

Marshall University

**Marshall Digital Scholar**

---

The Cutting Edge

The Society of American Fight Directors

---

8-1991

## **The Cutting Edge, July/August 1991, Vol. 2 Issue 4**

The Society of American Fight Directors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mds.marshall.edu/cutting>



Part of the [Acting Commons](#), [Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#), [Performance Studies Commons](#), and the [Theatre History Commons](#)

---

# **THE CUTTING EDGE**

Volume II, Issue 4

Newsletter for the Society of American Fight Directors

July/August, 1991

**F. Y. I.**

## **The Library of Congress**

There are 273 entries pertaining to swords in the computerized Library of Congress Catalog.

You can review all 273 titles in an hour (There aren't that many books—some are duplicate entries). The computer will display three titles at once. Detailed descriptions of individual books takes longer.

The rare book room contains original copies of Meyer, Marozzo, Agrippa, and Thiabault. When opened, the double-paged prints of Thiabault measure 32 x 42"! It takes around an hour to obtain a book. This room is open Mon.-Fri.

Highlights of the main reading room include Blakeslee's *Swordplay for Actors and Schools and Masters of Fence*. Any fencing manual in the main reading room can be conveniently copied (self-service). The main reading room, an architectural gem, is also open on Saturdays.

## **Laundry**

SAFD member and native Texan Steven Earl Edwards takes exception to the Spring *Fight Master*, where it was reported that *Giant* was filmed in Arizona because the producers couldn't find any place in Texas that looked like Texas.

... Well, it seems that much of *Giant* was shot in Marfa, Texas, near the Mexican border. The frame of the "big house" still stands. And the local hotel still proudly displays pictures of Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor, James Dean, etc. Many locals were extras, as were their cattle. Call off the posse, Steve—we surrender!

## **More Laundry**

Michael Jerome Johnson and Jennifer Collins recommended in *four* weapons at their Folger fight test—rapier/dagger, unarmed, broadsword and quarterstaff.

## **Bean Town Here We Come! Brandeis to Host 1992 NSCW**

Brandeis University, located just outside of Boston, will host the 1992 SAFD National Stage Combat Workshop announced Coordinator David Leong. The move from Las Vegas to Boston reflects an ongoing SAFD effort to be geographically accessible to its members.

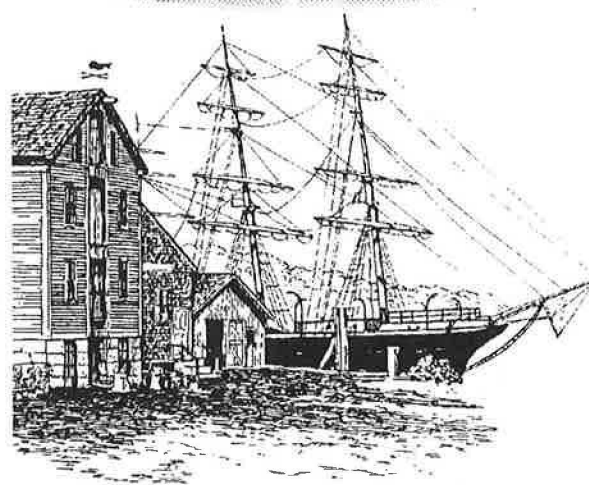
During its first seven years, the NSCW was in a new location each year. However, as the workshop grew in size and complexity this proved impractical. The NSCW stayed in residence at Memphis State University for three years, and at University of Nevada-Las Vegas for another three years.

The 1992 NSCW will see other changes besides locale. For the first time since 1989, a teacher certification workshop will be held. Openings in this program are limited; those interested should contact David Leong.

Certified teacher Bob Walsh will act as on-site coordinator at Brandeis. Teaching staff for the '92 NSCW is as follows:

David Boushey	Rapier & Dagger
Erik Fredricksen	Broadsword
J.R. Beardsley	Quarterstaff
David Leong	Smallsword
Richard Raether	Unarmed

**BOSTON**



J. Allen Suddeth } Teacher Workshop  
Drew Fracher }

Certified teachers interested in being assistant instructors in '92 should apply in writing to David Leong ASAP.

★★★

## **1991 Officers' Meetings: A Report**

Following is a brief summary of SAFD business covered in the 1991 officers' meetings in Las Vegas.

### **GRANT APPLICATION**

Our grant application to American Express was turned down; we are still pursuing a grant from Apple computers.

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

The current SAFD Glossary of Terms pertains only to swordplay. A glossary of stage combat terms will be compiled to include both unarmed and quarterstaff.

### **CORPORATE CREDIT CARD**

To increase SAFD's financial credibility and establish a credit record, a corporate MasterCard has been obtained.

### **WEAPONS PURCHASE**

The SAFD weapons purchase came in at \$6,243.53—24 new broadswords, seven new rapiers, 18 shields, and 18 new quarterstaves, as well as new blades and parts to refurbish existing stock. Although this was a major expenditure, it will mean a significant savings in annual weapons rental.

*continued on page 3*



How does a Chicago street kid end up as a rodeo rider, a mountain man living in a tepee, and the sinister dictator of a Latin-American country? No problem for an enthusiastic adventurer like Martino N. Pistone. "I'm busy living life—I'll read books about it when I'm old."

Marty credits his father encouraging his adventure permitted Marty to do what he wanted, "but I had to have the notion to—provided I had the money to cover the expenses. Starting in high school, Marty spent the school year saving up money to finance the summer's travel. He traveled alone to San Francisco when he was sixteen. Years later Marty would return as an actor enrolled in the American Conservatory Theatre. (The stints with the rodeo and as a mountain man came in between.)

At A.C.T., Marty began stage combat classes with J. Stephen White.

Marty brought hands-on fight experience to his stage combat training. "I was a Chicago street kid. I grew up in a tough neighborhood and I got beat up regularly. Then I found I could do the same stuff non-violently. And not get hurt!"

Besides real-life brawling, Marty had

a wealth of physical training prior to his stage combat training: boxing, wrestling, football, competitive fencing at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, and Tae-Kwon-Do. "I took Tae-Kwon-Do for eight years. Now I take Akito. You know, it's the old man thing. Akito is for guys who are tired of being kicked in the face; they just want to get out of the way."

Stage combat was love-at-first-thrust. "This is something I do because I love it. It's more than a hobby—it belongs in the category of soul growth. It's an acting skill. When I returned to

A.C.T. as a teacher, I'd ask my acting students, 'Is that line a parry or a thrust?' "

Marty got in plenty of swordplay in when he played the Sheriff of Nottingham at the Valley Institute of Theatre Arts in California. "I used to fall down two flights of stairs, eight shows a week. I didn't get hurt because I had the right padding and staged the fall for *those stairs.*"

The experience was valuable later when Marty was called in on *Sleuth* with Stacy Keach and Maxwell Caulfield. "I taught Max how to fall down those stairs wearing 29-inch clown shoes."

On the west coast, Marty worked with J.R. Beardsley and Richard Lane at Touché Unlimited, then attended his first SAFD National Stage Combat Workshop in Memphis in '88.

In 1990 Marty moved to New York to focus on acting. "In San Francisco, I was falling more and more out of acting. People were constantly hiring me to choreograph. I staged fights for the San Francisco Opera, ACT, Berkeley Rep., a couple of movies, stuntwork for television." Increasingly, Marty felt pigeonholed as a "fight guy" and decided to change coasts and images.

*"the first job I got  
—right out of the chute—  
was choreographing  
... it scared me."*

"I moved to New York and the first job I got—right out of the chute—was choreographing *Richard III* for the Public Theatre. It scared me." Although he'd been submitted as an actor, the director offered him the fight direction. Marty had a great time with Denzel Washington as Richard and SAFD member Army Schultz as Richmond, but worried about being seen once more as a "fight guy."

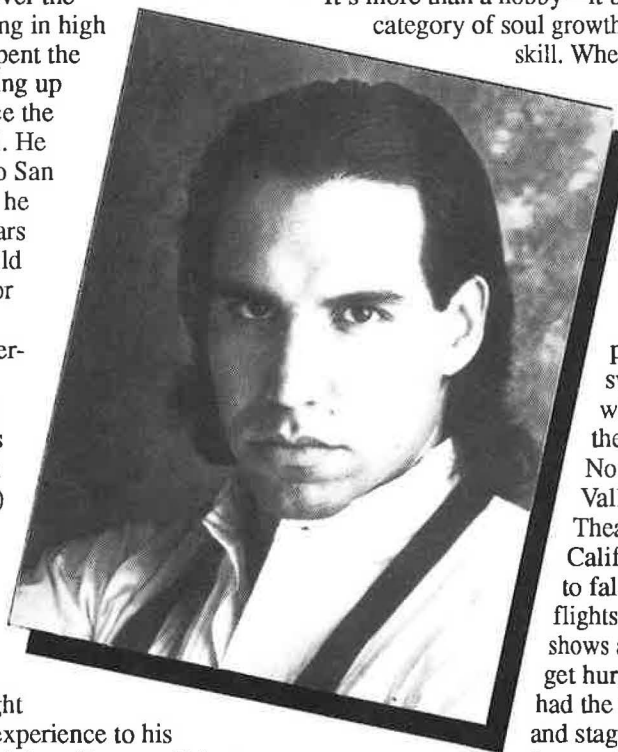
Fortunately for his peace of mind, Marty was immediately hired—as an actor—by the Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo to do *A Flea in Her Ear*.

Then followed a two-month stint on NBC's *Loving*. "I played Francisco Ramirez, dictator of a Latin-American country. He wore Armani suits and was *very* suave and casual about everything. And that's the way he would kill you!" Marty says his fight training was a major help in portraying Ramirez, even though he was never directly involved in violent action. "That menace, the killer instinct you learn, was in everything I did."

More recently Marty played Rudolph in a theatrical adaptation of *Madame Bovary* in New York. "It was great to play a well-bred, well-spoken character. Usually I get cast as a street tough or a drug lord."

Marty draws on a colorful background when he is acting. "Any experience is life-enriching." So stay tuned for further episodes in the life of Martino N. Pistone—actor, swordsman, adventurer.

★ ★ ★



*continued from page 1*

The officers discussed the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America, a new organization whose mission statement is, "To provide a forum for the artistic and managerial leadership whose central activity is the production of Shakespeare's plays; to discuss issues and share methods of work, resources and information; and to act as an advocate for Shakespearean productions and training in the United States."

The SAFD will join the STAA as a non-voting member organization and offer any help or assistance we can.

A home for the Patrick Crean Stage Combat Library is still being sought. A public-access library willing to house and administer the collection is needed. Forward suggestions to J. Allen Suddeth

More specific guidelines were set for scenes to be used in the actor/combatant fight test. Following are the amended SAFD fight test rules and regulations:

Part one of the test is the performance of the test choreography in the context of a scene that is both safe and dramatically effective.

- ★ The scene must establish character and a cause for the fight, as well as demonstrate an appropriate level of emotional commitment to the violence.
- ★ The choice of scene and character should not interfere with the combatant's ability to perform the required techniques in a realistic manner, either for comedic or dramatic affect; but there must be a sense of tension and potential danger in the fight.
- ★ Dialogue within the choreography of the fight should be restricted to lines which enhance and relate to the action, and be kept to a minimum.
- ★ The combatants will perform the test fight at performance speed and with acting beats, actions and objectives carefully worked out.
- ★ Fight test performance is not to exceed seven minutes in length for three weapons. An additional two minutes is allowed for each additional discipline.
- ★ Test material may be performed in any order.
- ★ Candidates for actor/combatant certification in five weapons may elect to split the fights into two separate scenes. Candidates certifying in six weapons must perform their fights in two separate scenes.

The first scene must include rapier/dagger and unarmed and one additional weapon. The second scene will include the additional weapons.

In the past, the SAFD has adjudicated anyone's students. Effective now, anyone wishing to have students adjudicated by the SAFD must first be a member.

*continued to page 4*

**David Engle** is choreographing and performing in *Richard III* this summer in Chicago. Next up for him is directing *Romeo and Juliet* this winter.

Steven Earl Edwards is not only handy with a sword, he also has a busy musical career. Taking a summer break from his doctoral studies, Steve is playing Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* at the Park Playhouse in Albany, NY.

**Charles Conwell** has been promoted to Associate Professor at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He will direct *Macbeth* for the Philadelphia Drama Guild in September.

**Richard Lane** recently choreographed (get set for the list) *Romeo and Juliet*, *MacBeth* (twice), *Orphans*, *Angel City*, *La Finta Simplice*, *Faust*, *Showboat*, *Don Giovanni*, *Otello*, *Romeo and Juliet* (twice) and *The Three Musketeers* at theatres and schools all over the Bay area.

**Mark Ransom Eis** is acting and directing this summer at the Young Writers for the Theatre New Play Festival in Richmond, VA. In August, he will be attending University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill's Professional Actor Training Program.

**Tina Hansen** reports in from Denmark where she has been teaching class at a stunt school. She worked as a trainer/stunt double in a Danish film this past winter, taught a workshop in Sweden this spring and is busily drumming up enthusiasm and support for a fight organization in Scandinavia.

**J. Allen Suddeth** is on the road touting the virtues of the SAFD at the ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education) convention in Seattle.

**Trampas Thompson** is spending his summer working with fight master Chris Villa at the Penn. Renaissance Faire.

**John David Brimmer** is back at the New York Renaissance Faire this summer choreographing the 30something fights contained therein.



Non-Profit  
US Postage  
PAID  
Rockford, IL  
Permit No. 434