

TUXEDO



WARRIORS

The Autobiography And Biography
Of Two International Adventurers
And Pioneer Cult Movie-Makers

The Sequel To
The Book And Movie By Cliff Twemlow: 'The Tuxedo Warrior'
Starring:
John Wyman, Carol Royle,
Holly Palance, John Terry and James Coburn Jnr.

Brian Sterling-Yete

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Tuxedo Warriors®

By

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I dedicate this book to one of the closest friends I've ever known, the late-great, Cliff Twemlow.

Cliff was an autodidact, a polymath, and the personification of a classic renaissance man.

He has been an inspiration to generations of film makers in the years following his death.

His legacy lives on.

This book is also dedicated to Lenny Howarth who sadly died on January 7th 2013.

Lenny was one of the great 'Tuxedo Warriors,' and a close friend to both Cliff and I.

He also appeared in many of the films we made.

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Round 1: Warming-Up

I decided to write this book because I believe it's a story which needs to be told before the people who are able to tell it are all long gone. For one brief moment in time, a group of talented, unique and wonderful individuals were brought together to share life, adventures, and to make movies. One special man was the motivator and catalyst who made it all happen, uniting everyone as a team. More importantly, he kept that team together for over a decade, through triumphs and failures, happy times and sad, Cliff Twemlow was the man who made it all happen.

Over the years since his death, an increasing number of people have discovered Cliff's original books, music and movies. Several people have written books which document the period of his film making, and which have helped to spread the word about his extraordinary achievements. Some of these are excellent, such as 'The Lost World of Cliff Twemlow: The King of Manchester Exploitation Movies' by Dr Chris Lee and Andy Willis. As I write these words, British playwright and author, Brian Gorman, is actively producing a play about Cliff called, 'Tuxedo Warrior,' and Stephen Crompton is producing a new TV documentary about Cliff's life. Movie enthusiasts, and the public in general, are becoming increasingly interested in Cliff, the movies we made and the adventures we had which surrounded them.

I eventually began to realise that in the not too distant future there would be no one left from Cliff's

original team who helped to make the movies. I also realised that someone from the team needed to make the time to tell the story of what happened behind the scenes during that period. If not, then a short, cold, yet shining page in the history of movie-making would be lost forever.

More importantly, I also realised that very few people were able to tell the whole story. This is because even though Cliff worked with a regular team, not everyone in that team was there from the time Cliff started writing his books and making his movies right up to the time when he died in on the 5th of May 1993.

It soon became obvious that there were only two people who were there with Cliff at the start, and worked on more of the movies with Cliff than anyone else in the team. The great Steve Powell was one of those people, and I was the other. It was also obvious that I'd actually worked on more of Cliff's movies than Steve. In thinking about all of this, I also realised something else which was important. I had been the catalyst of introduction for many members of the team, and for many of them, I was the person who had introduced them to the world of TV and the movies.

For those people who already know about Cliff and the movies we made, many of the names will be familiar to you including: Steve Tomkow the armourer and special effects guy, Craig Mills who made and the fire-proof suits, Paul Hennessey who played Zykon the Giant, John Simpson from Moonstalker and African Run, Beth Jones aka Beth Adams from The Ibiza Connection, Big Ricky from African Run, John Goddard the World Record holding motorcycle stunt performer, Sefton Samuels the photographer who

captured many of Cliffs production and PR stills, John Blackledge, Colin Spencer and Keith Knowles from the African Run gambling den scene, Paul Pooley who would also go on to finance some of Cliff's films, Phil Huntington who helped Cliff with publishing, Paul Gribben who played the corpse in the 'Eye of Satan' funeral scene together with my Mother Ida, my Father Norman, and Nicky Faulkner who all played the mourners, Ray Nicholas the outstanding stuntman and actor, Paul Flanagan the actor, stuntman and production manager, Stuart Hurst the amazing martial artist and actor, Yvonne Joseph and Jeremy Philips of British Actors. As I introduced all of these core people to Cliff's team, they in turn also introduced other people in the process which then enabled Cliff to forge the dedicated team which would create movie magic.

This book also serves a matter of historical record documenting the amazing people mentioned above, and most of all for my great friend, Cliff Twemlow. Cliff was the personification of autodidact, polymath, and Renaissance man combined. He achieved so much in his life because of one critically important factor. The real secret behind Cliff's genius and creativity was because of one thing, he lived in the greatest nation possible. Cliff Twemlow lived in his *imagi-nation*.

Cliff unquestioningly believed that if he could imagine it, then he could achieve it, and that's what made him such a great man. This book tells the hitherto untold background story and sequence of events, to complete the previously unwritten chapters in the life story of the amazing Cliff Twemlow, *THE Tuxedo Warrior*.

Round 2: First Contact

Brian Sterling-Vete and Cliff Twemlow back in Manchester once again. This time it was 1987 after visiting Pikes Hotel in Ibiza and the 41st birthday party of legendary rock group Queen's lead singer, the amazing Freddie Mercury.



Spring came early in 1977, and its coming was very welcome because the winter had been exceptionally cold, with more snow than usual. Perhaps it was nature's way of keeping balance after the unusually long and idyllic summer of 1976. That was one of the most memorable summers of my entire life because not only was it warm and sunny almost every day, but also because I'd got my very first car. It was a brand-new metallic red BMW 1602 bought for me by my Father's wealthy sister, Edna, who lived in Florida and was over in Manchester visiting us for the summer. It wasn't a gift though, it was more like an advance against me working to pay her off for it. And I did exactly that. After leaving Burnage High School in Manchester, I decided to take a gap-year to earn some real money, start saving some, and to begin repaying my aunt Edna for my new car before I started university. This was made a little easier because I was still living at home with my extremely kind and supportive parents at 25 Redruth Street, in Manchester, England, which was a poor inner-city street straddling the boarder of the Rusholme and Moss Side districts.

The problem was that well paid jobs were hard to find for someone of my age, and with almost zero real-world experience. It was a time of economic austerity in Britain in those days with the country in depression after a huge decline in manufacturing. A seemingly never ending cycle of industrial disputes followed, and the whole country seemed to be going into melt-down during Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan's second term of office. This didn't make it easy to find work. In fact the only job I had at the time was a part-time one selling books in Kendals department store in Manchester city centre. I'd started working there about two years prior while I was still at school, and even though I loved the job it wasn't very well paid. This meant that the gap year I'd originally envisioned taking was very rapidly turning into a two year gap between leaving school and starting university. The problem was simple, we just didn't have enough money as a family and I was determined to help all I could because my parents had literally given their 'all' for me in so many ways. So one way or another, I had to find a very well paid job so that I could build up some sort of financial reserve which would hopefully last me at least part-way through university.

As well as training religiously in the martial arts, I was also training in bodybuilding and power lifting at the Apollo Gym on Deansgate in Manchester. This was Manchester's premier gym in the late 1970's, and it was run by a very good friend, John Cupello. I clearly remember one cold November evening in 1977 after a particularly hard work-out, John and I were chatting in the reception area, and I mentioned that I was seriously looking for some additional well paid work. John was a huge guy, one of

Britain's strongest men, and before becoming the manager of the Apollo Gym he'd worked extensively as a night club bouncer. This was lucky for me because John still knew just about everyone in the industry, and he kindly offered to make a few introductions to see who was hiring. The first introduction John made was to a gym member who'd just started working at Peter Stringfellow's prestigious Millionaire Nightclub, Cliff Twemlow.

At the time I only knew about the Millionaire Club by reputation because it was considered to *the* most exclusive, upmarket club anywhere in Europe. It was frequented by the real jet-set, TV and film celebrities from all over the world, musicians, footballers, international sports icons, chart-topping pop stars, and last but certainly not least, by supermodels. I knew that if I could get work there then I'd have hit the proverbial jackpot with a well-paid job close to home, great tips, and with lots and lots of glamorous women as customers!

John arranged for me to meet Cliff in the reception of the Millionaire Club late on a Thursday evening, just before the club closed. I vividly remember walking into West Mosely Street and being greeted by the huge neon sign over the entrance door which illuminated the entire street. The music was loud too, and I could hear and feel the heavy bass sounds the moment I turned the corner. I never thought much about it at the time, but as I opened the door to the club the music changed to a song by Freddie Mercury and Queen called, 'You're my best friend,' ironically Cliff and I were destined to become just that to each other. The irony was even greater in the fact that 10 years hence from that time, Cliff and I would be in Ibiza at

the biggest and most lavish party the island has ever known, as guests at Freddie Mercury's 41st birthday party.

When I first saw Cliff, he was wearing a white dinner jacket complimented by a black bow tie, and even from a distance as I walked down the stairs into the reception area, I could tell immediately that Cliff was a powerful weight lifter. It was late, and people were already leaving the club to go home, so I waited for an appropriate moment to introduce myself. I could also tell by the way Cliff was offering jovial parting injunctions, and made polite conversation with customers that he was not the more usual image people have of a nightclub bouncer. Just from listening to the conversations I could tell immediately that Cliff was highly educated, articulate and a real gentleman.

Eventually, the opportunity arose to introduce myself, and Cliff and I hit it off straight away. He was a really friendly guy, and we sat in the bar area chatting as the late night party people were trickling out to make their way home, usually thanking Cliff by name for a great night out. When we eventually started talking about the possibility of me working as a Tuxedo Warrior, Cliff explained that even though I'd come with excellent references from John Cupello, in reality the job needed a cross between a diplomat and a prize-fighter. It was while he was explaining his concerns about my ability in those areas when we heard the sound of raised voices in the reception area, which was only a few yards away. Cliff politely excused himself from our conversation and immediately went to see what the problem was, I followed, but stayed just outside the doorway. The problem was that a lady, who was leaving the club with two guys, had apparently changed her mind about

going home with them both, probably because she'd suddenly realised what was in store for her. By now it was long past closing time, and the other members of the security team were inside the club rounding up the remaining customers, encouraging them to leave. This meant that Cliff was alone in having to deal with two increasingly aggressive guys.

While Cliff was diplomatically explaining to the men that when a lady says no, she really does mean no, one of the guys told Cliff to 'go away' by means of a profanity. At the same time both men grabbed the lady by each arm to encourage her to go with them. Cliff intervened immediately and engaged the nearest of the two transgressors. Breaking the man's grip on the lady's arm, Cliff then swung him around and pushed him away. As he did so, the other man pushed the lady aside like a discarded napkin and jumped onto Cliff's back, grabbing him in a headlock with the apparent intent of holding him while his friend could take a swing at Cliff's jaw. As the man prepared to take a punch at Cliff, I stepped into the reception area and performed neat little side thrust kick, which landed just above the man's knee. He immediately collapsed with one knee buckled under him. Surprised by the fact he'd been suddenly reduced to a painful kneeling position, and in an attempt to regain his balance, the man instinctively reached out to grab hold of me, simply because I was still nearby. I obliged, taking hold of his hand in a classic Aikido wrist lock.

By this time Cliff had freed himself from the headlock, and was explaining to the other man, in powerful physical terms, why he was a 'very naughty boy' and

needed to leave the club immediately. Cliff then physically picked the man up from the floor by the scruff of the neck and carried him to the exit door with the man walking on his tip-toes, where he unceremoniously threw him into the street. I followed up behind, with my man still in an Aikido wristlock. Even though the man had a badly injured knee, he was hopping in agony from the knowledge that I could almost effortlessly snap his wrist if he didn't comply. Cliff told me later that it was almost comedic because of the intense fear and pain on the man's face as he limped by, yet with me appearing to be completely unruffled. Especially since I was using only one hand to completely control the man, while explaining in extremely polite terms why a gentlemen should never abuse a lady, and also why they should always comply with the requests of members of the establishment's security team.

After the incident was over, Cliff and I went for a Chinese meal at Charlie Chan's restaurant in George Street. Incidentally, the father of the restaurant owner, an old man we all called 'Charlie,' was also a Grand Master of mine in Pak Mei Kung Fu. Cliff then asked about my martial arts. Apparently, John Cupello hadn't mentioned anything about that. Cliff no longer had any doubts about my abilities as either a diplomat, or as a 'prize-fighter,' but since they had no vacancies on the security team at the Millionaire Club, he directed me to a club where he knew they were hiring. Ironically, I found myself at a club, which was formerly called The Piccadilly Club, the very same club where our close mutual friend, TV comedian Jerry Harris, was once the resident funny-man. They say that the world is small, but there have been times I've found it to be positively tiny!

I'd done it, I'd gotten the extra well paid work I desperately needed as a keeper of the bar-room peace, protecting women from the unwelcome advances of ungodly men, I was now a Tuxedo Warrior. That was how Cliff and I first met, and it was from there that our journeys and adventures began.

From that humble beginning, meeting in Peter Stringfellow's nightclub in Manchester, Cliff and I would begin a life-journey which would see us both traverse the globe as film makers and adventurers. For the next 16 years our adventures would take us to the craters of volcanoes in Iceland and the frozen wastes of the Arctic Circle, to the warmth of the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, and North Africa. We'd attempt to sail a small boat from Malta to England, we'd make tramp-steamer journeys across oceans, and road trips across continents, complete with glamorous women at every turn. Not to mention numerous bar-room brawls, a war zone, and serious danger when we once encountered organised crime.

Today it's comparatively easy for someone to make a low budget film because it's even possible to shoot digital high definition video on a cell phone. At the time of writing this chapter, I even know of a new TV show which is actually shooting some of the footage on the Nokia 1020 mobile phone. In stark contrast to this, when Cliff was making films and pioneering video cinematography techniques, it was all very different. It was nothing short of being extremely challenging, not to mention being hugely expensive. Regardless of the obstacles facing him at the time, Cliff Twemlow made it all happen. Cliff was a true

visionary. He envisioned things such as video on demand, the rise of mass-market low budget movies, and a new era of home-based video studios which could produce some great movies, just like the big studios.

The times we had, the era we lived through, and the films we made have since been hailed by both the media and academia alike as being the 'Golden Age of Video Cinematography.' In retrospect I don't know if what we did was anything extraordinary, or if the films we made were anything very special, even though they will always be very special to each and every member of Cliff's team. Only time, history, future film makers, auto biographers and anyone else who discovers our work will decide. Ironically, some of our work now seems to have even become 'cult' in status, which is a good thing, because it will help to preserve the memory of one of my closest friends.

Thankfully, the films we made with Cliff during that era have now been extremely well documented, thanks to hard work of people like Dr. Chris Lee, Andy Willis, Stephen Crompton, Brian Gorman, and Noel Mellor. Thanks to their appreciation of Cliff's talents as a polymath and movie-maker, new generations of film makers, fans, and classic movie enthusiasts, will learn about what happened during those halcyon years.

I'm now going to complete the picture by telling the whole story of the 'golden age' for my great friend, Cliff Twemlow, who created his very own period of 'Camelot.'

TUXEDO WARRIORS

'The Tuxedo Warrior' was the autobiography of author, composer, movie-maker Cliff Twemlow. The book ended at the beginning of what has been called the 'Golden Age of Video Cinematography,' which he inspired.



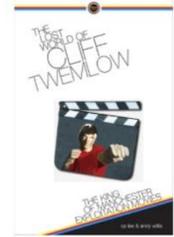
'Tuxedo Warriors' is the most complete behind the scenes biography of Cliff Twemlow ever written. It's also the autobiography of Brian Sterling-Vete who played a central

role in this unique, entertaining and true story of two extraordinary 'Renaissance-Men' and their adventures as guerrilla movie-makers.

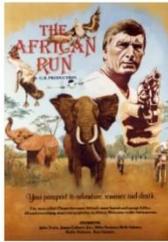


Brian and Cliff traversed the globe on many previously untold adventures in Iceland and the Arctic Circle, the Mediterranean, in North Africa and a war zone, on tramp-steamer journeys across the ocean, and on road trips across continents.

'Tuxedo Warriors' is told by Brian Sterling-Vete and continues the story where the original book ends. Brian is perhaps the only person who can tell the complete story from the time it all began right through until the end, with sudden and untimely death of his great friend.



Cliff and his works have now become known globally, even achieving 'cult' status primarily thanks to great work of Dr Chris Lee and Andy Wills in their excellent book 'The Lost World of CLIFF TWEMLOW: The King of Manchester Exploitation Movies.'



'Tuxedo Warriors' is a compelling and entertaining true story about two extraordinary characters who were pioneers during this pivotal and innovative period in the history of world cinema.

'Tuxedo Warriors' is the sequel to the book and movie: 'The Tuxedo Warrior,' Starring John Wyman, Carol Royle, Holly Palace, John Terry, and James Coburn Jr.



Brian Sterling-Vete

Brian is the author of Mental Martial Arts, a Guinness World Record Holder, TV broadcaster, motivational speaker and a former BBC TV News veteran.

Refusing to conform to normality; Brian has spent his life as an international adventurer which started when he began making movies and traversing the globe with his close friend Cliff Twemlow. Brian is still a non-conformist exploring paranormal phenomena around the world with his P.R.I.M.E. Team of investigators while producing TV shows about the expeditions.