



JIM KELLY:

“I Don’t Want To Be Another Bruce Lee”

Hollywood — Despite the freezing temperatures of the Malibu mountain location, Jim Kelly's face was shining with perspiration. His muscles flexed as he climbed a twelve-foot high chain-link fence. In the background he could hear the whirr of the movie cameras. Jim had already practiced the climb about fifteen times and then they'd gotten the cameras into position and started to climb. It took six takes before director Gordon Parks, Jr. announced that they had a "take".

Jim returned to the cameras with a smile on his face.

"You must be about to wear out," said one of the members of the crew.

Jim smiled. "Naw," he said, "I'm just getting warmed up!"

Although he's appeared in some fine films, Jim Kelly is still thought of as a relative newcomer to Hollywood and the movies. That's alright with him, since he knows he can prove himself anytime he has to. The former high school honor student and all-star athlete who went on to win the International Middleweight

Karate Championship, Kelly is one of those super people you read about but find hard to believe exists in real life.

In fact, "Three The Hard Way" is only Jim Kelly's third movie. It started when he moved to Los Angeles and got a chance to appear in the film "Enter The Dragon" with the late Bruce Lee. Then he played the title role in "Black Belt Jones."

In "Three The Hard Way," Jim continues to combine his acting ability with his karate, in fact he plays the owner of a successful karate school.

Jim doesn't pretend to be a fortune teller but he does determine what he intends for his future and proceeds to make it happen. He tells of running through the mountains of Kentucky during a training period and deciding that he would be making movies using his talent at karate. This was all before martial arts films were popular and the notion was an original one. He claims that he attended his first International Karate Championship as an observer and decided on the spot that one year hence he would return and win the championship,

which he did! This feat wouldn't seem astonishing except for the fact that, according to Jim, it was almost impossible for a black to win a championship at that time.

"Karate tournaments are a bunch of bull," Jim says, "They're all politics. A handful of non-blacks controlling the tournaments — cliques — judges dominated by the cliques. I won the championship because of my strong attitude. I just had to be so much better than the others that I couldn't be stopped. My attitude made the difference."

Today, Jim is flooded with scripts and offers but he's readying himself for non-karate films. Having studied acting in classes with Lee Strasberg and Estelle Harmon, he's now shopping for a private instructor.

"I don't want to be another Bruce Lee," Jim says, "I just wanted to show everyone how good I could be in martial arts films and then move on to different roles, which I predict I'll get."

If you doubt this, just keep in mind that Jim Kelly's predictions have a way of coming true.