

the main problems with Kenpo as a whole is not the art, the art is a proven way of combat, but the training methods employed by many schools in understanding the art. When an art is developed which cannot

be used in a full contact training situation such as Kenpo, then the art ultimately suffers. Obviously you should not have to 'prove' yourself as a fighter to practice Kenpo but you should at least understand within yourself how to fight in a genuine and spontaneous manner. This is very difficult without rigorous cross training in a 'boxing' system, a 'weapons' system and a 'grappling' system. Personally I would like to see Kenpo schools introduce cross training into their syllabus of teaching, this would dramatically improve the level by which students and instructors alike understand the art and themselves as the martial artists. Learning Kenpo the way it is currently being taught would be the same as learning boxing for say five years, using combinations on the bag as 'techniques' and understanding all the theory and principles behind the action, but then sparring using only point fighting semi-contact rules. I think most people would agree that this would be a fairly pointless exercise. The mind and the body is simply not designed to be able to make the kind of leap needed to suddenly have the awareness and fortitude to be able to use the combinations and spontaneously read the language of a fight in a real situation without having trained that way. Cross training would also encourage a leap of innovation in the art as practitioners develop their own new ways of applying the combat principles in reality. At the end of the day it is all just theory until you put it into practice.

**You've recently been pulled towards the fascinating Systema (The System). How did you discover this amazing art?**

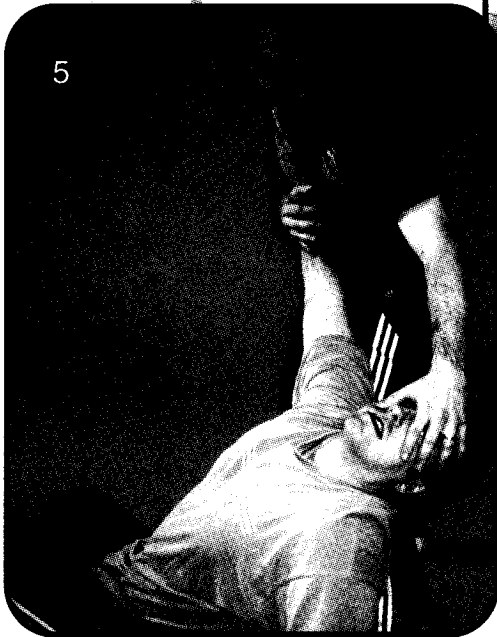
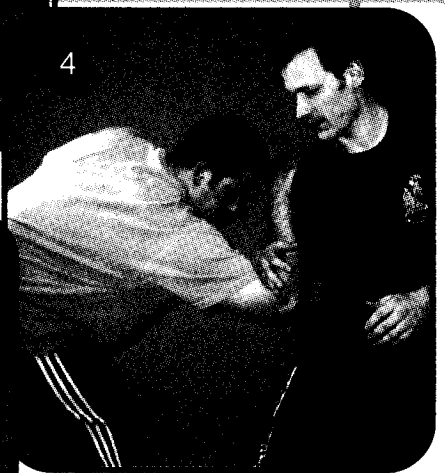
I met a master of the art, Vladimir Vasiliev at a seminar organised by Lee Wedlake and was further encouraged to study it by my friend Al Mcluckie. I train under him in his school in Toronto whenever I can. I have to say I am blown away by the concept of Systema which is an internal Russian martial art. Vladimir and Mikhail Ryabko, who I was lucky enough to meet recently, are incredible teachers of the martial arts. Their concept of the art and teaching methods are quite simply amazing. I am not even entirely sure how they do what they do, I just know that it works. In a way I was searching for Systema without really knowing what I was looking for, the training regimen I was following

was telling me to relax, stay in contact with the opponent, steer away from specific technique, keep in motion, allow my weapons to follow their own paths and let the body's fluidity work for itself while encouraging the mind to intuitively strategise. But saying all that I think if I had carried on down the path I was taking for the next twenty years I doubt I would have learned as much as I did in my first week of training in

The System under a teacher such as Vladimir.

**From what I've seen of Systema it appears to contain just about every real art I've had the pleasure to encounter. What in your view makes it so special?**

My view of The System is still rather limited as I have only been training in it for a relatively short period compared to the other arts I have studied, although the training I have had has made a profound difference to my martial arts and more importantly to my life. I am convinced that any training in The System will change a person's perception of a martial art. The System is special because it seems to work as much on a person's consciousness as



- 1. Natural reaction
- 2. Swing hips
- 3. & 4. Takedown
- 5. Fall into break