

Martial arts practical in many lives

MATTHEW BORYSEWICZ
features reporter

The Collegiate Times was fortunate enough to sit down with Krav Maga instructor Moshe Katz. Even inside Squires Student Center, he did not leave his luggage unattended for a moment, a move that would earn him a commendation from the Transportation Security Administration, but also an indicator of what life is like in Israel.

COLLEGIATE TIMES: I've read your website and you have an interesting story. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and how you got into Krav Maga?

MOSHE KATZ: The initial inspiration that I got for getting into martial arts came from a Rabbi whom I knew when I was younger. He thought it was important for Jews to learn how to defend themselves. It was actually the Karate Kid movie that gave me the final push to give it a try and since then I have been training.

I started with karate, moved into judo eventually and over the years I began to gravitate toward Krav Maga because it is more street-oriented. When I was younger I did more sports like boxing, kickboxing and judo (which is not really geared toward the street). But Krav Maga has two things I like about it. One, it is practical and two it is Israel — it represents Israel.

CT: What really separates Krav Maga from other styles of martial arts?

KATZ: Israel is a country which unfortunately is always under attack. It is not only under attack from the outside, but also it is attacked from enemies within.

Everyone in Israel serves in the army, it has a warrior attitude and most of the terrorist attacks that take place on the streets are stopped by ordinary civilians. In other words, when you hear about some suicide bomber who is stopped in the street, usually it isn't the SWAT team who

arrived. Usually it was somebody who took initiative and responded effectively.

So Krav Maga isn't designed for sports, it is not designed for tournaments. There are no trophies or anything along those lines. It is simply designed for survival. Most martial arts have a tradition. In order to get a black belt you have to uphold that tradition. Krav Maga has no tradition, it changes from year to year. If we have a technique that somebody tries in the streets and it doesn't work effectively, we'll change it. So it's not like a God-given law. Krav Maga evolves according to the needs of the streets. It has one objective and one objective only: your survival. It's not about art, it's not about beauty, it's not about tradition and it's not about competition.

CT: Have you ever had to use Krav Maga out in the streets?

KATZ: I personally have not been attacked in a very, very long time, but some of my students have and some of these techniques have been used in the streets effectively. But more than just the techniques, it fosters an attitude and the attitude is what makes a difference.

CT: That was definitely something I noticed, especially in the beginning as you explained in Krav Maga you are never "down and out" but "down and dangerous." Why would you recommend Krav Maga to anyone who might be interested in learning a martial art for self-defense?

KATZ: I would recommend it, I mean, you talk about colleges. Statistically one in four college women will be sexually molested before she graduates, which is a horrible statistic. To think the majority of these attacks are never reported, we can only imagine what these numbers are. I've been to campuses and you find out that a fraternity guy was just shot in the head. There is a lot of violence unfortunately.

I've been to a lot of universities where they say campus is safe, but

you walk three blocks off campus and you take your life into your hands. There are a lot of situations like that and the police cannot be everywhere at once. So having some idea of what to do makes all the difference.

I taught a course a few years ago at (the University of Virginia) and several months ago I turned on the computer and the news said that a girl from UVa was murdered by her ex-boyfriend who didn't take their break-up lightly. I researched exactly what happened and it was a simple choke which we worked on with the women's group earlier. If I had 30 seconds with this woman, I could have taught her how to save her life. These things happen, but there's an easy defense to that. If students can arm themselves, even with very basic techniques, it can make a difference of life or death.

CT: Those are really all of the questions I had, is there anything else you would like to add?

KATZ: Well I'm happy this is my third trip to Virginia Tech and it's a beautiful, peaceful place. But even a place like this has its history of violence.

Think back to that horrible incident, who was the person who fought back? It was an Israeli, an old man, a professor. So we see there that it wasn't a young, strong, athletic guy. It wasn't a member of the wrestling team or the football team. It was an old man, a Holocaust survivor.

I have a book I am working on called "Israel: Nation of Warriors" and I discuss the idea of what made him act the way he did. It was his sense of Jewish history, that we're fed up with being victims, that we're fed up with being slaughtered. So even a horrible situation like that where a student goes crazy and everyone is panicking, he didn't panic; he fought back.

He died a warrior, he died a hero — not a victim. We see that this kind of action can save lives. To me this is a life mission to help empower people against violence, against abuse.

Self-defense class hits home

MATTHEW BORYSEWICZ
features reporter

This past Thursday, I punched myself in the face.

This wasn't anything I had planned or even intended to do. It wasn't some attempt to make a friend laugh. It was merely a rude reminder of my own lack of coordination during my first Krav Maga self-defense course.

The only time I had heard of Krav Maga before this week was an episode of "Manservants," which was trying to answer the question, "Can you kill a bear with your bare hands?"

I learned Krav Maga is an Israeli martial art developed by Imi Lichtenfeld and employed by special forces and police units around the world. It is an effective close combat fighting technique which, unlike most eastern martial arts, focuses on function over form with staggering results.

Hokies for Israel invited Krav Maga instructor Moshe Katz from Israel to teach self-defense classes to Virginia Tech students. There were a few specialized classes for women and the Corps of Cadets, but I was fortunate to make it to one of the open sessions.

We started out by learning how to defend ourselves if we were ever to be knocked onto our backs. Katz revealed a lot about Krav Maga with a single sentence. He let us know they had a saying, that a Krav Maga practitioner is never "down and out" but "down and dangerous."

We learned how to protect our heads from attacks while being able to retaliate with our legs. It was at this point I realized how very out of shape I had become.

When the mock firearms came out, I realized this was not the same kind of martial art I so fondly remembered from my elementary school stint in Tae Kwon Do.

Katz began showing us how to disarm someone holding a gun to you. We learned it from a variety of positions — standing, seated, pointed at your chest, head and back.

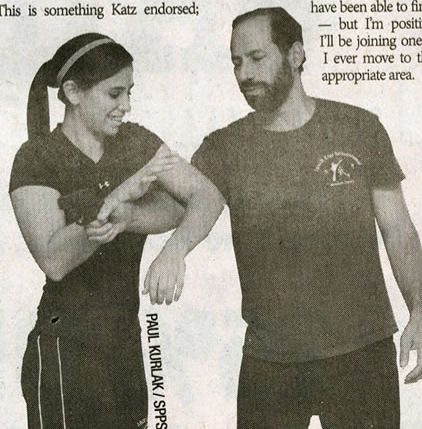
Two things ran through my head at this point. First, I was glad I was never mugged in my many nights spent walking to 7-Eleven in Richmond. Second, if someone did have a gun pointed at me, I would probably hand them anything they asked for, likely with a side of unintentional fear-leakage.

This is something Katz endorsed;

if someone is after your wallet, just give it to them. However, the reality of the situation, especially in Israel, is that a Krav Maga practitioner has to be ready to defend his life, not just his bank account.

This is about when I punched myself in the face. The fluid motions Katz was pulling off require years of practice to execute perfectly.

In my hour-and-15-minute Krav Maga career, I didn't master any of the techniques. However, Katz armed me with knowledge and more importantly a non-victim attitude as well as a desire to learn more about this uniquely Israeli style of self defense. There aren't any Krav Maga centers close by — at least none I have been able to find — but I'm positive I'll be joining one if I ever move to the appropriate area.



RAPID FIRE REVIEWS

BY MATT BORYSEWICZ | features reporter

ESPNU (Facebook)

ESPN has gotten its hands into the Facebook game market. In ESPNU, you control a small college campus in an attempt to transform it into a nationally renowned university.

Players accomplish this through building various buildings on the campus. Build a journalism department to increase student happiness (I built two). Build a fraternity to attract more students. Build a hot dog stand to increase revenue and build a football stadium to play games against rival colleges.

Colleges can "rank up" as play goes on by increasing the size of their college (both dimensionally and in enrollment) and becoming the best at various sports. Another option allows players to affiliate their school

with a real-life college or university. I chose Virginia Tech, of course. My school colors, along with the uniform of the very informative and kind cheerleader serving as my tutorial guide, switched to orange and maroon.

Over time, some buildings will produce money or new students, which can be obtained by clicking on the building. Sports venues will be ready to host new games but must be "cleaned up" first by clicking on them.

If any of this sounds familiar it is because ESPNU is a shameless rip-off of Farmville. I can imagine the meeting where it was first pitched, one executive saying to another, "Himm. Facebook can make us

money but we don't want to spend a lot of money. You know that Farmville game? Let's just do that, but for boys?"

Nearly every aspect of the game is the same with just enough tweaked to prevent any lawsuits. Look up Skinner Box on Google and you'll see exactly what this game is: an attempt to get Facebook users to stare at ESPN ads for as long as possible.

ESPNU gets one punt out of five but don't worry if you're one of the 70 million people using the Google Chrome browser (I am). ESPNU won't work for you.



Star Control II (PC)

Star Control II was released in 1992, back when floppy disks really were floppy and Windows 3.1 was the hot new thing.

Star Control II is a bit hard to explain. It is a relic of an age when games could not rely on stunning visuals to scrape by, so not a single ounce of the game could be wasted. The result in Star Control II is a game with writing that both intrigues the player and pokes fun at its own genre.

It is part starship strategy game, part role-playing game and part exploration game. It is truly the pre-

decessor to multi-titled epics such as Mass Effect.

The game can be a bit frustrating to those who aren't used to the difficulty curves of older games. In fact, if you do not write down every bit of useful information (hint star coordinates) you come across, you can quickly become confused or frustrated.

The game requires active thought as opposed to passive reflexes to get by. But when diplomacy breaks down and ship-to-ship combat is your only option, you better pray

your fingers can be light on that keyboard.

Star Control II has been heralded as one of the greatest games of all times by entities such as Gamespot and IGN.

Its visual standards may not be up to par, but if you're looking for a solid, quality game to pass time over Thanksgiving break, check it out and you will not be disappointed.

Star Control II gets five stars out of five.



'Unstoppable' takes audience on action packed, suspenseful ride

Despite the premise of "Unstoppable," the film was definitely not a train wreck.

Director Tony Scott, brother of the better-known Ridley Scott, gives us the "true story" of an unmanned train in Pennsylvania traveling at speeds of 60 mph and heading toward a densely populated town. It is, well, unstoppable.

Denzel Washington and Chris Pine play the engineer and conductor, respectively, who try to stop the train from derailling and killing everyone in a fiery explosion.

Did I mention the train was carrying highly toxic chemicals?

While the events in this film are exaggerated from the real life story, that is to be expected.

What actually happened is better interpreted as an inspiration for "Unstoppable" rather than the narrative of it.

The film starts off a bit cliché as we catch glimpses into the ordinary lives of Washington and Pine. Marital problems, job insecurity and so forth. It's very formulaic.

Fortunately, the film picks up speed as soon as the train does.

The train becomes a character itself, plowing through anything unfortunate enough to get in its path.

The various tracking shots of the train careening through southern Pennsylvania's peaceful, rural landscape allow the view-

er to experience it as the primary antagonist. Suspense is a key element. "Unstoppable" could easily be summarized in a paragraph, but what keeps the simple plot moving is the suspense Scott is able to create.

Certain moments are drawn out just enough to keep the viewer on edge, but not too long, which would ruin the effect.

News reports intercut the scenes on the train, helping to keep the viewer informed as to what is going on, where the train is and how horrible the impending crash is going to be.

The five or six breath-holding scenes really shape the overall tone of the film.

Washington gives a great performance. He's the Average Joe who comes to the rescue.

Sadly, the script's characterization is a bit wooden and does not allow for him to shine like he has in previous films.

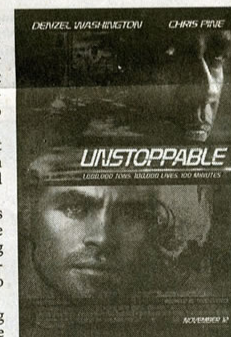
Even so, Washington works with what he has and creates a believable character.

Like so many other disaster films before it, the primary focus of "Unstoppable" is not the characters but the action.

One complaint I did have was the shaky camera work.

The camera was always unnecessarily moving. Obviously while following the train, it had to move, but other times I didn't see the point. The camera couldn't stay still.

Even in scenes where characters



were standing stationary, having a conversation, the camera had to be circling around them or zooming in at random times.

The only way I could justify this is that maybe it was an artsy attempt to emphasize the motif of movement. Honestly, the only thing it did was give me a headache.

"Unstoppable" is an enjoyable hour-and-a-half.

It gives the viewers what the previews promised: heart-pounding excitement.

It's believable, though dramatized, and a fun ride — literally.

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