STEVEN SEAGAL

A DANGEROUS MAN

DON'T MESS WITH THIS OUT-SPOKEN MOVIE STAR, MARTIAL ARTIST AND MUSICIAN.

FOCUSED, INTENSE AND READY FOR ACTION, Steven Seagal steps into the dimly lit room. He squints suspiciously at the two questionable characters sitting on the couch. One is armed with a camera, the other a microphone. The larger-than-life (he's 6-foot-6 but appears taller) martial arts master-turned-Hollywood action hero approaches. In his signature serious-as-a-heart-attack tone he thunders, "I'm ready. Are you?"

Classic Steven Seagal, but this isn't a scene from one of his movies, which include *Hard to Kill*, *Under Siege* and *A Dangerous Man*. The actor has granted us an exclusive, uncensored interview at his lavishly decorated California ranch house. (Think five-star Chinese restaurant meets cowboy honky-tonk.) Pulling no punches, he discusses everything from martial arts and his female costars to crime-fighting, actor Jean-Claude Van Damme and trying to "make a difference in the world."

HUSTLER: Of all your films, what sets A *Dangerous Man* apart?

STEVEN SEAGAL: We had great fighters and pretty good Chinese stuntmen. It was written and directed by Keoni Waxman, and he did a very good job. You combine a pretty good director and some great actors and some great fighters, and that's what sets it apart.

How do you prepare for a film?

It's different with every film. The preparation is going to depend on what you're doing in it. There was a lot of karate in this one, so we did a lot of advance planning for the fight choreography. We had some trouble though with the camera crew because in some scenes I would kick some guy so fast, he would go flying across the room, and the camera would miss it. They weren't used to that action.

Your character in *A Dangerous Man* does time for a crime he didn't commit. Do you think a lot of wrongfully accused people are behind bars?

Yeah, I do. As you know, in real life I'm a police officer, and I try to believe in our judicial system. I'm really out there to try to protect the little guy, the normal people— trying to get the bad guys off the street. But sometimes, let's face it, in the judicial system mistakes happen.

In the movie you tell some bad dudes that you're going to have to "fuck them up ugly." Have you ever had to "fuck someone up ugly" in real life?

PHOTOS BY LADI VON JANSKY

Yes, I have, but I would never talk about that. Let me put it this way: I am a warrior. If you have a choice, it's always great to walk away. But if I don't have a choice and someone crosses the line, it gets ugly.

Are the choreography and fighting more important to you than the script?

It's very important to me because I'm a martial artist and martial arts teacher. But without a good story, no matter how great the martial arts are, you're screwed. (*Laughs.*) Can you use profanity in this magazine?

Yes, it's HUSTLER Magazine.

Since they show vaginas, I guess anything goes. Okay.

You can curse. Say what you want. You can even show us *your* vagina.

I could show maybe someone else's vagina. (*Seagal points to the makeup girl and his female publicist.*) But I don't have one of those. I can guarantee that.

What is your favorite place to make a movie?

In all of my film career I would have to say that Japan is the nicest.

What are the advantages of shooting on location?

With location you get the real thing. You get real gritty, uncontrived and unmanipulated action and performances.

Do you have a say in picking your sexy female costars?

Of course I have a say! I can't even remember half of them. I've worked with actresses that are pretty on the outside but ugly on the inside. Some that are ugly on the outside but pretty on the inside. And some that are ugly all over.

Do you have a favorite movie from your vast body of work?

I really like *Fire Down Below* quite a bit because it dealt with protecting the environment from the corporations that are destroying our planet. It's funny that I was talking about the Kyoto Protocol long before "The Amazing" Al Gore gets a fucking Academy Award and Nobel Peace Prize. I care about the environment but don't care about pimping my own agenda and getting praised.

Music is one of your passions. Does it bother you when people say, "Oh, he's just an actor trying to make music?"

I really don't give a fuck! I've played with the greatest blues masters and legends of our time. They love, respect and praise me. That should mean fucking something. I've shared the stage with Albert Collins, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and B.B. King, and they say I belong there. I played with some of those guys hundreds and hundreds of times. I don't give a fuck if Harold Dick Hymann says, "Oh, Steven Seagal isn't good. He's just an actor." If he knows anything about the guitar and blues, he ain't gonna say that. Unless he's just one of those bitches out there that just want to diss somebody so he can't look like he's got more inches.

Why did you decide to do the reality show *Lawman*?

It was my love for New Orleans. Having been down there most of my life, I felt I needed to bring some awareness to the city, which is still healing, and bring awareness to law enforcement. I've dedicated most of my life to helping the little guy and getting the bad people off the street.

How real is that reality show?

They [the producers] have to be concerned about what is shown because they're worried about lawsuits. So some stuff was cut out of the shows, but it was pretty real.

Does your being a famous actor make it hard for you to be a police officer?

Here's the thing: I've been a cop down there for 20-some-odd years. When you arrest someone for one of the lighter things where we don't have any cause for concern, people have time to look around, and they may say, "Oh, you're Steven Seagal." But on the heavier stuff—when it's the middle of the night, and we come kicking in the door, armed to the teeth with the lights flashing—they don't say anything.

Will there be a second season?

Yeah, looks like 16 or so more episodes.

The perception is you're a very serious person. Do you ever joke around?

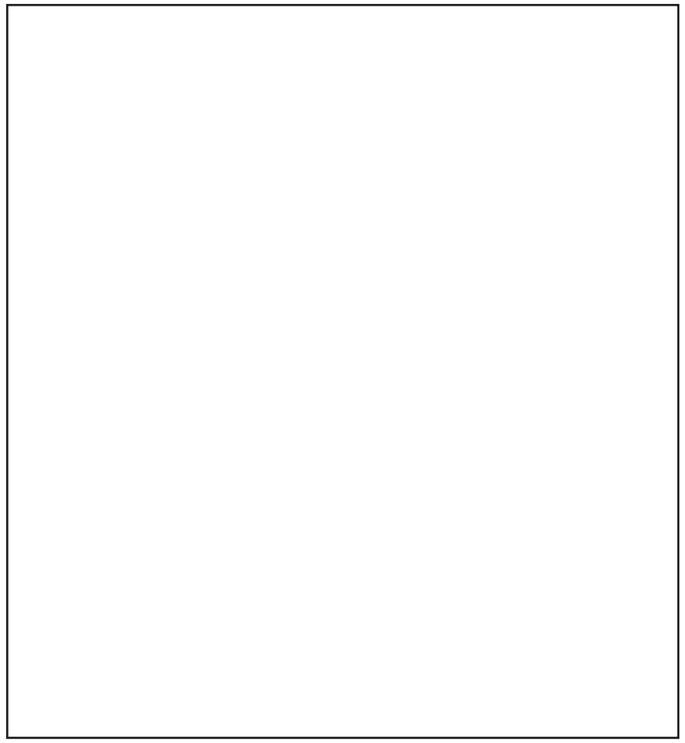
Sure. You get four or five soldiers or cops alone at an all-night stakeout, and the shit we say to each other will make you laugh till you cry. You have to come up with all this shit to pass the time.

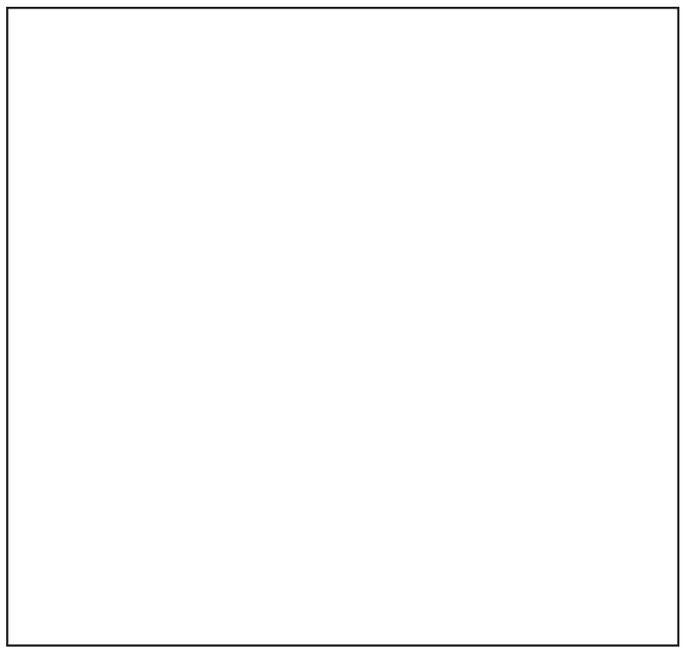
Have you ever had to fight regular guys to prove how tough you are?

Almost never. Most people know that I don't come from Hollywood; I come from the world of martial arts. They respect that.

Do you follow Ultimate Fighting Championship and other MMA events?

Of course! Pound *(continued on page 102)*





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(continued from page 40) for pound, Anderson Silva is kind of my favorite guy.

Are you and actor Jean-Claude Van Damme still feuding?

The guy is no taller than her (*indicating the 4-foot-11 makeup girl*). He never did the martial arts in his life that I know of. Find his teacher for me. Find who he learned whatever he learned from. Whoever says he's trained is a cocksucker and an asshole. I don't really want to say a lot on this, but everybody knows about his problems.

There was this one time where he approached me. He was drooling. foaming at the mouth, and he said something to me. I just said back to him, "When you're sober, if that day ever comes, come and say shit to me. I don't care how small you are or how girlie you are. It won't matter."

I don't know if that's the kind of shit you guys are looking for in this magazine, but it's stupid shit. Everybody knows what he is and who he is. And they know the difference. Come on!

Have you had any encounters with crazy fans?

I'll give you a story without going into some of the more graphic details. There was this one guy who climbed over the gate onto my property. I saw him—mind you, I had my gun on me—and I walked up to him. I put my hand on his shoulder and started walking him down the driveway. I said very calmly, "What you're going to do right now is you're going to leave [my property], and if by chance you do this again, I will have to assume my life and the lives of those I love are in peril. That will force me to protect myself by any means necessary."

I got a phone call later in the day from one of my friends in law enforcement who told me that the individual had a long history of mental illness and had wandered away from a facility. So that night I kind of was doing a perimeter check. Sure enough, I looked up the driveway, and here he comes. But this time he's naked and carrying something long in his arms. In the shadows I thought to myself, *Man, that might be a rifle*. I got out my gun just as these lights came up behind him. It was my friends from the sheriff's office. They started yelling, "Steven, don't shoot him! Don't shoot!" They grabbed the guy, wrestled him to the ground and took him away. I understand after that he got locked up in a place he couldn't wander away from for a long time.

What is the biggest misconception about you?

You know, when I go wherever I go, I enjoy respect. I try to do things that will make a difference in the world. I was concerned about ecology and helping people who are suffering long before a lot of celebrities were thinking about doing anything about it. I just never talked about it, never hired a publicist to hold a press conference. I just do.