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# Fictional Martial Arts

by Michael Surbrook

## Fictional Martial Arts from the Pages of *Ninja Hero*

When I wrote *Ninja Hero* I gave several of the characters new and totally fictional martial arts styles. I now present these martial arts styles in a fully written-up form, complete with histories, full maneuver lists, elements, skills, and special maneuvers. As an added bonus, two completely new styles are included: Flying Dragon Kenjutsu and Verrkess. The former is meant to be reminiscent of the fighting styles often seen in *anime* and video games, while the latter is used by a fantasy-based lizardman race.

### FLYING DRAGON KENJUTSU

It is not known exactly when Flying Dragon style (*Hiryuu-ryu*) was developed. Legend has it being taught to a samurai named Kadosuke by a *tengu* (bird-headed goblin) of the mountains. Another story says Kadosuke learned it from a river dragon, after Kadosuke killed a *mukade* (giant centipede) that had been terrorizing the riverbanks. In keeping with its origins, the style has always been fairly rare and is now largely regarded as mythical, especially since the last known practitioner died sometime in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. However, this hasn't prevented it from becoming a popular choice of fighting art for certain samurai, ronin, and ninja characters in several modern day *anime*, *manga*, and video fighting games.

Flying Dragon kenjutsu places a great deal of emphasis on speed and movement. Stylists are taught to avoid staying in one place, to bring the fight to the enemy, and to strike first if at all possible (this can be simulated by either a high DEX or with Lightning Reflexes). The style also emphasizes practicality and unpredictability in combat. Thus it teaches the art of throwing the sword, as well as various unarmed techniques designed to allow the practitioner to get his opponent's sword away from him.

A Flying Dragon stylist must purchase the Dragon Ascends To Heaven, Dragon Cavorts Among The Clouds, and Dragon Returns To The Sea maneuvers. WF: Thrown Sword and the Barehanded element will be taught to any advanced student (defined as someone who has purchased at least five maneuvers, Fast Draw, and KS: Flying Dragon Kenjutsu on an 11-).

### FLYING DRAGON KENJUTSU NOTES

**Optional Rules:** The Breath Of The Dragon, Dragon Expresses His Displeasure, and Dragon Returns To The Sea strikes take location rolls of 3d6; Dragon Ascends To Heaven, and Leaping The Dragon Gate take 2d6+1. The other maneuvers do not require location rolls.

**Special Abilities:** Flying Dragon has a number of special and very powerful sword techniques. In addition, stylists usually purchase extra inches of Leaping or Running.

1) *Enhanced Running:* This is the ability to attack while moving at great speed.

**Enhanced Running:** Running +6", Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) (18 Active Points); Only to Make a Half Move (-1). Total Cost: 9 points.

2) *Dragon Brandishes His Claws:* A rapid series of slashes, all delivered in the space of mere seconds.

**Dragon Brandishes His Claws:** HKA 1½d6, Autofire (3 shots, +¼) (31 Active Points); OAF (katana, -1). Total Cost: 15 points.

3) *Dragon Emerges From His Pool:* By charging straight ahead, the character can deliver a series of lightning-quick strikes at a large number of foes clustered together. Note: although the Area Of Effect is 10", the character actually moves 12". The first and last inch are not counted as part of the Area Of Effect.

**Dragon Emerges From His Pool:** HKA 1½d6, Area Of Effect (10" Line, +1) (50 Active Points); OAF (katana, -1), Linked (to Running, -¼) (total cost: 22 points) **plus** Running +6" (12 Active Points) (total cost: 12 points). Total Cost: 24 points.

4) *Dragon Sweeps His Tail:* Similar to Dragon Brandishes His Claws, this technique delivers a rapid series of strikes to everyone around the character, instead of just one target.

**Dragon Sweeps His Tail:** HKA 1½d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex, Doubled, +¾), Personal Immunity (+¼) (50 Active Points); OAF (katana, -1). Total Cost: 25 points.

5) *Fury Of The Dragon:* This sword flourish is used to defend the character against multiple foes.

**Fury Of The Dragon:** HKA 1 ½d6, Damage Shield (+½), Continuous (+1) (62 Active Points); OAF (katana, -1), Requires a Successful Attack Roll (-½), Power Stops Working Instantly if the Character is Stunned or Knocked Out (-¼), Not When Grabbed (-¼), No STR Bonus (-½). Total Cost: 18 points.

# Response Force One

by John Ivicsek Jr.

“What the... I’m not sure if you can see this Katie, but Grond just tore that entire bridge support out of the ground! It looks like he’s going to— OH MY GOD! He hit the cable support Katie, one of the main supports for the Governor’s Island tramway! I can see the terrified people being thrown about in the tram car from here! Katie, the destruction here is almost as extreme as it was at the beginning of this swath of doom in midtown at Broadway. As we watch the overmatched but undeniably heroic New York police trying to rescue all of those in danger, we can only ask, where are the supers? Where is PRIMUS?”

— Johnny Rocket’s broadcast on New York One, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998

In the wake of what came to be called “The December Debacle,” a lot of hard questions were asked and there were no ready answers. The public clamored for answers. How could no one have responded to Grond’s rampage for over an hour? How could the resident Super teams, PRIMUS, and UNTIL all have been caught with their pants down? Investigations into the event following in the wake of the announcement calculated that it would take twenty billion dollars to repair the damage. The relatively light final death toll of nineteen New Yorkers did nothing to assuage those cries as all reports indicated that it was sheer luck that kept the number from climbing exponentially. Congress reverberated with indignation and outrage as Senators and Representatives demanded to know why their multi-billion dollar agency had failed and asked quite vocally what good had come of the treaty allowing UNTIL to act on US soil when this was the result.

An internal review of the “December Debacle” concluded that the main issues were response time and inter-service communication. Examining past cases, the investigators discovered that it was, again, sheer luck that nothing like this had happened before. Many cases highlighted the discrepancy of response. In some cases, the units on hand were overkill. A cited example was when two full PRIMUS assault teams, an Iron Guard unit, an UNTIL Peacekeeper detachment and the Champions all showed up to stop Armadillo.

On the other end of the spectrum, the agencies had been lucky when Prince Marus of Atlantis had happened to be nearby on a date and pitched in with a badly outgunned PRIMUS assault team against the War Machine. They managed to hold out until reinforcements arrived, but it was a near disaster in the making.

New policies of communication with UNTIL and any resident super teams were the first obvious result of this investigation. But they were only the harbinger of what was to come. The investigators concluded that what was truly needed was a team capable of responding near instantaneously to reports of trouble. A team whose entire goal was to corral the high threat entities of the world and at least tie them up long enough for reinforcements to arrive. Additionally, they had to be able to limit property damage and civilian casualties as much as possible. In their downtime, they would be responsible for developing the tactics and training needed to take down these threats.

Thus was born Response Force One.

The main goal of this team was to provide initial response to a threat, and to organize the back-up. They were to put down threats to civilians hard, fast, and with minimal collateral damage. Response Force One was not organized for the purposes of publicity, and in fact would be considered an adjunct to the standard PRIMUS bases. The initial budget requests were not encouraging. At a time when Congress was still openly lambasting their multi-billion dollar agency, PRIMUS requested a budget greater than the operating costs for the New York and Millennium City bases combined. Needless to say, this did not go over well.

Response Force One may have remained a dream if two events had not occurred to bring it new life. One was the recruitment of a young mutant codenamed “Portal.” Suddenly the transport budget could be slashed as transportation to most locales was now the matter of an eye blink. The other was finding the legendary Doctor Isaac Hamilton, known to the world as “Doc Grond,” and getting him to agree to help in both the planning and fieldwork.

The more austere budget passed by a narrow margin and work began in earnest in January of 2000.

## AUTHOR’S NOTE

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