

Review of ARNIS 1

This DVD covering “ARNIS 1” is truly a meat and potatoes presentation of Pilipino stick fighting. For someone wishing to hear and see some of the technical aspects of the stick itself will be disappointed. Personally I’m not a person who needs to have those particulars up front as I’m looking for the tactical combat aspects of what’s being presented. I can always find the other details elsewhere.

What I found interesting in this presentation was just the few brief comments up front by Master Brusso about the background of ARNIS itself – no lengthy presentation up front. If one listens, the history lesson comes in small bite size servings throughout the DVD without really pointing it out as such. The real desert, in the form of a history lesson, comes at the conclusion of the DVD where by Master Brusso expands on the history of ARNIS.

There are as many ARNIS “Instructors” with their version of the art as there are religions in the world. I have watched a great many DVD’s with some of what I call the ‘Revisionist Guru’s” who claim that one does not need to learn any more than perhaps six or seven strikes and blocks with the stick – fewer the better. Well, it certainly makes the “system” much easier to learn for sure! Question: But, does it fully equip the student to truthfully defend themselves with a true arsenal of blocks and strikes? Probably not! Let me be even bolder here – NO!

In the “ARNIS 1” DVD you are going to find thirteen strikes and thirteen blocks thoroughly demonstrated (multiple times) from the front, rear, close up and some slow motion views of the techniques presented as well as how to properly step with the technique – broken down extremely well. What I liked and most often time is never mentioned is the fact that the movement with the ARNIS stick is in fact the movement and use of the machete in a combat scenario. Truth is, you are learning to use the machete as well. Connecting the weapons!

The ARNIS student I believe will find an entirely different approach to this art. Master Brusso spends time explaining the details of what a “Check Move” and “The “V” are. He further covers the important drill aspects of “Quatro – Canto” (Four Corners) as well as the “Dobley Baston (Double Sticks).

Couple of questions to those reading this review: Would you edit out your mistakes of a professionally produced DVD on the art of ARNIS? If not, would you be bold enough to critique yourself and point out your own errors and leave it all in? Well, Master Brusso didn't edit anything and yes, he critiqued his own mistakes. We are not infallible human beings and this certainly demonstrates the character of the man and sets him apart from the average Sensei.

In my opinion, this is the DVD to consider if you are looking to begin your journey into the art of ARNIS.