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Please feel free to duplicate and share this tape with anyone.

The first section is the unedited recording of the visit to Mike Sigman , Saturday March 4th 2000 in Atlanta. The sound is bad. And towards the end there are three "dropouts " caused by camera malfunction. Immediately following is tape shot by Alexei Ovtchinnikov of the pushing etc.. Though he missed the first few seconds ,he taped the seconds that are missing from tape.

Present from the "de Thouars Gang" are Don Miller, Willem de Thouars, Alexei Ovtchinikov, Alex Korenfeld, David Dunn, and myself. Alexei, Alex and David may all be contacted through Alexei's email address : achentajji@mindspring.com . Don can be contacted through his website at : www.mastadonproductions.com Willem or myself may be reached through www.kuntaosilatdethouars.com .

The second section of the tape is of interest only to those who read rec. martial arts. It is Willem recorded January 14th, 1999 discussing his relationship or lack thereof to Chas Clements and Steve Gartin. He makes references to Roberto Torres as Bob had recently been much maligned by Clements and Gartin. Uncle makes references to Gartin's belief system which includes hating Cops, the government and a big dose of anti-semitism. I believe Uncle is clear on these points but please do not be offended, as he is referring to Gartins beliefs and not his own.

If you have any questions about any of this material or would like information on Uncles art or his seminar schedule please e-mail me and I would be happy to help.

Roger Brockman
brockmn@gateway.net

This is to Mike Sigman, and everyone else who has been following the debate over our encounter in Atlanta:

1. I don't own a computer. I have no intentions of getting into a protracted debate about who said what or did what and why. I also do not believe in violence as a solution to problems of communication or differences of opinion. I do, however, believe strongly in self defense, and in acting forcefully to deter aggression and disinformation. Therefore I must, regrettably begin by saying that Mike Sigman is a liar, a manipulator, a deliberate distorter of facts, and no authority on Tai Chi. I do not say this out of any personal animosity, but rather from an accumulation of facts, which I will try to present to you briefly here. He has infected the Tai Chi community with a degree of antagonism and "negative campaigning" that never existed before he came along, and is not being practiced by anyone else to the degree of pathology he represents.

2. I will very briefly explain my Tai Chi and martial arts background, so you will understand that Mike's label of my "so-called Tai Chi" is not only grossly insulting, but spurious: I have studied Tai Chi since 1970, first with Lian Tung Tsai (TT Liang) from 1970-80, and since then with Chern Chyu-Kuan of Taiwan, William CC Chen in New York, Yu Chen Hsiang, Tao Ping-Siang (Dr. Tao), and others. Neither these masters, nor any of a long list of other teachers and masters with whom I have trained, practiced, or "crossed hands" think that my Tai Chi is "muscular bullshit". In addition to the Tai Chi, I have practiced Yi Chuan since 1986, Kuntao-Silat since 1994, and a number of other chi kung and martial systems. I do not consider myself a master, but rather a serious student and teacher of the arts, which are to me ways of personal growth and healing as well as empowerment and martial prowess. To have this uninformed, unskilled idiot use a phrase like my "so-called Tai Chi" is incredible. Ask any of the thousands of people I have taught in the past decade—most of them already experienced Tai Chi players—what they think of my Tai Chi, not a self-serving, self-appointed "authority" like MS.

3. Just for one example of Mike's lies, he posted a few years ago the story that Ren Guang Yi, an excellent Chen style player whom I defeated twice in major US push hands tournaments in 1991, after one of the tournaments in informal play, unhindered by the restrictive American rules, threw me around like a baby. I swear to you all that this event never occurred. I have great respect for Ren's abilities, and would love to compare techniques and abilities outside of the tournament arena, but we never have. Mike's putting this story out as fact is a clear example of his efforts to promote truth, justice, and the Tai Chi way. Here's another: he posted recently that Mario Napoli was just "some soccer player" whom Don Miller and his friends trained in push hands, who managed to win a few tournaments, which we gloated over. Another totally inaccurate story: Mario Napoli is a serious Tai Chi student, the top disciple of the late Stanley Israel, who was one of Cheng Man Ching's senior students, reknowned for his root and pushing hands. Mario never studied with me, although he is a good friend and we have trained a few times together and laughed a lot. Mario didn't just win a few minor tournaments—he's won Taste of China many times, and last year won the Heavyweight division at the Chia Yi Cup in Taiwan, one of the most prestigious international tournaments, beating the Taiwanese champion on the way to his victory. Mike's version of reality is skewed so far that we must ascribe deliberate distortion.

4. On to Atlanta. My Kuntao-Silat teacher Willem de Thouars and I were giving a seminar in Atlanta the same weekend as MS, and I thought it an opportune time to speak to Mike about some of his offensive and inaccurate public renderings, as well as to see what kind of power the Great Authority had, he who promotes himself incessantly as the expert in all matters internal, denigrates others whom he has never even seen, and claims to have the "real" method of "real Tai Chi" power. I did not, I repeat, did not go to demonstrate my abilities, to start a fight, or to aggrandize myself at Mike's expense. We were told there would be a free-play push hands session after his workshop and it seemed like an easy time to go. The video cameras, I must confess, were my idea, because I know how Mike likes to distort facts and rewrite history, and I wanted to deny him that capability.

5. Here's what happened: Mike wanted to see my fajing, I popped a quick one off on the air, he wanted to see more, I said, "let's see yours", he did a kind of sluggish karate-style downward block while moving backwards (both these are viewable on the tape: judge for yourselves, people). Then we pushed for about three minutes. I will narrate only the first ten seconds or so of the encounter, to give a flavor of how it went: I began with a short pulse (okay, not strictly fajing) which threw Master Sigman back a full 6-8 feet. Watch it in slow motion—he takes two full steps backward to recover his balance. This from a little "muscle bullshit" arm shove? Next, MS attacks with a lunging, leaning shoulder stroke, which DM absorbs by withdrawing the rear foot slightly and turning the waist. Frustrated, Sigman grabs Miller's front arm with both hands and yanks downward (watch in slow motion, it's tense and amateurish). Miller steps with the pull to the left outside angle, then turns to the right and with his rear hand projects through Sigman, uprooting him and again sending him at least six feet away before he **stops** travelling. I defy anyone to examine this first few seconds and tell me that Sigman is demonstrating "real" Tai Chi and I am not. The remainder of the session includes some interesting stuff, a few sloppy moves on my part (in some measure due to the fact that Mike's a lot taller than I and was trying to keep me at (his) arms' length, and my footwork was deficient due to a hip injury, so I on occasion did lean a bit to reach him), and not one occasion where Sigman shows "real Tai Chi"—internal power projected with balance, ease, root, and calmness. Judge my "performance" as you will, I don't really care—but see how weak, ineffectual, and clumsy your vaunted Authority is! He does not possess, in my evaluation, either root nor uprooting nor neutralization capabilities, has zero sensitivity, and, worst of all from my standpoint, no sung, no downward release of tension, which must be present to balance one's peng.

6. The fajing question: I don't claim to know all that much about fajing, and I certainly don't feel anywhere near satisfied with my level of ability in it, but it's something I work on a fair amount lately and I will share just a few thoughts: First, fajing must occur over an extremely short span of time—in fact, 0.5 second or less, in order to produce its optimal effect, which is a "shock" response of the receiver's body, the result of the jing getting in "under the radar" of the normal perceptual threshold/response time. Anything longer is not fajing (although there are some moves that start with a flow or long power and end in a fajing). Second, the movement of the body must be minimal, as fajing is an explosive energy-discharge, not simply fast body-mechanics. If the body moves more than a few inches, it ain't fj. Frequently, all that you'll see is a hand (or hands) turning from palm in to palm out; or a fist closing; or an elbow moving forward a few inches; but the power of the whole body is focused in this small gesture. Look at

Mike's "demo" move at the start, and any of his attempt during tuishou: he just doesn't have it all. But hey, what do I know?

7. Where do we go from here? For starters, Mike, I challenge you to a public contest of skills, which could be: full-contact fighting, no gloves; push hands, any rules you like; giving and receiving fajing blows to the body; teaching a class in rooting, yielding, fajing, pushing, or any other Tai Chi skill; Tai Chi weapons sparring; a non-Internet debate on any of these matters, hopefully without vitriol. Again, I'm not out to prove that I'm the greatest at anything, I'm not: only that Mike ain't what he says he is, and I'm not what he says I am. Come to think of it, I've got an even better, and more constructive idea: let's teach a seminar together, each instructing half the time, in rooting, fajing, uprooting, etc., and let the participants judge what our respective merits are, what our similarities and differences are, and make their own choices, syntheses, or whatever. I'm sure we'd draw a crowd and who knows, it might be fun. After all, Tai Chi is a martial art, but it's ultimate goal is harmony, the integration of seeming opposites—earth and sky, hard and soft, yin and yang—why not Miller and Sigman? There's a challenge worthy of this beautiful and profound art, man: can you and I find a way to reach harmony with one another, and better the art for all? That would be real Tai Chi.

8. And yes, if that's the Big Question, then I will address it. To me, Tai Chi is much bigger and more profound than a mere series of movements, or martial techniques, or jings (fa and others). It is an art of living, which includes fighting and healing, separating and combining, manifesting energy and attunement with nature, and the Tao. If you've got perfect fajing but come home and scream at the kids or kick the cat, you have no Tai Chi. One of my great teachers, William CC Chen, told me a few years ago, "After practicing for fifty years I really don't know what Tai Chi is. It's not this form or that movement, but anything can be Tai Chi. Tai Chi is doing anything well." Or, as the Native Americans would say, who owns the sky?

In the spirit of the smile of my infant son,

Don Miller

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