

VALIDATING THE DEADLIEST WARRIOR'S INSPIRATION REPORT BY SNAKE BLOCKER

Spike TV's "Deadliest Warrior" is like the *Ultimate Fighting Championship* in a time warp. Hall of Famers in full battle gear go at each other for keeps. It is somewhere between virtual reality and a video game that plays itself. The "Deadliest Warriors" each are prototype Terminators with singular skill sets, conjured from what's known about their weaponry and Tales From the Crypt. Scholars and techies match them in War Games. A thousand simulations write the script for mortal combat in the show's finale. It's almost too

good for home entertainment. Maybe someone will do a Theme Park to virtualize the reality?

It was Apaches vs. Gladiators in the show's première. Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell's guest appearance made for authenticity with the Gladiators. He is pretty much the shop steward for today's generation of Gladiators. Apache authenticity might well have been the most genuine article you'll see in this series, with Alan Tafoya and our own Snake Blocker.

Above and beyond his tribal affiliations, Snake is now on his third deployment, this time to Afghanistan. A former World Muay Thai Champion who trains U.S. Navy Seals, Army Rangers, and Special Ops in his day job, there is nothing virtual about Snake Blocker's reality. Mortal combat is what he does where the terrain is hostile, the force is lethal and validating the "Deadliest Warrior" is all in a day's work. Here is Snake's memoir from his experience in the show. **EDITOR.**

MORNINGSTAR ENTERTAINMENT Presents

DEADLIEST WARRIOR

Series Premiere
APACHE vs. GLADIATOR
on
SPIKE
at 10:00pm
Tuesday, April 7th, 2009

Please check your local TV listings.

GETTING THE GIG

Spike TV broadcast the premiere of its new hit show, “Deadliest Warrior”, on Tuesday evening, April 7th 2009. I’d spent 5 weeks, on and off, in October and November, furnishing **Morning Star Entertainment** with my biography and film clips, as well as doing interviews with various members of the production crew

at the studio in Burbank, California. The director called me one morning with a “thumbs up” on my last demo.

I’d brought my own Apache weapons to the audition. Although half became casualties of combat, there were enough in reserve to prove that Apache

Warriors were ready for every contingency. I demonstrated close range weapons in the office hallway, then did longer range weapons in the parking garage. I put on a show with archery, knife throwing, spear hurling, rock heaving, plus some improvised weapons like the leg bone of a bison. I also did a few one liners for laughs.



Tim Prokop, Director, & Snake Blocker on the Set

WHILE THE CAMERA WAS ROLLING

The show was filmed in late November of 2008. We didn't know quite what to expect. None of us were given a script, a story board, or even a clue where the battle would take place, whether in a closed arena or on open terrain. We weren't told which weapons would be in our respective armories, until it came time to do battle. Neither was there any rehearsal with the weapons we'd auditioned on set. The only weapons I'd practiced with were the knives and tomahawks that survived my audition, which luckily were in the script.

On seeing the tomahawks that we were supposed to throw, I said "You've got to shorten the handles. They're way too long." They did and it worked out just fine. We filmed for 5 days straight. Almost every scene was wrapped on the first take. Although Alan Tafoya had never before used the bow that was furnished, he hit all the targets on his first try. I threw knives from 5 feet, 10 feet, and 15 feet away, never missing one target. Thank God!. They filmed a couple of extra takes, only to get different angles on us. But what you see on the

show is the real deal. We had a lot of talent there. Tim Prokop at **Morning Star Entertainment** is the best director I've ever worked with. He is a consummate professional with superb communication skills. In fact, every single one of the "behind the scenes" crew was great to work with.

The bow was below weapons grade but did the job. Maneuverability would have been quicker with a better bow. Alan Tafoya got Chuck Liddell's attention with his tomahawk throws. Chuck mentioned his son kind of hoped Dad would learn how to throw a tomahawk, then teach it to him. Chuck asked Alan for some pointers. Alan said "Sure." By the end of his lesson, Chuck was throwing pretty well. This segment was filmed but didn't air.

There was also a scene, where I threw several knives at a target on the ground, but it didn't air either. When I did the Horse Bone tomahawk shot to the skull and the fake blood hit both camera and camera-man, **Spike TV's** staff wanted the scene

deleted. After **Morning Star Entertainment's** people made a case, though, it stayed in the show. Alan Tafoya and I each did 30 minute interviews on Apache history and fighting culture, but only a couple of minutes were broadcast on the show.

I asked the Weapons Supervisor, Mark, to get either a live rattlesnake or scorpion for when I'd be talking about how Apaches poisoned their arrows. He was like "Are you sure?" I said "Yes. I used to have a wild rattlesnake, before I went to the Middle East. I had it next to my bed in an empty trophy case for two years, before I let it back in the wild." Mark brought me a scorpion the next day. When the time came for me to talk about Apache history and the practice of arrow poisoning, I told the director, Tim, that we had a scorpion for the scene. Tim said "Alright" but didn't seem to care either way. This was until I reached in and grabbed the scorpion out of the cage. Then everyone's eyes opened wide. I spoke for several more minutes, with the scorpion on my hand. Everyone was happy it didn't sting me but none more than I.

CAST AND CREW

For those of you who don't know the cast and crew, Chris Torres (Gladiator) is a Hollywood stuntman and Mixed Martial Arts practitioner who used to train with Chuck Liddell. He did all of the stunt scenes for the latest James Bond video game, among others. Chris is also an authority on Gladiator history and weapons. He lives in the Los Angeles area. We got along great.

Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell needs no introduction, unless you've been living in a cave for the past few years. Let me say for the record that he is a regular guy, low keyed and well spoken. We talked about his son, who lives near me in Denver, Colorado, and he autographed a UFC photo book for me. It was a memorable experience working with him.

Steve Dietrich (Gladiator) is another class act. I very much enjoyed working with him. He lives in Las Vegas, Nevada and does a lot in the Entertainment Industry, from consultant, to actor, to stunt man, plus a lot more. He introduced me to his lovely wife and their new baby, who is very cute. Alan and I had dinner with him. The three of us usually ate lunch together on the set.



Alan Tafoya, Snake Blocker, Chuck Liddell, Steve Dietrich, & Chris Torres on Set

ALAN TAFOYA AND APACHE CULTURE

Alan “Colorado Warrior” Tafoya is a full blooded Jicarilla Apache. He is a direct descendant of the famous Apache Chief Magnus Colorado. Colorado means “Red” and Magnus Colorado means “Red Sleeves”. Alan's father was the Police Chief of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation for over 40 years, before he passed away in 2000. One of Alan's uncles was also on the Police force. His other uncle, whom I've met, is a Medicine Man. Alan Tafoya won the 1999 and 2000 Soldier of

Fortune Knife Championship in Las Vegas, Nevada. He has studied Martial Arts and Kickboxing since youth. He got his first bow and arrow set when he was just 4 years old.

Alan is also an actor, musician and song writer. He was featured in the book, *Vital Point Strikes* by Sang H. Kim from Turtle Press (416 pages), which was published this year. His companion is the actress, Cynthia Straus. Alan has two beautiful daughters, both in their 20's, and one grandson. I've

met his companion and entire family. They are the nicest people. Alan has also been featured in several Native American movies, magazines, and short films. He just completed a role in “Spec Ops”, produced by **Morning Star Entertainment**, which will air in July of this year on television. Alan's biography was featured in the film, “Dancing on the Edge”, in which he talks about his world on the reservation. It shows his second consecutive victory in the Soldier of Fortune Knife Fighting Championship.

Alan and I recently did the 14th Annual Apache Knife Fighting & Battle Tactics Seminar on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation. He is a true friend and brother to me. What we teach at these seminars is handed down from elders of the Apache nation. It is oral history that has been passed from Great-Great Grandparents to their Great-Great Grandchildren to our own Grandparents through the

generations. Their stories of Apache fighting aren't in any history book.

Many Apaches believed that photographing them claimed a slice of their spirit, so few historical pictures are available. One of the Great-Grandsons of Goyathlay, also known as Geronimo, lives in Colorado. It was an honor and pleasure for me to meet him. Most know

very little of the Apaches, because the only accessible sources are Western movies and a few documentaries. Apache history is much deeper than these sources reveal. That's why I started researching and teaching our culture 15 years ago. Those who make a serious study of our culture would be rewarded by its richness.



Snake Blocker & Alan Tafoya on Set

CANDID COMMENTS

Let me also say for the record that a one hour show, after commercials and review scenes, is only 30 minutes of air time. It would be impractical to show every scene in the Gladiatorial arena, along with a whole variety of outdoor terrains. How many would sit through all 1,000 scenarios, with the Gladiator winning 300 plus times while the Apache prevails 600 plus times, before switching the channel? You'll get to see spears, pistols, rifles, and other

exotic weapons on upcoming shows with other warrior prototypes. Thirty minutes to show everything is not enough. "Deadliest Warrior" is a show for entertainment with an element of history and a little bit of testosterone. Okay, maybe a lot of testosterone.

Because the "Deadliest Warrior" will feature other warrior prototypes in upcoming episodes, the audience would

see a lot of repetition, if entire armories were a prerequisite in every broadcast. Apaches also used pistols, rifles, spears, throwing rocks, and horses, for example, while Gladiators sometimes had recourse to bows and arrows, chariots, as well as other exotic weapons. The Gladiators in "Deadliest Warrior" were ripped body building actors. I wonder whether any Gladiators were actually that built, but it was cool to see.



Snake Blocker & Chris Torres on Set

Not all Apaches became great warriors. Gladiators only survived, individually, if they were undefeated. How rare was that? Gladiators were all slaves, who were expected to die for the public's amusement, so they got commensurate training. With human life so cheap, what are the odds that big bucks were spent on their weapons and armor, while Roman legions

were supposed to keep barbarians from the gate? For our own entertainment, the best we can do is conjure a plausible scenario.

Perhaps it is a stretch to do computer simulations based only upon armament. Although training and luck accompany every warrior into battle, quantifying firepower is more

objective than trying to configure tactical permutations in a black box. Most fights are contingent. It is impossible to predict an outcome 100% of the time. Anyone who thinks it's possible should get a reality check in Las Vegas. Simulating 1,000 outcomes under every conceivable scenario is close enough for me to an educated guess.



Snake Blocker & Steve C. Meyer II on Set

There is a moment of truth in the climactic battle scene, when the apparently victorious Gladiator pauses over the snared Apache. It was meant to portray the Gladiator's practice of looking for a thumbs up or down, rather than exercising his

own free will. Since Gladiators were trained for submission to their own slave status, it was more authentic than not to write this into the script.

None of us were told who would win. I didn't find out, until I

went to the Producer's Preview of the show in Hollywood on Monday, April 6th, the day before its broadcast. The actors and camera crew were told to film every scene twice, once with the Gladiator winning and once with the Apache victorious.

POST PRODUCTION

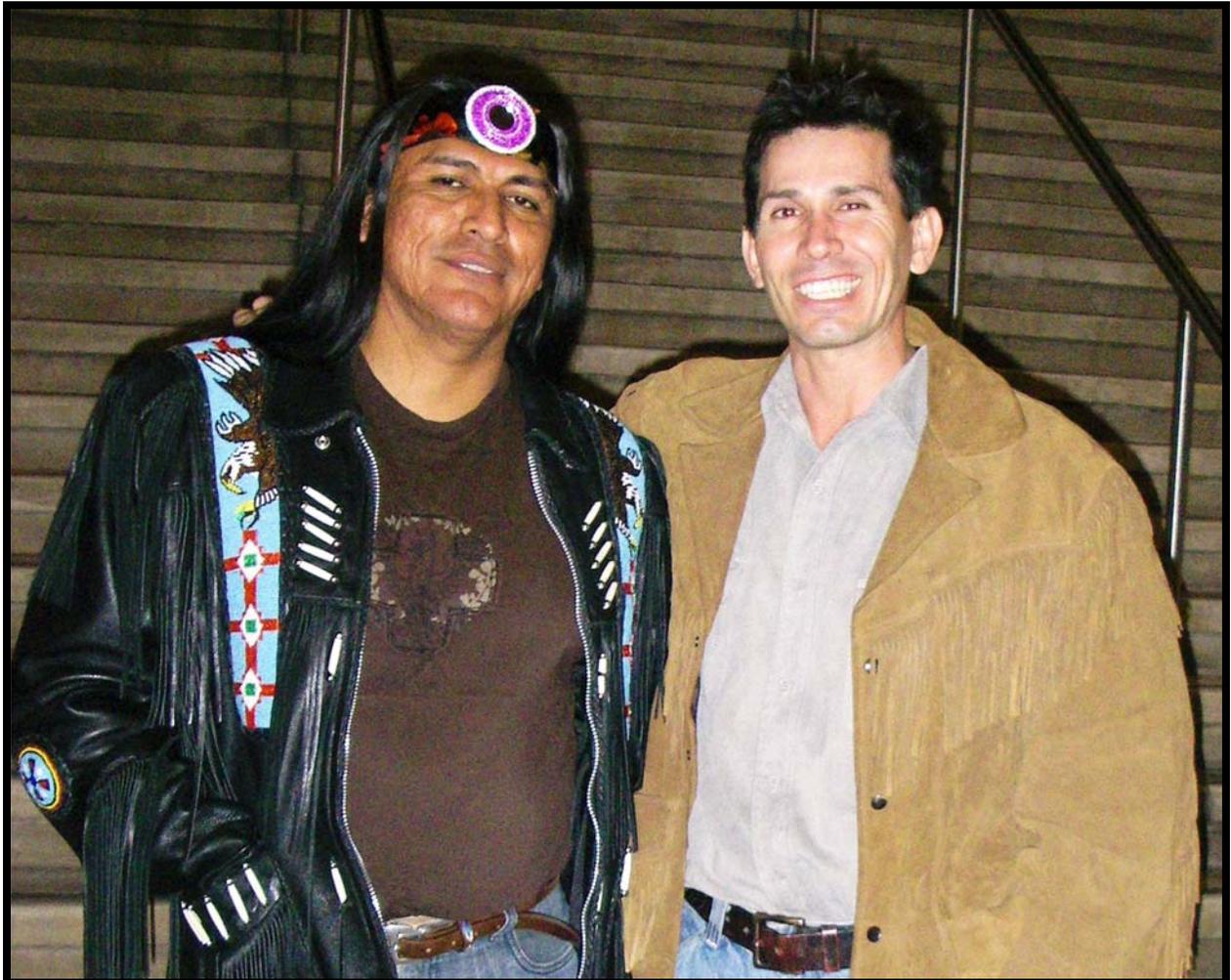
Spike TV targets Alfa males aged 18 – 35 years old. It is owned by MTV and gets 94 – 97 million viewers. I believe that most of them saw this episode. Spike TV advertised it heavily in New York City and in Hollywood, California. The show sparked a huge interest in the knife fighting/counter-knife fighting community, as I received thousands of hits and hundreds of emails from people all over the U.S.A. and Canada the first few days after it aired. Several of my associates, students, and instructors have

also gotten calls and emails from people who want weapons training, separate and apart from Apache battle tactics. It has helped all of us in the Edged Weapons community. Personally, I had fun testing weapons for a full week and getting paid to do it.

I very much enjoyed making new friends on the set and got a lot of satisfaction from reading the fan mail. **Morning Star Entertainment** has done shows for the **History Channel**, the **Discovery Channel**, and

National Geographic. It has won several awards for documentaries, most notably for the documentary on “Billy the Kid”.

Criticism comes with anything, if not everything, in the public domain. Much as I welcome the opportunity to put myself out there, I’m even more appreciative of the freedom to express opinions that makes such an opportunity possible for me. It is something well worth fighting to defend. God bless America! –Snake Blocker 🐍



Apache Warriors