

Meeting “The Lizard”

During this time Ben introduced me to Lucio Rodrigues also known as “Largarto”. Largarto translates as Lizard, a nickname earned I believe by Lucio's ability to use his feet almost like hands whilst grappling, once you've placed eyes on his feet you'll understand why they are so effective.

[/lucio-rodrigues-lagarto](#)

Lucio took me under his wing whilst in Brazil, he would take me to his morning physical training sessions at a place across Rio, we'd go eat then head to Gracie Barra for Jiu Jitsu training. It was a great time.

I was staying in an apartment block on Avenue De Pepe which ran parallel to the Barra Tijuca beach front.



To a young lad the beaches of Rio were an experience in themselves.



The beach was literally 20 yards in front of the building.

On a night I would leave the balcony doors open and fall asleep to the sounds of the ocean and the occasional dog barking.

Lucio would collect me from the apartments. We would then careen through Rio to the small gym where the training would take place.

Lucio's driving was terrifying.

It was even worse when Jerry was present and I was crammed into the back of the car.

It's like he was hardly paying attention.

The residents of Rio aren't known for their polite driving skills, road signs and rights of way are treated as mere suggestions.

Lucio and Jerry would have these fast paced conversations in Portuguese, with driving whilst being secondary was still fast paced.

The coach, who's name I've unfortunately forgotten, asked me what I wanted to train, strength, power or endurance?

My main reference point for training up to now had been the hard, train until you vomit, MuayThai style of Paul Hamilton.

In my ignorance I said, "I'll do what Largarto does" (Largarto at the time was gearing up for international competitions ...)

What followed was an eye watering, nausea inducing experience starting with a warm up of some [Ginastica Natural](#), followed by a mix plyometrics, power plate training, isometric holds & lifts.

After the first session I didn't stop aching until I left Brazil.

Post training, Largarto took me to his family home. A modest place in a relatively poor part of Rio, up the coast from Barra.

His family treated me like one of their own, it was a humbling experience.

After we'd eaten, we sat in Lucio's bedroom watching TV.

I was shattered, I could barely keep my eyes open but thinking it rude to be invited into this man's home and fall asleep, I endeavoured to stay awake.

After a little while I heard snoring, I looked over to see Largarto flat out asleep . I promptly closed my eyes and fell asleep.

I was woken by noise coming from the kitchen, Largarto was up and preparing for the next training session.

It was during this time that Largarto told me why put so much pressure on himself to become a world champion at BJJ. He was pushing himself so he could one day provide a better life for all his family.

Jiu Jitsu had given him, like so many others before and after, a path to a better life.

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