

## *Aedh wishes for the Cloths of Heaven*

*"HAD I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."*

- William Butler Yeats

## Finding Parker In Oklahoma

### *Prologue*

*If a person has the want to find something more inside themselves, it takes courage to continue searching even when they fail.*

*When I was sixteen years old, I was like all of young men, some just had less or more problems, but I wasn't really all that different. It was at this time I saw a man named Jeff Speakman in a movie called "The Perfect Weapon", a movie dedicated to showcasing American Kenpo. From that time I went on a personal quest to gain the stability that I didn't have at home, with my family, or even my health, I wanted to be that guy in that movie. I wanted to be able to stand tall and know that I had the ability to hold onto values, morality, and honor. Little did I know that it would take me 18 years to reach my goal of learning the system of American Kenpo the way Grand Master Edmund Parker had taught it to his students (and was portrayed in that film). This is the story of my walk:*

### Each Step

Attending high school in Wagoner, Oklahoma, I found a school of Kenpo. I was too young to see what was out there in the world, and didn't realize I was in an Okinawan version. I spent some years studying that system with several different instructors, had a great beginning to my martial arts career, but in the end realized I hadn't found American Kenpo.

From there I found a man named Angel Quesada in Muskogee, Oklahoma. An exceptional Kenpoist, originally from California, and who had moved to Oklahoma. I studied with him for approximately 4 years, but in the end I found that while his system was founded in American Kenpo, it lacked the base techniques, forms, and sets. What Mr. Quesada focused in on was street fighting principles, and he did it like none other. I will always value my experience with Mr. Quesada, but I still hadn't found Parker Kenpo.

Through some searching I found Robert Attebury, who was currently with the Oklahoma Kenpo Karate Association out of Claremore, Oklahoma. Professor Attebury is a very kind man and his students shared their art with me with honor. I spent a little over 2 years off and on learning his schools system. They have a wonderful blend of Lima Lama and American Kenpo, which is a logical combination as Kenpo has roots

in Lua. Many of the techniques were blended to reflect this dynamic combination of the two arts, with some Jujitsu added in. I learned a great deal from Professor Attebury, his student/instructor Kevin Sumter, and could have easily stopped my search right there and found all the self defense knowledge I could have ever wanted. Although in the end I bid them a fond farewell, and continued to search for the system as Ed Parker had taught in the *Infinite Insights into Kenpo Vol. 5*.

In between my time with Professor Attebury I heard of a legend in Oklahoma in the realm of Kenpo, Kyoshi Roger Greene. A master of Tracy Kenpo, and one of the nicest men I've ever met. He and his wife warmly received me at their private dojo at their home. I spent two months working out with him and his top students. To say what I saw changed the way I looked at martial arts would be an understatement. In that time I was with him I found that Tracy Kenpo was different from Parker Kenpo, and respectfully bid him farewell.

It was 2001, I was in my mid-twenties, and I realized that Parkers original system wasn't going to be found here in Oklahoma. I had met and worked with some of the best people in state, and any of them would have been able to give me an art that would have served me well. I forever respect their institutions and honor their commitment to the martial arts. With that behind me, I took my search out of state. I looked for the very best I could find, I found Master Larry Tatum. I studied his tapes, and trained with anyone I could find to dummy for my techniques. I had at this time developed some great friends and students in Kenpo, and they did me great justice in helping my training. After 2 years studying his art we had to part ways due to some logistic problems with the cost of upper belt rankings. His system is definitely worth the money, but I didn't have it. I can't measure the amount of technique, form, and set application I learned. I was grateful for the experience, but it was just out of my means.

Shortly afterwards I decided to attempt to make associations with the American Kenpo Training System. My application with them was well received, and even though I had never tested for a black belt, I was recognized as a school by them in Oklahoma. I taught several students and kept my studies up by learning from Mr. Mohamad Tabatabai's training video's. Mr. Tabatabai's tapes were some of the greatest I've experienced, and rivals Mr. Tatum's in talent. In the end I had to part ways with the AKTS due to some of the requirements they wanted in order to continue ranking me, and my inability to meet their expectations. Mr. Michael Billings of the AKTS was a wonderful individual and enjoyed being apart of their organization.

After this time, I was turning 32, and found myself growing distrustful if I would ever find a situation that would allow that young man from Oklahoma to find Parker. I considered moving, but that was not to be without greater funds. I took two years off practicing off and on, but taking my Art less seriously than I had in the past. I almost gave up at that point.

In 2008, I had somewhat of an epiphany, and I began working with a man named Kevin Lamkin out of Louisville, KY from the American Kenpo Legacy Association. I began working with him in the same manner I had Master Tatum, through video training. At the age of 34, I realized that my chances to capture my dream were becoming slimmer by the year, as was my drive to persevere. I redoubled my efforts and decided to make another go at it. Things worked out this time. I re-certified on all belt levels, tested with Master Lamkin for Black Belt, became a Certified Instructor, and re-opened my doors as a teacher. I now stand at a rank beyond Black Belt, and work 2 hours everyday in Kenpo and weightlifting to uphold the standards I set.

I honor all the schools in Oklahoma that I studied under. They each brought something unique to the realm of martial arts here in this state. After 18 years of searching, I too humbly bring something unique. It might have taken me two decades to get here, but I realize the value of the journey. My students will be able to achieve the same degree of success in gaining a Black Belt in approximately 2 years of dedicated

study. I may have spent half my life towards becoming a traditional American Kenpoist, but now I dedicated my Art to Oklahoma. I will uphold all the moral standards, proper conduct, respect, and honor to the very best of my ability.

This journey might seem long to some. I believe in my heart that it took me exactly the amount of time it was meant to take. Every step was an adventure, and every turn I learned new things. When one of my students achieve success with my guidance, it is In their faces I see proof that the rewards of a teacher don't come with a belt.

- Robert Luellen