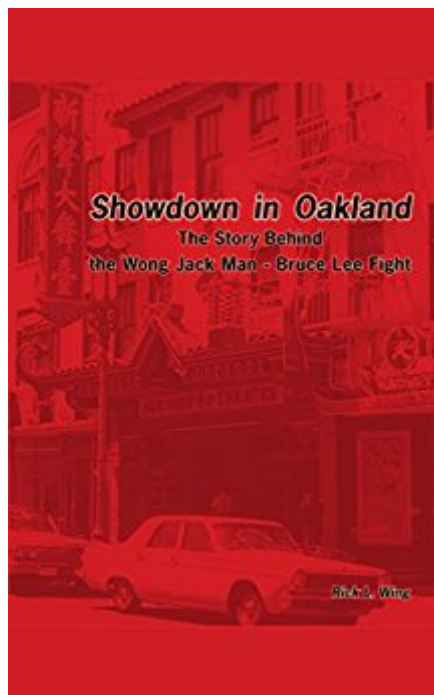




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Showdown In Oakland: The Story Behind The Wong Jack Man - Bruce Lee Fight



Synopsis

Many say this fight was the most important fight in the life of the famed martial icon Bruce Lee. True or not? You be the judge. This book is the most detailed version ever written of the fight between Wong Jack Man and Bruce Lee in 1964, a fight which many insiders say spurred Lee on to create his personal art of Jeet Kune Do (JKD). Most importantly, it describes the context within which the fight occurred, how it all happened, why it happened, and what happened afterward. It is also a glimpse into the kung fu world of San Francisco Chinatown in the 1960s. This fight has taken on an almost mythical status in the much studied career of the great martial icon Bruce Lee. Details unknown to the general public are revealed here for the first time ever and any student of martial history, Bruce Lee, or Jeet Kune Do should find this book a fascinating read. If anyone wishes to discuss this incident in an intelligent and thoughtful manner, this book must be read. Follow the author's careful reasoning as he takes the reader back in time to an incident which took place almost fifty years ago. The true-life story behind this match is easily as interesting (perhaps more so) as any fictionalized movie portrayal - think "Birth of the Dragon" - of this singular encounter. Eyewitness accounts, Chinese newspaper articles (with their English translations) and many old photographs make this meticulously researched book required reading for anyone interested in what actually transpired between Wong Jack Man and Bruce Lee in late 1964 and early 1965. These newspaper articles document the viewpoints of both Bruce Lee and Wong Jack Man on the fight at the time, and as such, make this text the definitive book of the subject. Get an inside look at what really happened and step back in time to the streets of San Francisco Chinatown in 1964!

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Customer Reviews

As a Bruce Lee fan, researcher and collector for over 40 years I applaud Rick Wing's effort to finally set the record straight. While written in a somewhat formal fashion with lots of names, dates and history the book is a very interesting read. Some points are repeated (I think we can all agree the fight was never over Lee's right to teach non-Chinese students) but generally speaking this is a well-researched and unbiased attempt at the truth. Wing interviews people who were actually there (more who knew Wong Jack Man were at Bruce's Oakland school to observe the fight than those who knew Bruce Lee) and as a student of Wong Jack Man he is well-suited to provide Wong's side of the story as well as insight into his character and personality. I was fascinated to learn that the late 1964 fight was well documented (albeit inaccurately) in the San Francisco Chinatown newspapers of the day. Lots of great pictures and documentation to support his conclusions. A must read for true Bruce Lee fans.

Showdown in Oakland is one of those rare books I finished in a couple of days and then immediately missed it and want to read it again. If you thought you knew Bruce Lee or about his "toughest fight," then you are wrong. This book is the most exhaustive, well-researched and balanced account of the event that has ever been documented. Written by someone with inside connections and a master in martial arts, Rick Wing tracks down and interviews many of the only surviving eye witnesses to the fight and to the inciting events that led up to the mythic encounter. Wing brings us on a colorful ride through 1960's San Francisco Chinatown where you can smell the dim sum and hear the hustle of a busy Chinatown populous. The author brings the perspective of a person who is a master of Kung Fu, a knowledge I think necessary to understand the dynamics and details of the fight that one might not otherwise think of. He also happens to have known the other fighter and opponent of Lee in this drama, Sifu Wong Jack Man, for many decades. Although Wing obviously is friends with Wong, he is balanced, logical, and lets people make their own decisions based on the many interviews, quotes, news articles, and facts. Like a detective story set in Chinatown, this is interesting as a story, a historical event, and as a study of how media and

individuals can distort what one perceives. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in Chinatown, Bruce Lee, Kung Fu, or what people refer to as "Bruce Lee's Toughest Fight." Grab a cup of Tea, kick back, and prepare to experience a "Showdown in Oakland."

As a former student of Wong Jack Man, I was intrigued by Sifu Rick Wing's conversations with this venerable grandmaster of the Northern arts. I was a witness to many of their exchanges during my years training and perfecting the techniques Sifu Wong taught me (some of which I have successfully used in real self-defense situations). Many of Wong's students (including myself) are not of Chinese descent, which should call into question the notion that the conflict between Lee and Wong arose from Wong's insistence that Lee had no right to teach non-Chinese pupils. The book presents compelling evidence to the contrary, and Sifu Wong is quoted as saying: "Even Bruce Lee never said these things." There can be no significant discussion of this fight without a reading of this book. Most of the Internet discussions about the event, which have been carried on for years, have been heavily biased in favor of Lee, presumably based on Lee's own testimony. But the book presents evidence that Lee had made several statements that were patently false. It should be noted that Lee was quite young at the time, having not yet landed his first U.S. role, as Kato on The Green Hornet. At the time he was still trying to make a name for himself and was known to be quite the capable fighter, having proven his mettle during many scraps in Hong Kong. He wasn't, however, invincible. The book quotes Lee's friend Michael Lai: "Bruce hated to lose. If he lost, he would have some excuse and never admitted that he had been beaten fairly. He had 'nga tsat,' which is to say he was very cheeky and strutted like a peacock. He always acted very superior." A similar take of Bruce's young life is given by Wong Shun Leung, Bruce's senior kung fu brother (his article, "Bruce Lee and His Friendship with Wong Shun Leung," is a very interesting read). It should be noted that Sifu Wing reveals himself to be quite a Bruce Lee fan. He recounts the first time he saw Enter The Dragon and the splash that it made with him and his peers at the time. Among Wing's friends is Greglon Lee, the son of Bruce Lee's good friend James Yimm Lee (who was at the fight). Greglon has written a foreword for the book and has shown his support for Sifu Wing's efforts in recounting this historic event. Other testimonies include Ming Lum's, a friend of both Bruce Lee and Wong Jack Man and who Sifu Wing eventually befriended. The book is a treasure trove of rare photographs, many of which have never been revealed to the public. The photos of the young Wong Jack Man performing his Northern Shaolin kung fu are spectacular, and there are some great pictures of Bruce (courtesy of Greglon Lee) that have never been made public. There are also many photos of the relevant historical locations throughout the Bay Area, including some of the family associations

in San Francisco's Chinatown, the Sun Sing Theatre, where Bruce Lee demonstrated his skills to the public, and the location of Bruce Lee's kung fu school in Oakland. The book also includes copies of the Chinese newspaper articles reporting the event at the time, which along with the extraordinary photos further enrich the fabled tale. Showdown in Oakland is a must-read for all martial arts enthusiasts. I highly recommend it, and every Bruce Lee fan with a strong opinion about this event should read this book to develop deeper insights and determine if what they think they "know" about this fight is in fact true.

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