



Did working as a doorman help your understanding of Kenpo?

Yes, definitely. I started working as a doorman at seventeen in the local clubs (and continued on and off for the next ten years working in London and the USA), which

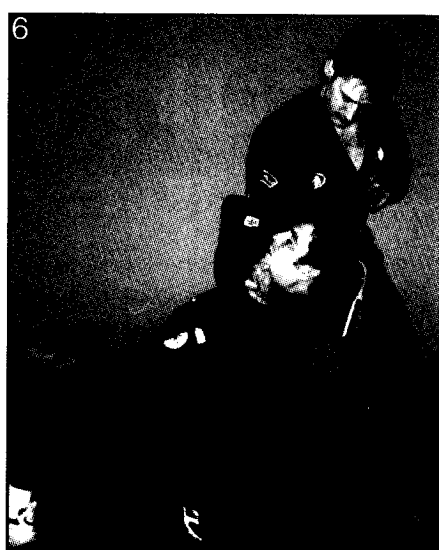
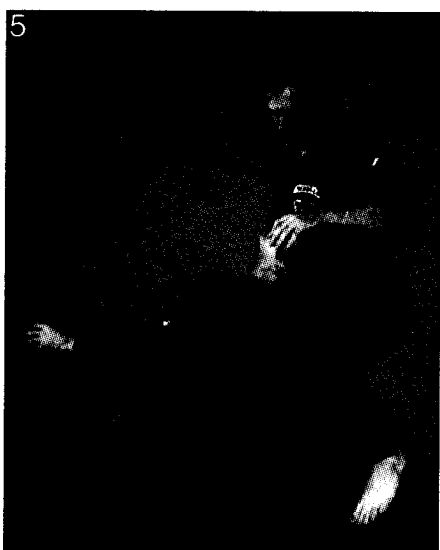
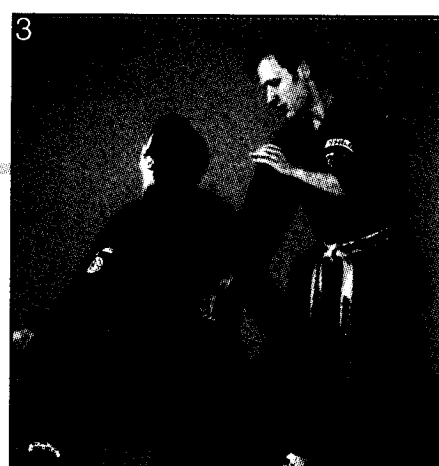
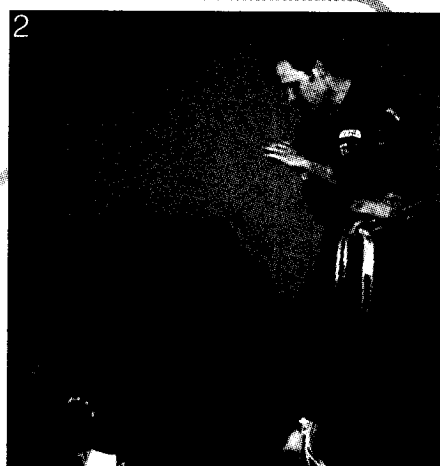
forced me to look at Kenpo in very practical terms. For what appears at first to be a rather eclectic system, the more practical my requirements of it became the more it seemed to have to offer. Torbay proved to be surprisingly violent for a beach town, with a mix of high unemployment in the winters and a summer influx of young holiday makers, football supporters (or pretty well just hooligans) and anyone else who decided to turn up, all thrown together at the night clubs. Many of the lessons I learned on the door showed me that even a 'street fighting' designed system like Kenpo is fairly stylised compared to the reality of fighting.

Would you agree that Kenpo Karate is a well-balanced martial art?

It depends on what you mean by well balanced. Kenpo is one of the best Boxing-Jujitsu systems devised and is probably one of the most logical ways of looking at a martial art as a mechanical egression. Mr Parker developed it by taking the most logical ways that you can strike by using the body's natural weapons (i.e hands, elbows, fingers, knees, feet and so on) along with joint manipulations and assembled about 150 interrelated base techniques. These techniques are designed to correspond to natural bio-mechanical power, combat and motion principles which in turn are examples of the rules and principles developed in the nine Kenpo forms. If you look at it from this point of view it is well-balanced because the system completely contains itself. Kenpo is devised to be understood much the same way as you would learn a second language. The basics as the alphabet, the forms could be seen as a dictionary and reference books describing the grammatics

and structure of the language and the techniques as specific examples of the language. All these components combine to encourage the practitioner to speak from a mechanical stage to a level of fluency and spontaneity. This could be seen as a very well balanced method of learning and understanding an art.

But from another point of view Kenpo is really not primarily designed for weapons fighting or grappling. It does contain some of these aspects but more as peripheral ideas. The central theme of Kenpo is a hand-to-hand system. I am not saying it would not work in these situations, it definitely would, but it would be up to the practitioner to understand the types of environments they are working in for it to be genuinely effective. As Huk Planas often points out, Kenpo is not magic, you have to make it work. I think this was part of the brilliance of the founder Ed Parker, that he created a conceptually based fighting system rather than a purely technique based system (even though it appears



1. Destruction on entry 2. Snap kick back of leg 3. Backfist to kidney to raise head
4. Elbow sandwich 5. Knee to back of head 6. Chop to throat