

BLACK BELT

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editorial

A True Believer

I first heard about George Dillman in 1981, not long after I was hired as an assistant editor at BLACK BELT. He was the guy in *Ripley's Believe it or Not*, the sensational "Ice Man," the martial artist who smashed huge slabs of ice with his fist. I was schooled very early by my peers to be suspicious of ice breakers. Ice isn't concrete or brick. Anyone can break ice, they told me. "They can put salt in the ice, making it easy to break," they said. "And one time this guy put salt in the ice and it broke apart by itself as he walked up to it. Don't trust an ice breaker."

Then there was Dillman's busy publicity department. Hardly a week went by when he didn't send us a news release, photos of him with Bruce Lee, Muhammad Ali or some other great fighter, news clippings about him from local papers, and letters updating us on his latest whereabouts and how successful his seminars are. Why did he feel such a need to promote himself?

I was later elevated to executive editor at BLACK BELT, and I continued to be wary of Dillman and his martial arts expertise. It soon came to my attention that Dillman was teaching what he claimed were secret pressure-point strikes hidden in the original Okinawan karate forms, something he called *kyusho-jitsu* and *tuite*. He claimed he could knock a man out with a simple touch to these points, and he began giving seminars around the country, advising me periodically on how many individuals he had kayoed.

I was skeptical of the information. How did Dillman just happen to discover these "secret" techniques? Who were the knockout victims, his students? Wasn't this just another in a long line of publicity stunts by the man?

But then martial artists whose opinions I respect began to inform me that what Dillman is doing is truly legitimate—and incredible. People like BLACK BELT Hall of Fame members Wally Jay and Remy Presas began aligning themselves with Dillman, conducting group seminars with him. Then some of my best writers told me how they had witnessed a Dillman seminar, and how impressed they were with what they saw. He hadn't just knocked out his own students; he had knocked out some of my writers' friends, and with just a slight slap of his hand. Hmm, maybe there was something to this Dillman guy after all. Maybe he was legitimate. Maybe he *did* know something.

So I invited him to visit our offices for a photo session. When he arrived, he seemed quite concerned with convincing any doubting Thomases that his abilities were for real. I would shuffle a safe distance away while we talked, but he was like an octopus, grabbing my arms, demonstrating various locks, identifying specific pressure points, and explaining his theories. There was no escaping him.

My assistant was the first to go, a victim of a strike just above the chin. Then Dillman dazed the photographer with a similar blow. He dropped the publisher next. He even politely asked our 60-year-old receptionist if she would like to be knocked out. I knew my time would come, and Dillman knew he had to show me to make a believer of me. And he did.

Dillman explained that it took strikes to three pressure points to knock a person out, and he said he would strike—moderately—just two, most likely producing a stunning effect similar to that experienced by his three previous victims. I braced for the blow, and it came—a slight jolt to the chin region. Suddenly I felt an electric current surge through my body. Everything grew dark for a split second, then I was back. Some sort of shock wave had coursed my body, but I was OK. I hadn't fallen.

Yet, *something* had obviously happened—something I had never before experienced. I had definitely been dazed for a moment by that slight blow.

For once, Dillman had let his art do his talking for him. It told me more about him than any news release could ever do.

—Jim Coleman,
Executive Editor