

# The Grappling Debate: Ending It Once and For All

by **Keith Pascal**

Your ultimate goal is to stay safe. That's why you study martial arts and self defense.

We aren't talking about sparring or horseplay ... or even sport wrestling.

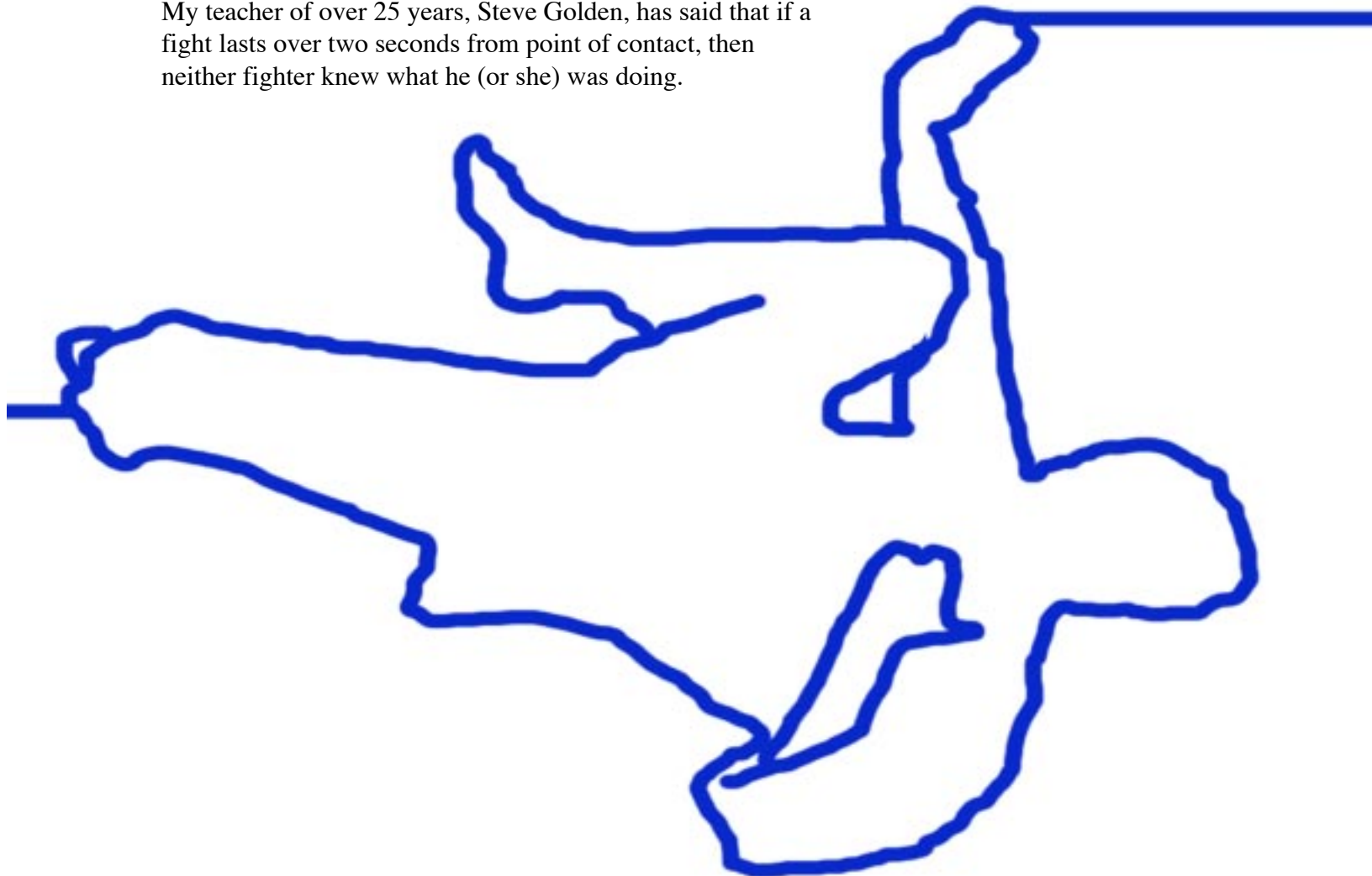
This is a fight to defend yourself.

How long will the fight last? How will it end?

Those are two important questions. You don't want the fight to last. The more time it does, the more stamina you need, and the more potential there is for it to go sour. Bad things could happen.

You want it to end quickly. Efficiently. And if you know what you are doing, then it can be over in an instant.

My teacher of over 25 years, Steve Golden, has said that if a fight lasts over two seconds from point of contact, then neither fighter knew what he (or she) was doing.



**That's an important point. We'll come back to it later.**

## **How Will The Fight End?**

If you believe what you read on the Internet, then most martial artists believe that 99% of fights go to the ground, and the fighters grapple.

Before we answer how the fight will end, whether or not this statement is true, and whether or not you will have to or want to grapple in a fight, let's talk about some general categories of fighters:

First, we can divide our fighters into those who like to grapple and want to go to the ground, and those who avoid grappling, and want to stay on their feet.



Let's talk about the grapplers first — there are three general groups of grapplers — those who go to ground as if they were horsing around with their friends. What they do feels more like horse play than self defense. They never learned how, but they believe they can fight on the ground and they love to tackle in a fight.

The next group of grapplers have studied grappling. They know techniques. They have a sense of the kind of balance it takes to fight from the ground, and to lock their opponents quickly and efficiently. Their only fault is that they treat the fight like a wrestling match. They forget to hit.

Finally, we have grapplers that use grappling like a tool. They are fast and efficient when they go to the ground, and they hit and kick the entire time.

So, if you are an efficient grappler and you take someone to the ground, you know how the fight will finish.

Not so fast ...

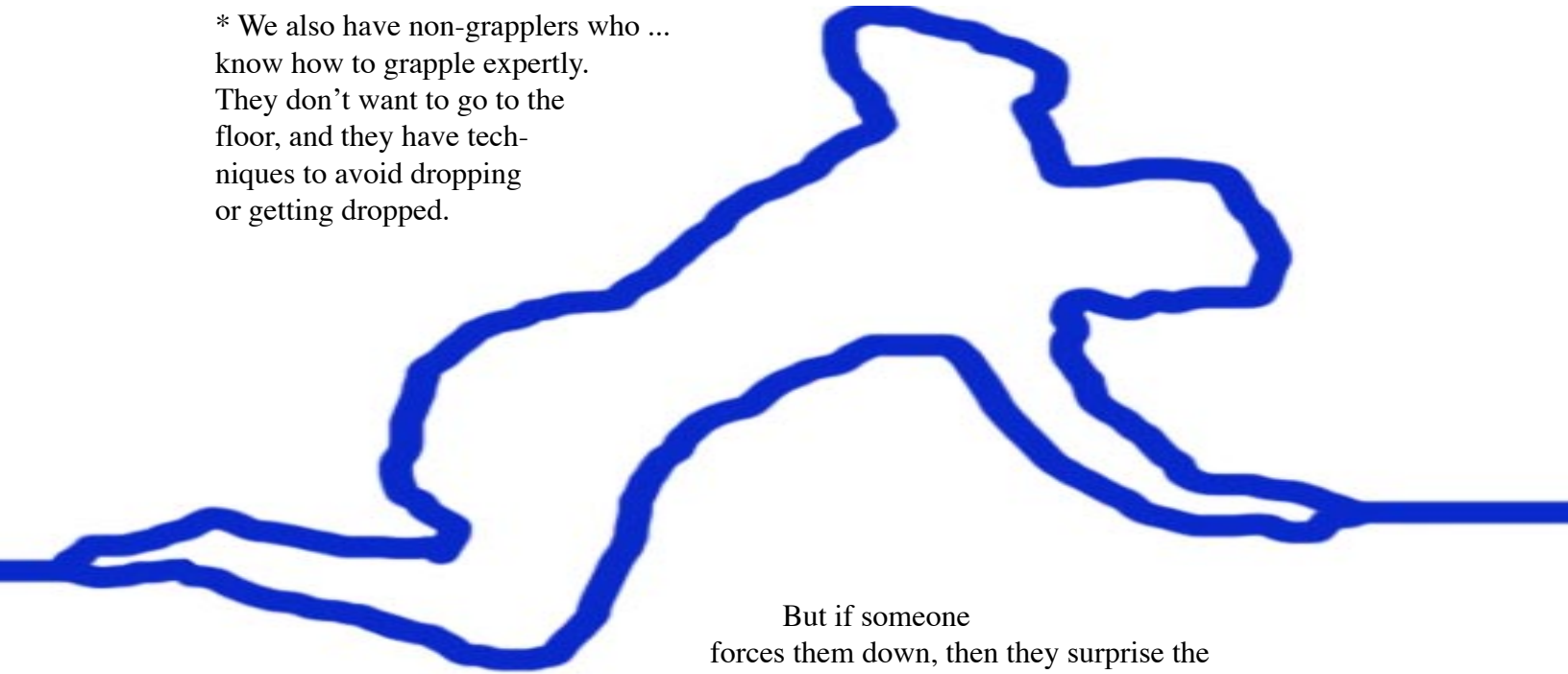
We also have to consider the non-grapplers.

## We have non-grapplers categories to consider:

\* Some martial artists don't grapple and they are taken by surprise when someone grapples them. They go down.

\* Other martial artists don't grapple, but they understand exactly what to do when someone tries to take them down. They have tactics for avoiding going down.

\* We also have non-grapplers who ... know how to grapple expertly. They don't want to go to the floor, and they have techniques to avoid dropping or getting dropped.



But if someone forces them down, then they surprise the attacker by being able to control the “game” on the ground.

## So, Who Would Win?

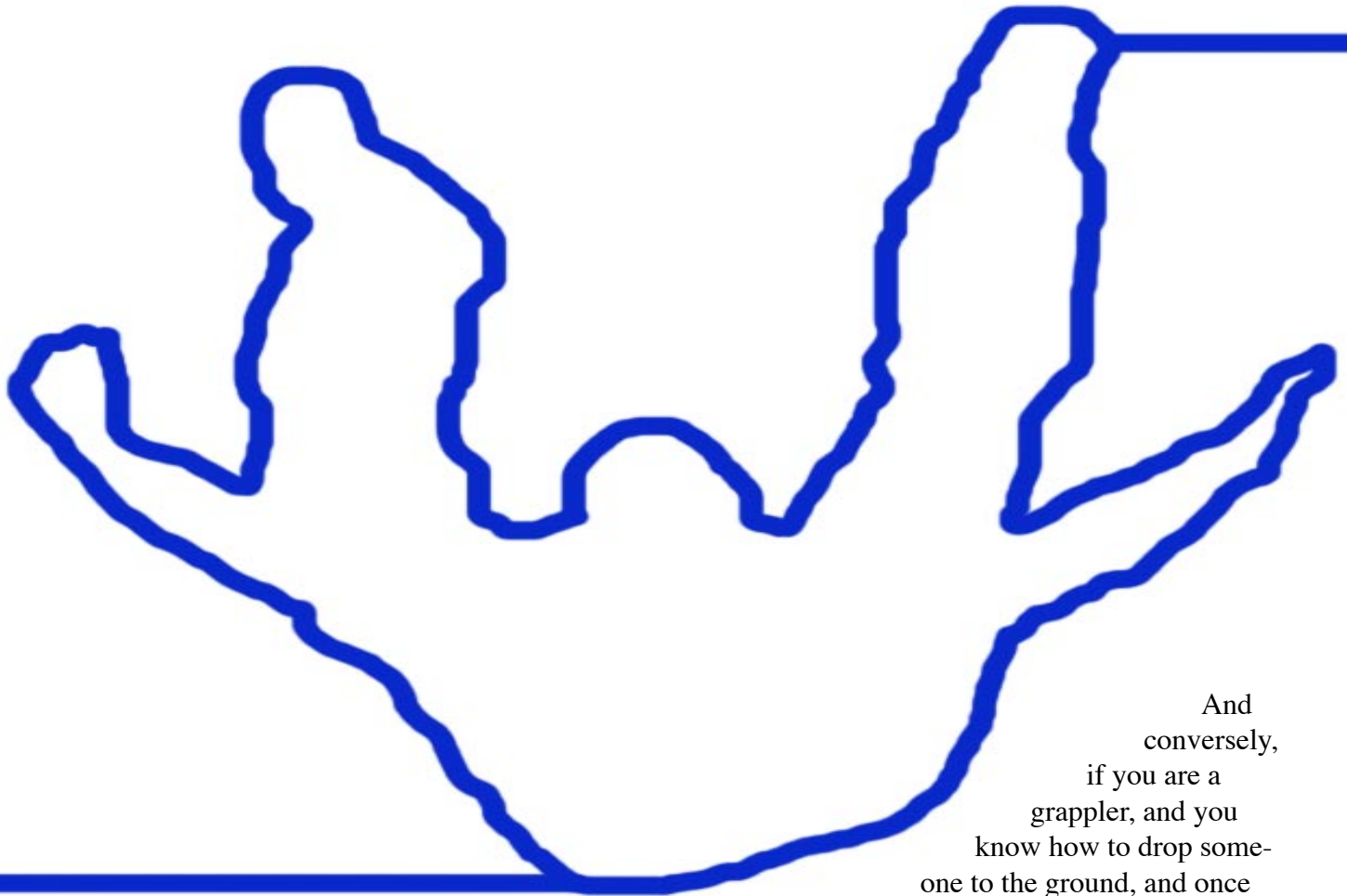
Without avoiding the answer, the person who would win is the one who can end the fight in under 2 seconds from point of contact.

Is your martial arts style serving you?

If you don't want to go to the ground in a fight, and you successfully avoid grappling and dropping, great. That's what you want. And if, from a standing position, you can control the fight — end it in under two seconds — even better.

Note: In this ebooklet, we are not discussing dropping on someone and locking your attacker after you have taken control. We are concerned with grappling mid-fight. For controls, read [Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert](#).

On the other hand, if you are a non-grappler, and you find yourself constantly on the ground, struggling to survive, then your particular martial art isn't doing what it's supposed to be doing for you.



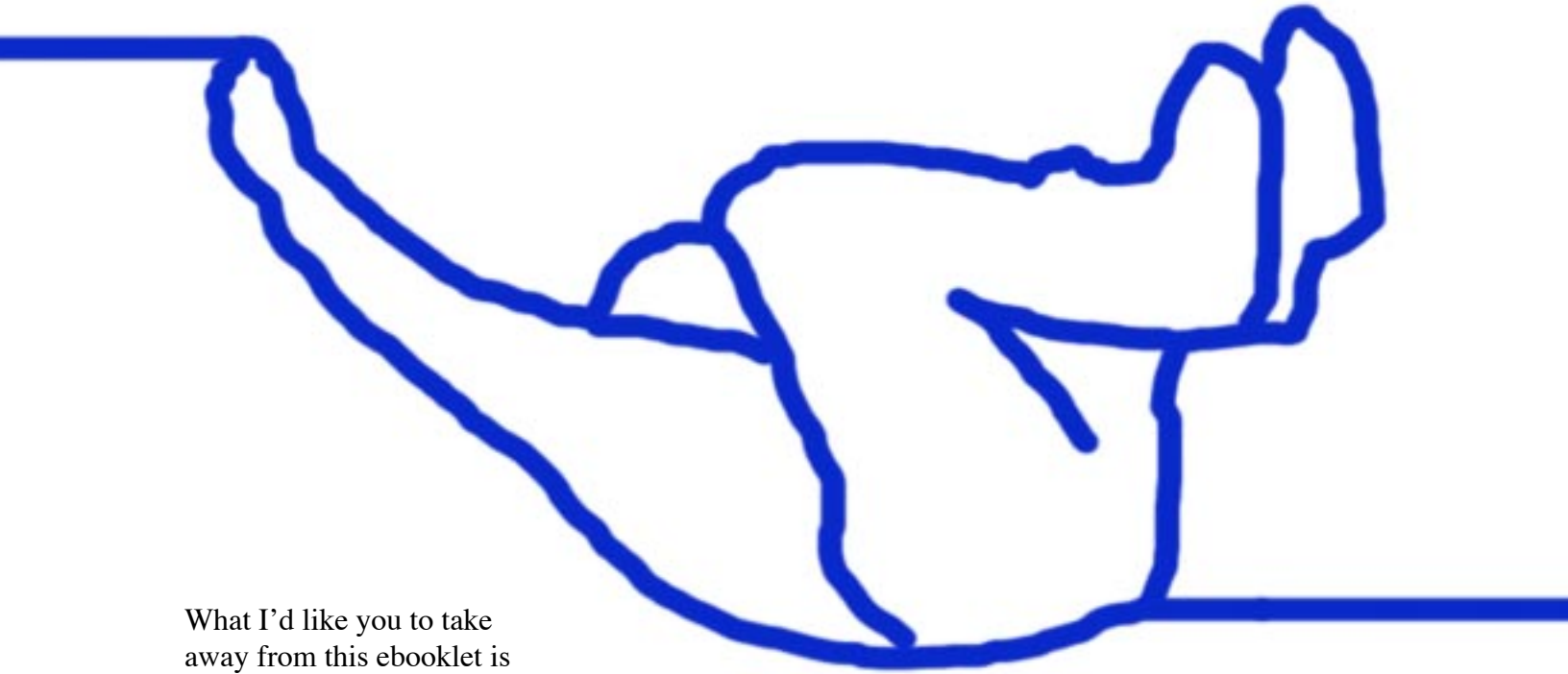
And  
conversely,  
if you are a  
grappler, and you  
know how to drop some-  
one to the ground, and once  
there, you have command of the

situation, then bravo for your martial art. You know where you want to be. You get the person there, and you know what to do, in order to efficiently and quickly end the fight, once you are down.

But if you are a grappler, who tries to drop someone, and you both go down in a tangle, with both clawing and scraping and trying for a hold of some type — then you aren't a very efficient grappler.

You aren't ending the fight in less than two seconds from point of contact. You aren't controlling the situation. The grapple isn't serving you.

## Spewing Out the “99% of The Fights End in a Grapple” Phrase Says A Lot About You



What I'd like you to take away from this ebooklet is knowing more about your own personal fighting style.

Decide which category you'd like to fit into. Will you be a grappler? Will you work both styles of fighting? Is it time to learn more ways to avoid getting dropped? Maybe you should find a grappler to train you?

Remember your ultimate goal is to stay safe. Hey, if I could run away, I would.

If I have to stay and fight, will I be able to end it quickly and efficiently? (Can I poke his eyes out on the first or second move, for example?)

And do you remember how so many claim that 99% of the fights end on the ground in a grapple?

Well, that says a lot about you?

If you claim the 99% statistic, and you love going to the ground, because you end the fight efficiently and quickly, then you are accomplishing your goal.

Unfortunately, most people who throw around this statistic struggle on the ground:

- \* If you are someone who tackles in a fight, but then tangles forever on the ground, then you are not mastering your art.
- \* If you are someone who doesn't want to go to the ground, yet you get tackled every time or go down in a scuffle, then you "really" aren't using your art proficiently.
- \* And if you avoid going to the ground but never seem to control the fight upright, then maybe you could learn to fight more effectively from the ground, because what you are doing isn't working.

### **Are You Ready to Become a Better Martial Artist?**

If we want to improve as martial artists, make a bigger than normal leap, then we have to examine our own weaknesses.

Wouldn't you agree?

This ebooklet discusses several areas of specialization in the martial arts. Of course, I would like to say that you'll learn it all — ground fighting, and fighting while standing. Avoiding going to the ground and forcing people down who want to make it a "high kick" competition. Who knows? Maybe someday you will learn it all.

For now, you need to pick something to work on:

Should you find exercises for avoiding going to the ground? Do you want to become an expert at staying upright?

Maybe you'd prefer to become an expert ground fighter? If so, remember to look for that which is really efficient. Being on the ground is no excuse for extending the length of the fight. You can still be an efficient fighter — hitter, kicker, joint locker.

Do you need ways to learn to drop someone who doesn't want to go down?

The point is to find what you need to work on when discussing all aspects of grappling. Of course, you'll have to do beyond this report.

### **Let's End the Debate Once and For All**

So, do almost all fights end on the ground?

It's a great debate — do they, or don't they?

And the answer is ...

All fights end on the ground when you are a competent grappler and you want them to. And fights never end on the ground, when you specifically avoid getting dropped.

Anything less means that you aren't yet mastering your art.

Remember when I said that if you can't end a fight in under two seconds from point of contact, then you don't know what your doing, and neither does your opponent?

That should translate into some sound advice ...

Never get into a fight that you know you can't win in under two seconds.

And if you don't know for sure, then my advice is to avoid the fight ... which is pretty sound advice anyway.

Being more secure about whether you'll be standing or grappling in a fight will give you an edge. If you have to defend yourself, I hope that edge is enough.

### **About the Author**

Keith Pascal is a full-time martial arts author who prefers fighting on his feet. Why? Because if he's standing, he can always run away.

Remember, it's all about staying safe. For more articles on martial arts by Keith Pascal, join Martial Arts Mastery  
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