. He never saw the dog again.

**"WITH THE PUSSIES,
THERE IS SOME
JEALOUSY."**

Talk us through your fighting style.

It incorporates kung fu, tai chi, karate, akido and jujitsu. It's a pretty unique melting pot.

Do you do your own stunts?

I do everything that's doable by a normal human being. I don't generally jump through windows or off roofs.

When were you last in a real fight?

I haven't had an altercation for a long time. I don't really remember.

What's your work-out routine?

I do some treadmill work, some stretching, some martial arts, some weights.

What did you do before movies?

I spent my youth in Japan getting into trouble, all this silly gangster stuff. When you're young and stupid and want to try out what you've learned, you walk through areas where you know trouble's gonna be. And trouble will always find you.

How did you break into Hollywood?

I did special security operations for some kings and queens and monarchs. In 1985 I came back to America to write. People kept saying, "Steven, we like your stories. We want to see you fight in front of a camera."

What do you think is your best film?

Fire Down Below came out exactly right. I also like *Under Siege*, which I did a lot of rewriting on. I completely redid the Tommy Lee Jones character, who was a flat, boring guy in the beginning. You're nothing without a great nemesis.

Any regrets?

I had a bad director on *Hard To Kill*, and *Exit Wounds* wasn't a very professional place to be. I don't regret my death in *Executive Decision*: I kind of wanted to do it to shock people. They gave me a lot of money — like, a million dollars a day — so I just thought, "Fuck it, let's try."

What's the best fight or stunt you've done?

I'll tell you a funny story. When Bruce Lee's boy died, I went to the funeral and walked up to Danny Inosanto, the knife guru. I said, "Man, it's so terrible." He says, "Yeah, it's so terrible..." (*Pause*) "But that knife fight, man, in *Under Siege*, that was fucking amazing!" (*Laughs*) It is pretty cool.

What movies do you enjoy?

My favourite of this film era is *Regarding Henry*. Then I love horror movies. The Chinese ghost stories, like *Ringu* — I kept telling everyone in Hollywood this is gonna be the trend, but nobody listened. The last DVD I rented was the new *The Hills Have Eyes*. It wasn't too bad, but I didn't like the lighting.

What do you think of other action stars?

There's a white boy who once tried to do chickenshit stuff with Bruce Lee who to this day is a large asshole. And there's another person out there who's always tried to copy me. I think among the real professionals there's a camaraderie, but with the pussies there is some jealousy. I will say that most of the so-called action stars these days don't do anything for real.

What do you like to do outside of movies?

I don't want to talk about the great successes I've had in the environmental world, though I have had some. I've shut down dirty toxic plants that were desecrating the Earth. There's the music, which is my first love — I play real traditional blues with my band *Thunderbox*. I studied pathology in Asia for a year and formulated my own energy drink (*Steven Seagal's Lightning Bolt*). I took some amazing herbs and I made the healthiest energy drink in the world. I'm excited about it.

Is there a Seagal life philosophy?

I believe we have all lived lives before and start to remember secret memories as we grow up. I subconsciously started leaning towards the Orient and martial arts. My old Buddhist teachers have identified the person I was in a past life (*17th century monk Chungdrag Dorje*). I have to believe it, but I don't dwell on it.

What ambitions do you have left?

I've said this before, but it's a shame that a large group of people with the money just want to see me do one thing and that's action. It's extremely disappointing. There's an epic I want to make, about Will Adams, a British lord who was asked by the Queen in the 15th century to go find gold. I want to make a movie about Genghis Khan. I want to make some comedy, like the commercial I did with *Orange*. But more than movies, I hope to make the world a better place. To protect nature and stop people dying, that's what I want to do.

