

I SHOULD BE DEAD — MIKE JONES

My desire to protect myself turned into an adrenaline rush. My parents enrolled me in karate lessons at the age of 11. If I was allowed to go 55 mph, I'd want to go 70 mph. I learned how to kick and throw a punch, but I wanted more. My karate teacher's cousin did judo. I found out it involved throwing, grappling, falls, and flips. This was great; I wanted even more! Now I get to hit back and throw people. This was right up my alley. I used to whisper in the ear of people that I would be fighting, "if that's all you've got, don't bother coming out next round," just to try to intimidate them. Then, the next round started, and I'd get hit so hard, I'd pray I would pass out so I wouldn't get hit again. I needed more practice! Three days a week, I started to train in karate, judo, and now boxing for the next several years.

Eventually, I loved hitting and being hit. I was never satisfied with the status quo. I had to be the best, and my students had to be the best. I did develop an attitude of arrogance. I became a little too confident and had to get back to who I really was and my humble beginnings. I was expected to win, and the pressure was on...

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