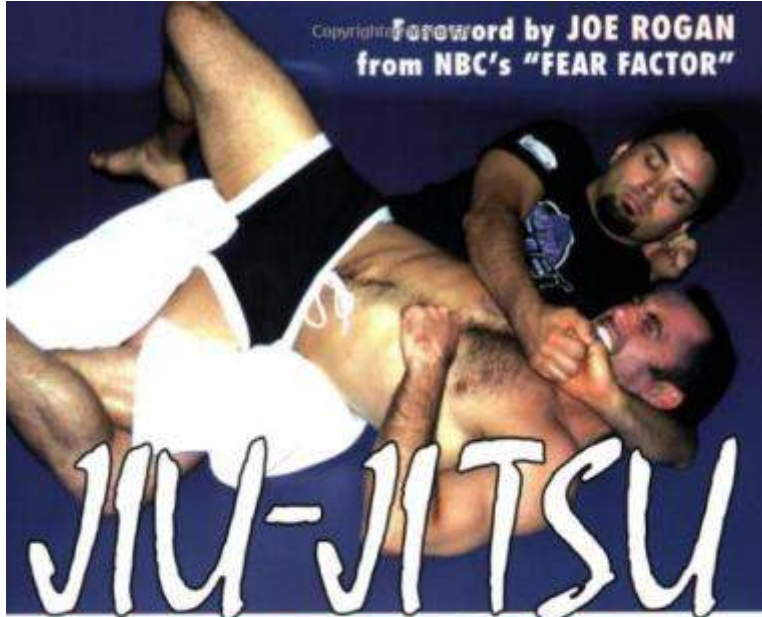


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Foreword by **JOE ROGAN**  
from NBC's "FEAR FACTOR"



# JIU-JITSU UNLEASHED

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE  
TO THE WORLD'S HOTTEST  
MARTIAL ARTS DISCIPLINE

**EDDIE BRAVO** with **Erich Krauss**

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# Foreword

Martial arts have been around for thousands of years, but for some reason most styles of martial arts have improved very little in that time. When you walk into a traditional karate or kung fu school today, you're very likely to be taught the same techniques that were used back when Columbus was sailing.

Now, the world of jiu-jitsu is very different than most traditional martial arts in that you can trace a very distinct evolution in the art back to the Gracie family in Brazil. It's very clear that the contributions of Carlos and Helio Gracie, along with all of their sons and students, have forever changed the concepts we had of hand-to-hand combat. They took an existing martial art and advanced it far past its roots into the most complete and effective form of fighting known to

man—what we now know as Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

There are many people who have learned this style and become very good at it, but few have actually contributed to the evolution of the art. There are a few who add something, a particular sweep that they've invented, a new way to get a certain collar choke . . . but even with the most innovative guys, it usually involves just one or two moves that are attributed to them. Most of what is in their game are the same techniques everyone else is using.

And that is what's so special about my good friend Eddie Bravo. He has invented so many techniques and improved upon so many traditional moves that he has literally created a completely separate style of jiu-jitsu.

Eddie is an incredibly creative guy, easily one of the most creative people

I've ever met in my life. His main outlet for that creativity most of his life has been music. He makes very cool, electronica-style music, and one of the more interesting things about Eddie's music is that he is involved in every aspect of it. He's not just a musician who does one thing well, such as playing the guitar or the drums. He actually writes and edits the music and plays all the instruments. Now there are a lot of musicians out there, but there are very few who can do *everything*. Even fewer can do it and have those songs actually be cool to listen to.

It takes a very special kind of brain to get good at all those facets of music, and actually have the creativity to combine all those skills and come up with something your ears and your mind lock on to. Now what's *really* rare is to take someone who has that very special kind of creative mind, and have them plug that same unusual thought process into coming up with new ways to strangle people. It usually just doesn't happen.

Most musicians are just concentrated on making their music, and during their time off they're partying. Very few of them have the discipline to become really good at grappling with people and getting them to submit just with their bare hands, and even

fewer have the inspiration or the ability to come up with new ways to do it. It's a very, very rare situation.

With this unusual combination of an incredibly creative mind combined with a passion for submitting people, Eddie has come up with a very unique approach to martial arts. If you've never seen him fight and aren't familiar with his moves, you will be completely lost as to what he's doing to you, right until the point where you tap out. I've seen it firsthand many, many times during the years that I've known him. Tough guys with years and years of grappling experience who spar with him wind up twisted in knots with a confused look on their faces, completely baffled as to what's going on.

His approach is so innovative and so unusual that it literally is a completely separate branch of the jiu-jitsu tree. And it's not just different—it's actually better. *Much* better.

Another thing that makes Eddie so special is that he's willing to share these innovations completely and without reservation with anyone who will listen. What took him years and years to develop and refine, can now be yours. In this book, he allows you to cut through all the trial and error that he had to go through to develop

these techniques and gives you his exact thought process through every aspect of them. He provides not just ways to submit people, but entire paths to get there.

What you are about to read in *Jiu-Jitsu Unleashed* is, in my opinion, the future of the art of jiu-jitsu. Years from now the techniques you see on these pages won't just be different or optional, they'll be standard. They'll be what all the competitors will use, not because they're new techniques or because you can catch people off guard with them, but because they're

truly the best techniques, especially for jiu-jitsu without the gi.

We're very lucky to have a guy like Eddie in the world of martial arts, and even luckier that he's willing to teach what he knows. I truly believe that when all is said and done, this book will become one of the most important books ever written on martial arts. So buckle up, strap yourself in, and prepare to absorb Eddie Bravo's very own 10th Planet Jiu-Jitsu in *Jiu-Jitsu Unleashed: A Comprehensive Guide to the World's Hottest Martial Arts Discipline*.

**JOE ROGAN,**

host of NBC's "Fear Factor"

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Foreword



# Acknowledgments

First and foremost I want to thank from the bottom of my heart, my master, Jean Jacques Machado. He is the one who guided me along this path of ever evolving jiu-jitsu. He was the one who made me realize what confidence really is and just how crucial it is for success not only in jiu-jitsu but life as well. He was the only one who was there time and time again to help me break through the roadblocks of jiu-jitsu.

I would also like to thank my two best friends, Joe Rogan and Laurence Zwiirn.

Joe, for being the first to call me a phenom, for giving me my first computer, for my hernia surgery, for forcing my talent down people's throats, for making me laugh harder than any other person on the planet, for the thousands of meals, and for just being

the best friend anyone can ever hope for. Joe rules.

Laurence, for buying all my mats, for constantly hooking me up with girls, for the thousand meals, for the crazy times in Vegas, for the lifetime supply of supplements (Nature's Purest *rules*), for all the financial help you have given me, and for just chillin' day in and day out. Ehhahhhh!!!!!!

A very special thanks goes out to the Gracie family. Though we have different views on the gi, I do appreciate tremendously what you did for the world of martial arts and my world.

Thank you Helio for being the warrior and innovator that you are. Who has tougher sons than you? No one.

Thank you Carlos Sr. for taking in the Machados as sons of your own and introducing them to the fascinating world of jiu-jitsu.



Thank you Rorion for producing the UFC; without you the MMA industry would not exist and I would be still deejaying in clubs.

Thank you Royce for having the courage to step up and fight in eight- and sixteen-man tournaments just to prove the effectiveness of jiu-jitsu. You will always be a legend.

Thank you Rickson for being the superman of the jiu-jitsu world. There is no one I would rather see in the ring than you.

And thank you Royler for being you. Without you and your unbelievable accomplishments in the grappling world, this book would not exist.

A very special thank-you to Larry Goldberg for being the most crucial piece of my literary career.

And last but not least, a very special thank-you to my top student, Gerald "The Finishing Machine" Strebendt, for believing in me and my techniques and for being my MMA prototype to prove to the world the effectiveness of 10th Planet Jiu-Jitsu.

A special thanks also goes out to Glen Cordoza, who spent hundreds of hours on the mats and behind the computer helping to write this book. If not for your talent as a writer, fighter, and loyal friend, this book could not have been written.

# About This Book

In 2003 I entered the Abu Dhabi World Championships, the largest and most respected no-gi grappling tournament in the world, and tapped out Royler Gracie, the most accomplished jiu-jitsu player in the world-renowned Gracie family. I managed such a feat not because I'm a jiu-jitsu phenom born to grapple, but because I did what no one else dared to try—broke jiu-jitsu down and developed a system that didn't require holding on to your opponent's uniform for control or submissions.

In traditional Brazilian jiu-jitsu, the gi has almost become a holy garment. Players use the collar and sleeve of their opponent's uniform to set up submissions, sweeps, and passes. This works wonderfully for regular grappling tournaments where competitors wear a gi, but it does not translate well for no-gi grappling tournaments or

mixed martial arts (MMA) competitions such as the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). If a traditional jiu-jitsu player who bases all his techniques on holding on to his opponent's uniform steps into a ring or cage with a competitor who is not wearing a uniform, he immediately loses all of his offensive setups. He is forced to play defense, and this often costs him the fight.

I did not want to have to relearn jiu-jitsu or break a bunch of bad gi habits, so one day I decided to enter MMA competition, so in 1996 I started developing a system of jiu-jitsu that was not based on the gi, testing each technique in competition before permanently adding it to my game. It is a system that you will find nowhere else but in this book. What I have laid out on the following pages is not a random pick of moves. Each chapter is

linked to the next, and each technique is described in detail through narrative and step-by-step photos. There are no hidden steps. There are no moves that haven't been proven time and again in the highest levels of competition. Unlike most jiu-jitsu black belt instructors, I am not afraid of divulging my secrets. Perhaps this will come back to haunt me in competition, but sharing all my knowledge is the only way I know how to teach.

So if you want to learn a style of jiu-jitsu that is MMA- and street ready, I suggest you read on. Whether you are a beginner or an advanced player, I also suggest that you start with Chapter 1 and the half guard, which is exactly where I started. Once you have a good grasp of the half guard, move to the next chapter, which is the full

guard. By the time you have mastered all the techniques in this book, you'll have a leg up on nearly all traditional jiu-jitsu players in no-gi grappling tournaments and MMA competition. While your opponent is busy searching for the collar and sleeve that isn't there, you'll land submissions utilizing over-hooks, under-hooks, and head control.

You'll also begin to see that I haven't thought of everything, that despite what traditional black belt jiu-jitsu instructors want you to believe, jiu-jitsu is still evolving. Just like my current students, you'll start coming up with techniques on your own. And, as you do, you will understand that it's the *grappling* that makes jiu-jitsu the most dominant martial art in the world, not the uniform.

# Introduction

## My Evolution

Shortly after moving to Hollywood in 1991, I signed a two-year contract at a local health club. As a twenty-year-old singer and guitarist in a rock band that was going to make it big time, I didn't want to be standing up on stage looking like a slob. But despite all my good intentions, I only went twice. I paid the monthly dues each and every month, yet I only went twice in two whole years. After spending the majority of high school hiding in the shadows while the rest of the wrestling team hit the weight room, I should have known that I despised pumping iron.

I still wanted to get into shape, so I put the brain to work, asking myself what I could possibly do to lose a few pounds, and then Bruce Lee sprang to mind. He was the toughest man on the planet—ripped to the bone, so I

decided to take some kind of karate or kung fu. I didn't know much about the Eastern martial arts, which style was the most deadly, so I opened the phone book, got the address of the closest school, and then headed down there.

The instructor's name was Professor Phillip Skornia, and within five minutes I became certain he could kill anyone with a single strike. He had a black belt in everything—aikido, judo, taekwon-do, shorin-ryu karate, five-animal kung fu. He was even some kind of ordained monk at the Shaolin Temple, I remember thinking, "Oh my God, the stars must be aligned! There were over fifty schools I could have chosen from, and I picked the ultimate one!"

So I ended up studying Zen Du Ru karate, which means "the style of inner strength," or something like that. It was Professor Skornia's very

own style. He had taken the best moves from each of the disciplines he'd mastered through the years and combined them into the most savage martial art. After six months, I had a green stripe on my white belt and had become a master of the overhead knife strike. Professor Skornia had even acknowledged my prowess when I'd taken my test, writing "Excellent overhead knife strike" on my grade sheet. Needless to say, I felt pretty confident.

I brought that confidence with me when I went back home to Orange County, California, just a few hours south of Hollywood, to attend an Alice in Chains concert with a few of my high school buddies. I hadn't seen them in a couple of years, and on the way to the concert they were acting funny, shooting me strange glances.

"What's going on?" eventually asked.

"We heard you were doing that karate stuff," one of them said, almost in awe.

"Yeah, I've been doing that for a little while now, bro."

"You must be able to kick some ass, right?"

"Yeah," I said. "I've been training for like six months."

I ate it up. Even though I only weighed 160 pounds, I was certain that I could beat anyone other than Profes-

sor Skornia in a fight. As it turned out, my friends thought that too, and they wanted to see me in action. While at the concert, I went upstairs to use the restroom. When I came out, all my friends were staring there, shuffling from side to side, sweat beading their brows. They'd been looking all over for me. Apparently there was some guy down on the floor, shoving women, giving everyone a hard time.

"We were going to confront him," one of my friends said, "but we thought we'd find you first."

I didn't feel the surge of panic one usually feels before a confrontation because at that time I truly thought Zen Do Ku practitioners such as myself were invincible. "Show me," I said. "Show me where he is."

They all pointed down to the crowd on the first floor, and I led the way with my shoulders puffed out. As we walked down the stairs, I kept thinking, "Should I use my reverse punch or my overhead knife strike?" After much inner debate, I decided to go with the overhead knife strike. I would tell the truth: to stop pushing on people, to leave without a fight. Once he disobeyed, I would walk up, get into position, and then *ka chop!*

Thank God we never found him. I mean, come on, who is just going to stand there while I gather my chi for

an overhand knife strike? He would have punched me square in the nose and I would have gone down. The incident would have become one of those painful stories that my friends always bring up when we get together every few years. I can just see it, all of them rolling around with laughter, chopping ridiculously at the air while I sulk off to some corner in shame. I would have been hearing about how I got my butt kicked in a karate stance until the day I died.

The only good that could have come out of getting my butt kicked is that I would have realized sooner that I was being scammed, taken for a serious ride. I still hadn't learned that yet, so I continued with perfecting my overhand knife strike. I really got into karate, but because they didn't have televised karate tournaments, I watched the next best thing, which was boxing. I became a boxing fanatic. Although I rehearsed with my band every night of the week, I would tape "Tuesday Night Fights" on the USA Network. When I popped one such tape into the VCR back in 1993, I saw a commercial for the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). They didn't have any highlights because it was the first event, so instead they showed a karate guy sparring with a kung fu guy in a gym. They kept saying, "The

Ultimate Fighting Championship. NO RULES. FIGHTING!"

A few of my friends wanted to order it on pay per view, but I talked them out of it. I thought it was some type of pro wrestling and that everything was going to be fake. The event passed without any of us seeing it, but then one day a friend came to my house totally out of breath. It looked like he had run several miles.

"Dude, you know that Ultimate Challenge thing," he said, huffing and puffing.

"Yeah."

"Dude, it was real!"

"It was real?"

"Yeah. There was some Iranian guy, and he was choking people out. He was just grabbing their tracheas and their throats, and he was squeezing their necks."

"Some Iranian guy is grabbing people's throats?" I asked.

"Yeah, he was choking everyone out, man. That's what the guy was telling me at the Center."

"No way," I said. "Was there a karate guy in there?"

"Yeah, he beat all styles. He beat kung fu, everybody."

"Not karate," I said.

"Yeah, he beat a karate guy, too."

"No way, that is my style. Karate is the best."



I couldn't believe it. No matter how many people told me what had happened at the event, I still couldn't believe it. I was brainwashed, so I put it out of my mind and continued learning from the professor. Approximately six months later, as I was getting ready to go to a party, a friend called up and said UFC 2 was on that night. I told him to order it and tape it. By that time, I'd heard the name Royce Gracie at least a hundred times, and I considered it a personal assault on my style and my professor. I wanted to see what this jiu-jitsu stuff was all about.

The next morning I ended up watching UFC 2 on tape. Gracie, a 180-pound Brazilian, was the bad guy I wanted him to lose. I wanted him to get his head knocked off. I hoped it would be a karate guy that did it, but at that point it didn't really matter. I just wanted him to lose so that his name would go away. So when he fought Minori Ichihara, a traditional karate practitioner from Japan, I found myself screaming, "Come on Ichihara, beat him up. Kick his ass, karate!" But by the time Gracie stepped into the finals to face Patrick Smith, a taekwondo practitioner who looked more like a street brawler, my leaning toward the Brazilian had completely vanished. I could see that he was the real deal, and

I found myself wanting to know the same things he knew. After all, I had wrestled for two years in high school and it seemed somewhat similar to this submission stuff. Immediately I began thinking about the Twister (see Chapter 3), the only move I had walked away with after two years on the wrestling mats.

Feeling I might be good at grappling, I did the unthinkable. One afternoon after training with Professor Skounta, I hopped into my car and drove to a jiu-jitsu school. The instructor let me hang around and watch class, but within a few minutes I noticed that they weren't doing the same thing Gracie had done in the Octagon at the UFC. Other than executing some funky rolls that looked like something you might see in a Ninja movie, they spent hardly any time on the ground. And they wore black uniforms. That really bothered me, the black uniforms. They should be wearing white uniforms just like Gracie. I began looking around, wondering what was going on here, and I noticed from a sign on the wall that they weren't doing jiu jitsu at all, but rather *jūjitsu*. I didn't see how a one-letter difference in the name could change things all that much, but apparently it did.

"What did you think?" the instructor asked after class.

"Why aren't you guys doing that much ground work?" I asked, but what I really wanted to ask was *How come you guys are wearing black uniforms?*

"You must be thinking of that Gracie jiu-jitsu stuff."

"Isn't this the same thing?"

"No. That is mostly ground work. We only spend about 15 percent of the time on the ground. But Gracie's cousin, the Machado's, have a school out here in L.A. I could get you their number."

"No, no," I said, not wanting to offend him. "I don't want to do that other stuff, I want to do this stuff." But the whole time we were talking, I kept thinking to myself *Machado, Machado, Machado don't forget Machado, Machado.*

So I took his paperwork knowing that I would never come back. An hour later, I called information, got the address of the Machado Academy, and headed over there. I was so excited when I walked through the door I could hardly contain myself. But that excitement quickly drained away when I found out how much it cost to be a student at the Machado Academy. It was \$125 a month! I didn't have \$125, so I left. Karate had been shattered in

my eyes, and with the secrets of Brazilian jiu-jitsu too expensive to afford, I decided to study Jeet Kune Do, the style of the only man who still seemed tougher than Gracie—Bruce Lee.

I did that for six months, working on kicks and punches, and then I landed a job as a DJ at a nightclub. For the first time since I'd come to Hollywood, I finally had some money in my pocket. I liked what I was learning in Jeet Kune Do, so instead of quitting, I decided to splurge and start taking jiu-jitsu from the Machado's as well. Doing both would make me a complete warrior. I would have punches and kicks for the initial flurry, and if things weren't going my way, I could take my opponent down and finish him off with a submission.

I kept it up for two and a half years, spending every Tuesday and Thursday on stand up and Friday on the ground. But my dream of becoming the complete warrior didn't materialize as I had hoped. Grappling just one day a week wasn't enough to get me anywhere. The new guys who were training five days a week would be able to tap me out after just a few months of training. That's when I decided to quit training stand-up, pick it up at a later date, and dedicate all my time to working on jiu-jitsu.

I became obsessed, but according to Jean Jacques Machado, I wasn't obsessed with the right stuff. During practice, I kept going for the Twister. I tried to tell him that it was a wrestling move, but he didn't believe me. He thought I had made it up. "You have to start learning basic jiu-jitsu," he said to me one day. "Your basic jiu-jitsu is terrible. You keep trying this crazy Twister thing. You already know that. Now you must start expanding your game. You have to start playing regular jiu-jitsu."

I listened to what he had to say, but I didn't give up on the Twister. In wrestling, it was an easy move to execute because people were always giving me their backs. No one gave me their backs in jiu-jitsu, not by choice anyway, so I knew that in order to make it work I would have to find some other way to slap it on. I learned it was easier to get an opponent in side control than taking his back, so that's when I came up with a Twister setup from side control. By the time I became a blue belt, I was catching guys with the Twister all the time. Instead of doing it off traditional side control, however, I did it off this new and improved side control position I'd come up with, which I named Twister Side Control. I realized that my basic

jiu-jitsu still stunk, but I also realized that many of the basic moves wouldn't work for me. I still hated lifting weights, so I wasn't all that strong. Every time I went for guillotines, kimuras, leg locks, or toeholds, my opponent would simply power out of them and then toss me around. In order to make those moves work, I figured I had to be just as strong as my opponent, if not stronger. So instead I focused on little man moves, such as the rear naked choke. Even a 220-pound muscle-bound practitioner can't power out of a rear naked choke, not once you have it locked in. It just didn't make sense to me to practice moves that were only going to work on a weaker opponent, especially because I was one of the weakest guys in the gym.

Despite my reluctance to follow the traditional path, jiu-jitsu became the center of my universe. I watched every UFC, and each time a jiu-jitsu practitioner stepped into the infamous Octagon to do battle, I'd slap my friend in the chest and point to the television. "Watch this," I'd say. "The jiu-jitsu guy is going to have his opponent screaming in pain in a matter of minutes." Most of the time it worked out just that way, which fueled my confidence that traditional jiu-jitsu was the ultimate

fighting style on the planet. But then, as the years began to pass, the jiu-jitsu players entering the UFC stopped being such an opposing force. They still took their opponents to the ground, and they still captured their opponents between their legs in the guard, but then they would just lie there, defending against punches. Their inactivity had nothing to do with their skill level. It had to do with the fact that every kickboxer and wrestler in the event had learned just enough jiu-jitsu to avoid getting caught in submissions. Back when Gracie had first stepped into the event, he'd had it easy. No one knew how to defend against chokeholds or arm bars, and he'd cleaned house. That just wasn't the case anymore.

I thought it would only be a matter of time before my fellow jiu-jitsu players competing in the UFC began changing their game to adapt to this new development. But they never did. They continued to just lie there, holding on to their opponent while trying to avoid punches. Just as I began to wonder if perhaps jiu-jitsu *wasn't* the best fighting style on the planet, it dawned on me why they were having so much trouble. It wasn't that they didn't know how to grapple, but rather that they didn't know how to grapple

when their opponent wasn't wearing a gi. They had based all their setups, submissions, passes, and sweeps off holding on to their opponent's collar and sleeve. If their opponent didn't have a sleeve or collar to grab, all their techniques went right out the window.

It made perfect sense. In order to land submissions in a no gi tournament, you had to practice jiu-jitsu techniques that didn't require holding on to your opponent's uniform. Nearly all the jiu-jitsu competitors competing in mixed martial arts (MMA) latched on to their opponents' arms using over hooks for defense, but then they would let go of the over-hooks to go for a submission and take the risk of getting punched in the face. It only seemed logical for them to learn how to submit to their opponents while maintaining the over-hook control because then they would not only be in a defensive position, but an offensive one as well.

I suggested this strategy to a few of my fellow jiu-jitsu practitioners and they readily bit my head off. How dare I suggest something as ludicrous as learning how to grapple without the gi? They were brainwashed like the rest of the jiu-jitsu world, but that didn't stop me from continuing with my plans. My intention wasn't to develop

my own style. I didn't want to be the guy inventing his own moves. But with 99 percent of the jiu-jitsu schools teaching moves based on the gi, it began to look more and more as if that was what I would have to do. As it turned out, I didn't have to go far to get the help I needed to do that.

My instructor, Jean Jacques, was 50 percent better than most of the traditional jiu-jitsu instructors when it came to techniques that didn't require holding on to the gi. It wasn't that he was against wearing a uniform; he wore one all the time. He was 50 percent better because he had no fingers on his left hand. He couldn't grab the collar or sleeve of his opponent's uniform with that hand, so he would use it to secure an over-hook. That's part of the reason he blew through the competition in the late 1990s when he began entering these big competitions. Even though Jean Jacques still played the traditional game with his right hand, gripping at his opponent's collar, I could see just how much the tactics he employed with his left hand had helped him in these no-gi tournaments. I was going to follow his lead, only I wasn't going to grab my opponent's uniform with either hand. That way, when I began entering these big competitions, I would be 100 percent

more prepared than those who had been training with the gi, which was just about everyone.

Jean Jacques guided me through the process; as a result, his fingerprints are all over my style. I might have carved my own way, doing what no one else was doing at the time by developing a highly individualistic style based on no-gi techniques. But without Jean Jacques's help, I never would have been able to put it all together. He helped me figure out the best movements in every no-gi position. He helped me decide where to place my hands for defense and how my legs should get involved. He helped me put every limb to work so that while I was defending against punches I could still be going for a submission. We went through many frustrating years trying to reinvent the wheel, but it began to pay off. I started smothering people in the gym, getting one submission after the next. It gave me a sense of accomplishment, but the ultimate test would be to see how it held up in competition.

## The Proving Ground

They're pretty much the same animal: competition and real fighting. Standing out in the street just before a fight,

you feel the same stress you do when standing in a warm-up room prior to a tournament. You get a sloshing sensation in your gut, your mouth dries up, and your palms begin to sweat. I wasn't looking forward to those feelings, but I knew that if I ever wanted my style of jiu-jitsu to work out in the street or in MMA competition, I had to get used to the pressure. Slapping a new technique on someone in the gym and making him tap was easy. It was much harder to slap that same technique on someone who has his pride riding on the line in a competition. I knew it was going to be the ultimate proving ground because one way or another I would walk away not only knowing if I had what it took, but also if the style I had been developing was worth a damn.

Two years after I had first walked into Jean Jacques's Academy in April 1996, I entered my first jiu-jitsu competition, which was held at a police academy near Dodger Stadium in LA. I was a blue belt at the time, and I smoked through my first two opponents. Because I hadn't taken my instructor's advice to train in the basic moves, all I really knew how to do was capture my opponent in my half guard, establish the lockdown, flip my opponent over with an Old School

sweep, and then hold him down on the mat until time ran out. (See Chapter 1.) It had worked so well that I decided to try the same thing in the finals with Jack McVicker, who is a black belt now. But he had been watching me all afternoon and had caught on to my technique. Once I secured him in my half guard, he blocked all my sweeps. He just smothered me for an entire six minutes. Neither one of us scored a point, but because he had been on top the whole time, the judges gave him the decision. Rigan Machado, who refereed the match, seemed disappointed. Never before had he seen such a boring match.

It went on like that for some time. In the gym I was on fire, catching people in my Instantaneous Twister submission and making them yelp, but when I entered a competition I turned into a tamed beast. I played everything cautious, never putting myself out on the limb, so rarely did I catch anyone in my homemade submissions. Then one day I just snapped. I got sick of watching myself on videotape, holding my opponent in my half guard. My friends had heard what an animal I'd become, but when they came to watch me in tournaments they wondered why I would just lay on my back the whole time without trying to do anything. I



convinced myself that if the Twister worked in the gym, there was no reason why it shouldn't work in competition. I just had to find the courage to pull it off.

I found that courage at a competition I entered in Santa Cruz, California. I was grappling with my opponent, doing the same boring thing I always did, and then suddenly I went for the Twister. To my surprise, I caught him *instantly*. With his spine cranked out of whack, he began pounding his hand in submission. It was such a high that I used it again and again in competition, and it always blew my mind that no one ever caught out. It wasn't some superhuman submission. It was just a move that I had learned in high school wrestling with an added twist.

With some victories under my belt, Jean Jacques and I decided it was time to take it to the next level and I entered the Nelson Gracie Tournament in Hawaii. Aggressive attacks had worked for me as of late, so I decided to stick with that mind-set. After beating my first opponent with a triangle choke (see Chapter 2) and my second opponent with a Kamikaze Coll Crank (see Chapter 1), I found myself in the finals. I was told to come back in an hour for the final match, but before I made it out the door the promoter

flagged me down. He told me a contestant had come late and that in order to make it into the finals I had to fight the guy. I was about to argue and tell him that I was in fact already in the finals, but then I caught sight of the new arrival. He was a gangly little kid I thought I could beat in my sleep. I told the promoter that I accepted the challenge.

My opponent was Regan Penn, B.J. Penn's brother. Although B.J. would soon make big waves in the UFC by laying siege to nearly every opponent he stepped into the Octagon with, I hadn't a clue that he or his brother were jiu-jitsu phenoms. The first second on the mat, Regan was all over me like a cheap suit. I had thought I could beat him because he looked so hapless, and here he was cranking my limbs in every which direction. I knew toeholds were illegal in the competition, but I was desperate and decided to go for one anyway. And I got it, and I held it. Just as Regan was about to tap, the referee jumped into the mix screaming about the illegal move. He told me to let go of the hold, and I did. A moment later Regan jumped on me and used the collar of my gi to lock in a choke.

Despite the loss, Jean Jacques thought I was ready to upgrade to a purple belt. I wasn't so sure I liked the

idea. I had been doing well as a blue belt, and now I would be going against more experienced competitors. As I had feared, once I got my purple belt I fell back into my cautious mode in competition. Every time I climbed onto the mat, I thought I was so out-matched that survival became my only goal. This went on for a year or two, and then I realized just as I had before that these guys weren't that good, that if a blue belt could fall victim to my moves, then so could a purple belt. As a matter of fact, I realized this right in the middle of a match. I only had two minutes left to do something, so I went from half guard to full guard, crawled my legs up my opponent's back, and set up the arm bar. Just as I captured it, time ran out.

Because I hadn't done anything up until the last two minutes, my opponent won on points. That frustrated me because I knew if I had only been aggressive earlier, I would have won for sure. Shortly after that bout, which took place in 1999, I promised myself that from that point on, I would never again be timid. It didn't matter who I faced on the mat, what his reputation was, I was going to turn myself into a monster.

While running the gauntlet, I kept an eye on MMA competition. I had been certain that it was only a matter

of time before competitors in the larger competitions, such as Pride and the UFC, would begin to realize what I had already realized—that spending all their time training with the gi was hurting them. But they didn't. They continued to train with the gi, and when they entered MMA competition they continued to flounder on their backs, just without the sleeve or collar to use for setups. Without fast paced action on the ground, many MMA fans began to lose patience with the Brazilian ground game. If too many fans began to complain, promoters would start implementing stand-up rules. That would completely change the game. Kickboxers would no longer have to learn how to grapple. All they would need to do is hold on for thirty seconds once the fight went to the ground, and then the referee would stand them back up. Then MMA competition would become nothing more than a glorified "tough man" competition. Instead of implementing stand-up rules, promoters needed to showcase grappling, because that is what makes MMA so special. But in order to do that, competitors first had to learn how to make jiu jitsu work without the gi.

I grew so worried about the sport of MMA dying that I began posting instructional pictures of my Rubber

Guard (see Chapter 2) on the internet, begging competitors to take a look. It just seemed to work a whole lot better than what I was seeing in MMA competition. But my efforts did no good. Every time I tuned into an event, jiu jitsu players were getting worse and worse fighting from the guard position. A prime example was the UFC bout between Matt Hughes and Jorge Pereira, a Rickson Gracie black belt. Pereira was one of the best jiu jitsu practitioners on the planet, but once he had Hughes in his guard all he did was lay there. He used over-hooks to block the punches, but he didn't seem to know any submissions off the over-hooks. The result was devastating. Hughes smashed him into oblivion.

After doing an ample amount of preaching on exactly what MMA jiu jitsu practitioners were doing wrong, it dawned on me that although I had spent all my time in the gym perfecting the no-gi grappling technique, I had never put those techniques to the test in a no-gi tournament. As a matter of fact, everyone I had grappled with up to that point had been wearing a gi. I came to the conclusion that if people were ever going to listen to what I had to say, I had to have some proof. So in 1999 I began to enter no-gi tournaments, and in 2000 I

entered Grappler's Quest, the largest no-gi grappling tournament in the United States. I still hadn't finished inventing my Rubber Guard, but I had done enough to have an advantage over all of my opponents, who had trained solely with the gi. I won the tournament, and it made me realize that I had been heading down the right road all of these years.

But I still didn't fully realize what I had stumbled upon - not until I began giving Joe Rogan, host of NBC's "Fear Factor," private lessons and teaching him my Rubber Guard. After our third session, he turned to me and said, "Dude, do you realize that you are a phenom?"

"What are you talking about?" I said, thinking he was busting my chops. "I'm no phenom. B. J. Penn, he's a phenom."

"No dude, you're a phenom. You're coming up with some revolutionary moves."

I still couldn't believe it. I'd never looked at myself as anything special because I had always been so offensive-minded. If I made a mistake and got caught in a submission, I wasn't good at getting out of it. That was just never my forte. My forte was turning on the heat and making my opponents tap. I was kind of like boxer Terry Norris. He

was knocking people out all the time because he took chances, but by taking chances he opened himself up for shots and would get knocked out himself from time to time. I figured that in order to be a phenom, you had to be more like boxer Pernell Whitaker. He wasn't knocking anyone out, but he also didn't get knocked out himself. For him, it was defense first. I guess all the times I took chances in the gym and got caught had led me to believe I wasn't all that good. I'd seen B. J. Penn train a few times, and he never got capped. But after hearing Rogan tell me over and over just how lethal my style was, I began to think that perhaps there was something to it after all. Perhaps a weak, 155-pound wannabe rock star from Orange County could make it to the big time. That's when I first locked my sights on Abu Dhabi, the largest, most respected no-gi grappling tournament in the world.

### 2003 Abu Dhabi Qualifiers

The more I focused on perfecting the Rubber Guard and other no-gi techniques, the more I felt myself separate from the rest of the crowd. I figured I had a leg up on traditional jiu-jitsu practitioners, at least when it came to

no-gi competition, so I decided to train for the Abu Dhabi World Championships. I was going to prove once and for all that the gi was not some sacred garment. Jiu-jitsu wasn't about what you wore; it was about the movement you executed.

It was a big jump, going from Grappler's Quest to Abu Dhabi. I got nervous just thinking about it because everything surrounding the tournament seemed mysterious. It had been founded by Sheik Talon, a prince from Abu Dhabi. He had gone to college in San Diego and studied jiu-jitsu under Nelson Monteiro. At the time no one knew he was a billionaire; they just thought he was a Muslim guy becoming very good at jiu-jitsu. But when he headed back home, he paid a healthy sum of money to Renzo Gracie, Shawn Alvarez, and a number of other top jiu-jitsu players to join him and open up a school. Not long after that, he decided to start his own tournament. As would be expected of a sheik, it was not a small event. He flew in all the top MMA stars, Olympic wrestlers, and world champion jiu-jitsu and judo players from around the world to partake in the largest and most prestigious no-gi grappling tournament in modern times. It was like

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