



Episode 297 – Cobra Kai | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey everybody thanks for coming by. Guess what? This is [whistlekickmartialartsradio](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). This is episode 297 and today you will get not one but two episodes as we talk about the television sensation I think we can call it; cobra Kai hang on just a moment I'll tell you exactly what I mean. If you're new to the show you may not recognize my voice, I'm Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for the show the founder over at [whistlekick](http://whistlekick.com). You find us at whistlekick.com, you can find the show at show@whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and we bring you two episodes every week, an interview on Monday, we bring your topic show on Thursday all because I love martial arts and hopefully you love martial arts. In fact, if you've been listening for a while, I'm going to guess that either you really love martial arts or your maybe, in tranced at the sound of my voice. Not sure what other options there are, maybe there some other options if you listen for reasons other than those two things, you can go ahead you can email me Jeremy@whistlekick.com. And of course I would love to hear any of your less sarcastic feedback that you might have. I love hearing from listeners, it's great, makes my day.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright, let me tell you what I'm talking about, two episodes, what, what can I mean by two episodes? Here's the deal. I recorded an episode little over a week ago about cobra Kai. Just me just chatting up by myself for you know, 15 minutes or so offering my thoughts on the show that's come out on YouTube



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Red, Cobra Kai. But I did that and I forgot that I had scheduled time to talk with Sensei Scott Bolon and Master Brendan Goodall about cobra Kai. We'd agreed several weeks ago and it took us to some time to find a mutual time slot on our calendars, but we did that just a couple days ago and as we're recording and I realized hey wait a second, I've already done this and it left me wondering what I do? There was too much overlap to release it as two separate episodes that seemed silly but at the same time I want to just toss what I had recorded in case there was something in there that someone else wanted to listen to. Of course it wasn't cool enough to make it some bonus episode or anything like that. So here's what we're going to do. We're going to run the episode with Scott Rendon I first and then if you want to stick around you can listen to my thoughts that I recorded prior. You'll hear some differences, you'll hear a lot of similarities and the likely be able to hear some of the evolution of my thoughts, my ideas because I again recorded the sole episode first and then talk to Scott and Brendan. So here we go, as the three of us talk about Cobra Kai.

All right everybody thanks for tuning in, I'm sure I recorded some kind of introduction that is gonna give you more context so I'll just kind of jump right into it. Here we are with sensei Scott Bolon and Master Brendan Goodall. It's weird because I talked to both you guys and often obviously when were just chatting, were not, were not using titles or last names or anything so it's fun to say all of those words altogether in one grouping as we are together to talk today about Cobra Kai.

Scott Bolon:

Oh yeah, I am looking forward to it.

Brendan Goodall:

I was definitely psyched when Scott asked me if I want to do this with you guys.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice nice. Alright well, a couple ground rules to get out a way for anybody that's listening that might be wondering, first off, we are not going to spoil anything. We are going to work with more overarching themes of the show, were gonna talk about how the show relates to martial arts to martial artists to the way non-martial artists see martial arts and martial artists and we're really looking at this from a broader contextual view kind of in the same way that we've often unpacked the original karate kid movie on the show. So you know, sensei I want to kick this over to you because you kinda organize this, I think you were the one that said hey we need to talk about this and maybe the time it was just because you know, you started watching, you were like aaah I need to be able to discuss this with people. But if nothing else we are talking about it now, so what were some of your initial impressions of the show? What was it, was the first 15 minutes like for you?



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Scott Bolon:

gosh, the first 15 minutes. It was like an ear to ear smile. Watching something you know, it is Johnny same guy from way back when, it is Daniel, it's like, I'm now using 80s reference for this because it's like finding that old Jean jacket in your closet and it still fits perfectly, it is such a throwback to childhood. I had that been, that's there it is.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Master Goodall, I know we've got a couple years on you but would you agree?

Brendan Goodall:

I would. I think for me the difference is, the karate kid original movie never had the same sort of impact on me because I missed all of the hype behind it and I had to watch on TV for the first time. So, I like the idea of them doing a cobra Kai show but I was like, I don't really need it, I'll watch it if it comes around in a way that I don't have to spend any money for it but it definitely blew all of my expectations out of the water with what they were doing and how the show progressed.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I think that that's kind of the common theme when I hear people talking about is expectation. I don't know what everyone's expectations were, I don't think I had any conversations with anyone about what expectations for cobra Kai were going to be, but that's universally what I'm hearing from everyone is that exceeded expectations. And I know for me that's certainly true but I don't know what I was expecting. I guess I wasn't expecting much; I was expecting something that maybe just kind of rode on the concept. You know something gimmicky, what do you guys think?

Scott Bolon:

I actually, I've told more than a few people now, personal friends and whatnot. You know, this show could've been half as good and I would've been very happy with it. It could have been you know literally nothing more than what would that be about 10 total hours of just calling back to the originals, you know, kinda like those those obvious wink and nods you know, to this scene or that scene, but it was in the best most surprising way it was so much better than just that. I'm sure those were their but it was, it is so well written the acting was really good, you know, unlike maybe some of the you know that the fight scenes from the original. The fight scenes in this where they looked like unpolished in the way that you might expect you know may be like you know normal people who practice martial arts here and there, you know part time you know after work things like that, but it looks good it looked honest it



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looked genuine. It was just, I mean, you know every category I could name, it went way beyond my expectations.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And how about you master Goodall?

Brendan Goodall:

Yeah. Like there is a part of me that feels like this could have been done as like a 15 minute short but the fact that they want the flesh it out and actually see Johnny evolved as a person see him kind of actually grow up a little bit and see how quickly Daniel tries to grow up but also the same time how fast so I fall back into that, I'm a new kid from Jersey so I gotta be really chippy and have a chip on my shoulder. What they did with it I wouldn't change a thing and I'm excited to see what happens in season two.

Scott Bolon:

Yeah. Season two yeah we what we've already seen some announcements, I don't know if we wanna call them announcements but there is an announcement that there will be a season two. I read some really interesting stuff, one of the things that I read was that cobra Kai has exceeded ratings however you want to turn that, for a large number of shows on both Hulu and Netflix. You know I don't know that that YouTube could've offered anything on YouTube red that would've garnered this much interest and support for a brand-new platform. I would love to see the sign up numbers for how many people signed up just because of this show.

Brendan Goodall:

Yeah. I'd heard I heard some like 20 million views in the first week alone. I don't know if that's the first episode because the first first two episodes I think were free without signing up. Yeah. It was a smart move though. I mean, you know, I kinda since I signed up, I kinda looked around on you to read to see if there is anything else and then there's there is literally you know, I mean at my age you know maybe in my age group there's one other show that's not bad. It's not bad at all it's fun would I have paid for YouTube red for it though, no.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What is it? What's that show?

Scott Bolon:



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Ryan Hansen solves crimes on TV. Kind of a funny tongue-in-cheek you know, breaks the fourth wall, buddy cop badly paired buddy cop type thing. It's fine it's not, it wouldn't have moved the needle so to speak.

Jeremy Lesniak:

One of the things I find really fun kinda interesting about the show, I always wonder where ideas for something like this come from. Obviously the karate kid came out in 1984? So here we are 34 am I doing the math right? 34 years later? Now they decide to do something like this obviously the two big stars while two of the three really big stars our back, of course Pat Morita has passed away, but as I'm watching as I watch the general plot and and I'm gonna talk about this from you know, kind of a bird's eye view the idea that you know we've switched from the star being Danny, to the star being Johnny. And that seems pretty significant to me and as we've gone on, as we've seen this really interesting storyline play out between the two of them where it becomes kinda difficult to say who the protagonists and who the antagonist is. Who was the good guy here, who was the bad guy? I can't help but think back to a few episodes of the sitcom How I Met Your Mother. And for anybody out there that hasn't seen the show that that might be wondering what I'm referencing here, there's an episode where Neil Patrick Harris's character Barney talks about the karate kid and how actually Johnny, who we all tend to see is the villain is actually the good guy that here come, this new kid comes from out of town he's got this old karate master and beating up him and his friends and it's actually a pretty cogent argument and then later on in a couple of the episodes, Billy comes on and is on the show. And it makes me wonder was it this plot line that ultimately led to this show?

Scott Bolon:

was this like a test screening and testing out the idea and seeing how it flew?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't think it would have been intentional. I think it would've been oh hey this part played really well audiences really dug this and then I gotta say Ralph Macchio, he's not doing a whole lot of stuff. William Zabka is not doing a whole lot of stuff. Dave, maybe they still talk I'm sure would be that hard for one of them to get a hold of the other and say hey what you think should we try doing something with this ride in that momentum?

Brendan Goodall:

probably. I'd be intrigued if it was one of them that started it who initiated it like, I guess if you think of actors who hang on the roles too long and I'm not saying Ralph Macchio or William Zabka did this



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because there's not 87 karate kid movies out there. Who would want this more would it be Daniel or would it be Johnny who would want their story told you know.

Scott Bolon:

I think it's another part of his, there were was attached to executive producing was and I think. Was will smith attached to executive producing?

Brendan Goodall:

Will smith was attached to executive producing on this and it kind of makes me hope that someday Jaden and Jackie Chan will make an appearance as like the big boss of the next tournament? I don't know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There are all kinds of places that that could go. Looking through the other names on the credits, I don't see any other names that jump out at me so it makes me wonder how much of that was really, hey can we put you down as being executive production for this you know, because it will get people talking about it. Because it will make it seem more, more credible and obviously that stuff has to happen before the show gets shopped, so for them to go into YouTube and say you know, we've got will Smith on the executive production team that makes it that look that much better. You know there's there is the business element to the show so that's my guess where that comes in. But yeah I don't know what involvement there may be on the backend because of the later, the remake if you will of karate kid with Jaden Smith with Jackie Chan and how involved will Smith was on that picture.

Scott Bolon:

I think he was a I think he was a producer on the 2010. Yeah he was, he was a producer on that movie too and I wonder if it's you know maybe there is a little bit of connective tissue there in the sense of this is it I mean, I've admitted it before on my, one of the articles I put on martial journal about good martial arts movies, I had no problem with the 2010 karate kid movie as it was, the only thing that bothered me as I have a little martial arts OCD and it should be called the kung Fu kid but other than that, that's literally my only gripe about the movie I thought it was a good way to bring it up to the current day and maybe they felt like hey let's go back to the original characters because they did that with this show. They brought it up to today extremely well.

Brendan Goodall:



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I think the 2010 version can also kind of exist on its own Will Smith's involvement in Cobra Kai was standing because you saw that the karate kid didn't work when you didn't have Ralph Macchio's good or bad as you want to say this two and three were the next karate kid with Hilary Swank was an absolutely horrible movie.

Scott Bolon:

yeah it was. But that was the first movie that all the original creative team was gone, director, the score, the writing team, they were all gone. So that was the first one that I felt like they were like okay let's see if we can make a few more bucks squeeze this one more time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think we should talk about let's call it the magic. When we look back, we will look at the original movie there's something about that movie that has allowed it to stand the test of time for martial artist, for non-martial artist. One of the most interesting things for me about cobra Kai is that people who love that movie are talking about it again and a lot of those people who love that movie don't do martial arts or at least, you know maybe they dabbled as a child that they're not martial artist the way the three of us are, the way most folks listening are. And when you really break it down that movie had terrible acting, terrible writing, the cinematography was nothing special, there were no special effects, there are plot holes, the fight scenes aren't even for the time anything spectacular. You could argue that the martial arts are pretty solid and pretty traditional and practical but it's not something anybody's ever gonna say; my favorite martial arts fight scenes are from the karate kid. But there was something about it that I expect was relatable for many of us and I'm curious when we compare that, all those elements of the original movie to cobra Kai, how does cobra Kai fair?

Brendan Goodall:

for me it definitely recaptured a lot of the magic for it like, I'll admit, I was watching it while I was working out in the morning while the baby was napping so its kinda like RA I got the sweet 80 soundtrack on just what I had in the original movie, got some decent fight scenes, I've got like watching people develop martial arts skills, I've got very hilarious high school drama coming between two middle-aged men, like it recaptured so much of that because I used to watch at least the tournament scene of karate kid before I go out and compete just to help get the competitive juices flowing because you know you're the best around is one of those songs that gets you motivated to do stuff. So it made me want to watch the original movie again which is something I think they wanted to do? I don't know if that's necessary but it definitely put the karate kid back in my head more than it is on a regular basis. I don't know if that answered any question in there?



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Scott Bolon:

throughout the whole season, they had this I mean, I don't know if it's, they had this amazing knack for using those callbacks to the old movies and they didn't, they call back all of them by the way even the next karate kid. Although that reference was extremely thin and if I'd someone had told me, at the very end of the last episode, there's a very vague reference to it and if someone hadn't told me I wouldn't have known it. But they did that where they use those callbacks not in a cheesy or tongue-in-cheek wink nod type way but it was in a very organic way. The use of flashbacks was fantastic, very effective. They bring that like you said magic and it really does, there's times when some of that music from the original movies comes back into play at a very important and intelligent time based on what's going on story wise and you know various parts of the episodes and then I think they really captured very well the magic that the original I think the acting and writing are significantly better in this season than they were in the old movies. Martial arts are like I said, I've always said I thought that that was pretty good, but I think it's it knowing when to keep it in the here and now you know as far as you know, the kids are on social media, high school life is different, whatever. But then also when to call back to the original movies, when to call back to those timeless lessons that mattered then and they still matter now. I think they did a fantastic job with that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Who was this series written for? That was the question that kept coming to mind when I was watching it because all three of us enjoyed it and I think from what I've read and heard speaking to others, it's getting a lot of presses, getting a lot of acclaim, I don't think I've really seen anyone who's watched it, who's been really down on it. But generally when music's made or a book is written, when a TV show is produced, there's a target audience and that's the thing that I can't figure out here. Who is the target audience for the show?

Scott Bolon:

that's a great question. I think it's obvious that it was made for people of our general generation you know, grew up in the 80s and the 90s you know whatever but I'd almost say that I think they found a way to hit everybody. My son, he, I was watching one of the episodes early in the morning and he comes down you know getting ready, of course like a zombie at that point and he's 10 and you know he does tae kwon do with me and my daughter and he's watching it a little bit and he's like can we watch this together dad? I was like yeah, I'm sure we can sit down to watch it is like but I want to watch the original movies first and it's like I mean, he watched I don't know five minutes of it randomly just pick five random minutes deep into the season and he already wants to watch it. So my answer is almost a nonanswer in the sense that I think that, I think they found a way to hit more than one target audience. I



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don't think they, I think they wanted to get us. You know, people who are now adults but were kids back then but somehow they managed to pull it off.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Master Goodall. I know you're a big fan of movies, you've you been doing some movie reviews over Martial Journal, you know what are you thinking about this?

Brendan Goodall:

I don't think they made it for us the lifelong martial artists because ratings and everything show like we will watch most anything martial arts related. And I know that's not really fair but like, I watch a lot of movies I don't like and I watch them because they're martial arts movies and I hope there's good martial arts in there. I think they made it for the I think Scott's mostly right, I think they made it for the people who were around in the 80s and the 90s and maybe thought they wanted to try karate and then they found like the younger kids are like, oh that looks really cool. Like. So I think the, I think our demographic and [00:25:05.01] slightly younger than yours, I think we were incidental because they know that they could pull us and if they make a good show for everybody else.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's great point and one that I hadn't even really considered.

Scott Bolon:

I would agree with that, I agree with that but the only thing that stuck out to me that maybe they weren't trying specifically to get us because you know, yeah you're definitely right master Goodall, I watch, I watch all kinds of movies that are terrible. But one thing that stuck out to me and I actually jotted this down at some point, was I wondered if the people who wrote this and maybe obviously Johnny and Daniel, I wondered if they've done martial arts because there are certain things in here that they could've come across as chintzy, cheesy you know, you know in a little nuggets of wisdom that you can get off of a mean. But these came across as very well said, very well set up delivered and there's times when I wondered it's like man and I wonder if they've done martial arts before because they just, they put them in there so well, they wrote them in so well, you know those little philosophical things of and whether you're talking about the concepts of balance or you know striking first and of course you know, that's a throwaway line on the wall in cobra kai dojos but the way that they talk about those kinds of things and I just, I just have to wonder about that some of it came across as too true.

Brendan Goodall:



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I don't know that they did I think that some of that just for all they never had huge commercial success outside of the karate kid that I think that's as good acting cause I don't think that Pat Morita was probably everybody's vision of the iconic sensei in every sense of the word had much martial arts training, he just understood the presence and I think the writers and the people who are doing the work behind the scenes have martial arts experiences they just trust the people that are portraying on camera to get the mood right. Because you're right like strike first, strike hard, no mercy, that is terribly cliché and most martial arts things although there's lots of good points behind it when you watch the show and see how Johnny explains it to people. I think that you just trust the actors more than assume that they have experienced the message in a way that allows them to portray it accurately.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But that leads us to the fact that somebody or at least the belief that somebody were more likely multiple somebodies involved with the show do you have an extensive amount of martial arts experience of training. Because yeah there's certainly a feel to this that is quite authentic and something that was lacking from the other, while the other movies. I mean, we get right down to it, we didn't get any perspective on what it was like to be a martial arts student in a class. You know, we worked from that one-on-one archetype of the student and the teacher and even in the 2010 remake that's what we saw but here were seeing Johnny teaching a class and we see some things that as someone who's had a school, someone who does teach and I know both of you teach we've seen goofy stuff happened as were teaching martial arts class and I don't know about you but there were some things that happen in those class scenes that maybe say you know what, somebody in here doing some of his writing has taught a martial arts class before or at least observed one quite a bit because this is ridiculous and yet authentic.

Scott Bolon:

some interesting things to happen on the floor sometimes

Brendan Goodall:

there some things that happened that I am very glad never happened to me because I don't know that I would've stuck martial arts, I don't wanna give everything away but I don't like getting stuff thrown at me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right and of course anybody who's listening that has seen the show in the entirety is nodding along saying yes, no I don't think I wanted those things to happen either. One of you spoke to the fact that he



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will watch pretty much anything and really when you get right down to it, there only two forms of visual entertainment that are notorious for having a rabid fan base despite terrible plots and one of those types of entertainment is martial arts. If we go back couple years now actually when, when into the Badlands was starting to come out, one of the things that I saw happening to early episodes as they were airing was this criticism of anything and everything under the sun, much in the way that martial artists are notorious for criticizing each other and really anything and everything we can because we are effectively a bucket of crabs and can't let anyone else have nice things. For those of you that don't get that cliché, the idea if you have a bucket of crabs and one of them starts to climb out, rather than actually making it out the other crabs will pull it back in and their own efforts to escape the bucket.

Scott Bolon:

yeah you don't say on that. I am a Kempoist, of course I know that one.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now when I was talking about into the Badlands on those episodes, I was talking about our need as a martial arts community to support the show because it was the first show that was coming out that really featured martial arts as a linchpin to the series. Of course there are fight scenes and pretty much anything on television these days nearly every movie, that doesn't make those television shows and movies martial arts entertainment. Into the Badlands is a martial art show and here we are were on season three now and it's doing well. Could this be an example, cobra Kai, of another martial arts show coming out? Can we call this a martial art show?

Scott Bolon:

I don't how you can't call it a martial art show. It's martial art show wrapped up in family drama and family is a big part of it. You know, family for Johnny family for Daniel those concepts are big on both sides of that, both sides of that coin I guess if you want to call that. But it's a martial art show all the way through.

Brendan Goodall:

think sort of the Scott's point is I think it's a [00:32:36.26] martial arts show the end of the Badlands was because it doesn't, because into the Badlands, while martial arts are very inevitable plot, like it's used for killing in a dozen talk about the parts of martial arts the we need spoken of more which cobra Kai does in a very accurate way of, this is the values you have, these are the values that you learn doing this. Whether there'd skewed a little I was taught this way this is going to teach you, aspect of it I think cobra ties kind of show that will get more people in the martial arts than into the Badlands could. Just because



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of how it's portrayed, like this is the class, this is potential of what you're gonna find. You're to gonna go to tournaments, you're gonna develop a relationship with their instructor that I know I have with my instructor and I know Jeremy has with his instructor because we both started young enough that they quickly become someone who were almost more willing to turn to than our parents and that something that you don't necessarily find from into the Badlands. [00:33:52.00]

Jeremy Lesniak:

And that's a perfect segue. When we talked about the karate kid, when we've talked about enter the Dragon, to a lesser degree Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, these are moments in time were these shows come out they sort of transcend their martial arts but their martial arts in a very approachable way that anyone who is owned a martial arts school at those points in time saw the impact they saw the increased enrollment. Could this be one of those phenomena that creates greater interest in martial arts participation among the general public?

Scott Bolon:

I absolutely hope it is.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hope it is but will it?

Scott Bolon:

I think it can.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Is it that broadly appealing?

Scott Bolon:

I think it can. You know, we talked about the fact that whatever the viewership numbers are and I don't know what the exact numbers are anymore but apparently they're pretty astounding. YouTube red read somewhere that they were absolutely floored like they thought it would do well, but they, but well for YouTube red and well for Netflix are two different definitions but I think that that at my understanding is that they are absolutely floored at the response which almost makes me wonder if you know, our Netflix and Nino Hulu and Amazon are they kicking themselves for not going harder after the show. Because



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you know, as you know the people pitching the show, I mean even if YouTube was deciding to throw in an absolute semi-truck full of cash at them, I would imagine they had to wonder like okay but is this going to be the platform that's going to be... Is it gonna be big enough to put our show out there? But you know maybe they needed a shot, you know they wanted, you know YouTube was willing to literally let them do whatever they wanted to do you know. I don't know what the story is behind there but I know that they've been absolutely floored with the response so yeah I think this can be one of those shows that or shows or movies or cultural phenomena that can get kids interested in martial arts absolutely. I don't how big will be compared to some of those other phenomena points but I think this would be one where you know there's a spike on that on that meter.

Brendan Goodall:

I don't know how good it would do for people have never done martial arts before because I don't know how geared it is to get them into a class, I don't know if that's something that they take into account. I think that where would have its most successes people who on a martial arts hiatus or kind of like, I still want to try it I don't know, I don't really have the time, I think that this old gets those people off there Keister's and back into a school whether it's karate, whether it's an art they did before something completely different. Because I think it's made for, I think it's more made for people who want to do martial arts again more than people who want to do martial arts to start with.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh. That, so what you guys may or may not know the two of you and what listeners will likely do not know is that as I'm recording interview episodes, I have a piece of paper next to me and I'm constantly listening for the quotes that you hear at the beginning of the episode, what is that nugget that might help people think, oh this is an episode I want to listen to and if this was that type of episode you just said it this is a show designed to get people back in martial arts. And I think when we think about the number of people in this country, in the world who have done martial arts at one time or another I'm sure you both hear it and when we did the you know the stuff martial art is hear episode, episodes? Is that one or two?

Scott Bolon:

that was two.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That was the one that we split between martial thoughts and here. Right? Okay. Can you tell that I do a lot of this and I can't always keep count of it? One of the things that we talked about on those episodes



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was the fact; oh yeah I used to do karate, I used to take taekwondo, it's pretty common occurrence a lot of people have done martial arts for 6 to 12 months. Maybe this will get people fired up. What do you think?

Scott Bolon:

absolutely. I think it does a good job of you know, showing it for the right and the wrong reason so to speak but in ways that even the wrong reasons are the... You know, whichever main character and I say kinda there, both main characters I think Johnny's the one and Daniel is the one a. I guess, but both characters they have their good in there, I don't wanna say bad but may be misguided moments. And but I think it shows it makes you feel like you know, that was good that was a good thing for me. I mean heck it, you know it made, you know I do martial arts actively and it made me like I can't wait to get to the studio tonight. You know as stupid as that sounds, now I think it evokes a feeling for sure.

Brendan Goodall:

I think for me a big part of what it did and what I really enjoyed is it brought back that martial arts relationship between student and instructor like if you think about Miguel and Johnny's relationship, it was fun watching kind of the melding of how Johnny learned karate from crease way back in the 80s to how he has to teach it now because Miguel is I don't wanna say but, weaker but I think he's a much less tolerant person of being treated poorly for all that he's bullied at school constantly. I think that he needs someone to change because he wants to do this and he wants to do with this person so, I need Johnny to be what I want him to be and I think Johnny does the decent job of actually evolving and taking the good out of the bad lessons that he learned when he was training full-time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I can hear you choosing your words carefully trying not to give anything away and one of the things that I'm I'm struggling with this is that as well and I'm wondering you know and maybe we could get some feedback from this from folks listening, would you be interested in a let's call it a spin off maybe occasional or heck if there was enough demand may be a multi-episode podcast on cobra kai. We have the power we can do that.

Scott Bolon:

I totally want to do a spoiler episode.

Brendan Goodall:



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I would love to do a spoiler episode.

Scott Bolon:

because this is really difficult sometimes

Jeremy Lesniak:

Let's keep that in mind when season two comes out and you know maybe we'll look at doing something like that and maybe you know we can set up a schedule. I can I can see some fun things that could come out of that because typically when people do podcasts that are on specific shows there generally weekly shows, something that the podcast is meant to fill in that time in between but of course I would assume as with season one we would get all the episodes at once and maybe would force us to slow down and we could watch and then record, watch and then record. Lots of options lots of options and I can see some things we could do for audience participation. So here we are we but we've been talking about this for a little while, and we should at least start considering winding it down. We've talked today about the hopeful impact that this show will have on the martial arts, we've talked about how it relates to the original movie, we've talked about you know what might've been going through the heads of the people responsible for making it as it was starting to come together. What have we missed? What haven't we talked about?

Brendan Goodall:

what were some your favorite parts from the show like what were those moments that just kinda made you chuckle, made reminisce, like what were your highlights and obviously in as vague in specific ways you can.

Scott Bolon:

yeah that is difficult to pull that off.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm gonna contemplate that for a moment I think and this actually doesn't give anything away but I think it's important to say my one of my favorite and least favorite moments was the moment where Ralph Macchio, Johnny, I'm sorry Danny went to Miyagi's grave. Now in the show Miyagi has passed away, the character who played him, Pat Morita has passed away. The date going on there was rather arbitrary but it was not the date the Pat Morita died.



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Brendan Goodall:

I actually looked that up too

Jeremy Lesniak:

And that, to me that seemed like a no-brainer and the fact that they didn't do that bother me a significant amount and I'm not sure why. Maybe because

Scott Bolon:

it bothered you that they didn't use his actual death date?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah okay maybe just because it... Let's be honest, if Pat Morita had been anybody else in that movie, it wouldn't have played as well. He is to me the single most important character and there are very very few people who could have played that character. So for them not to use that date felt like, eh, like not getting it and I just, I'm sure there's a reason because it's such an obvious thing that that maybe there's something I'm missing, I don't know. But the fact that they did find a way to mention him and of course as you already mentioned, all the flashbacks you know, that's been I think those were my favorite moments the way that they related the show back to the movie in a way that let's be honest, somehow it wasn't cheesy to use flashbacks for probably the first time I've ever seen.

Brendan Goodall:

I will say one of my favorite moments and everything I had nothing to do with martial arts, it had to do in Johnny test drove the car and Daniel could find nobody else to go with him so he had to do it himself that moment just made me giggle because two people who very clearly don't like each other finding things that make them not so different and just...

Jeremy Lesniak:

And the radio, the radio while they're test driving?

Scott Bolon:

yeah that was that was awesome



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Brendan Goodall:

That was my favorite moments ever

Scott Bolon:

absolutely. My, trying to keep that 800-foot view on the show, admittedly much harder than it sounds. The big thing for me and it's something that I think all martial arts can talk about you know, you know I do Kempo, I do taekwondo and I do combat hapkido, and we talk about those arguments you find online, you know my arts better than your art my instructor could beat the crap out of your instructor type stuff. You know, you know it sounds like were all in 3rd grade or whatever and what I like about the way they did the show, is I think they did an even better job than, I feel like the on the original movie was kind of like a, okay here's the good guys and here's the bad guys and even though you know Mr. Miyagi was you know there's no bad students just bad teachers and kinda Putting it on crease not on Johnny so much, but this show did a better job of showing that just because you have a different way doesn't mean you can't get or at least attempt to get to the same spot. You know Miyagido karate you know or Daniels karate or whatever you want to call it, is you know all about you know it's very well presented its this is the foundation this is the way we do this, this is why we do this way and of course cobra kai's philosophy is very well flushed out throughout the show and you can see the good points in both sides of it, you can see you know that you know, the way Johnny is trying to help Miguel, he's getting bullied you know, and all these stuff. So is that bad that he's trying to help him be stronger you know not take it from you know from these kids and stuff like that. So, there's so many different martial arts in the world and I don't, I've never understood the argument of mine is better than that or this one is better than that, if this one works for you and it gives you what you want, good. Simply good. If you want all you ever wanted was competition and you find an art that gives you a competition oriented martial art congratulations great, I mean I'm happy for you. If you wanted hard-core self-defense well, there's plenty of those out there too. But to find that thing in you to complete to find that art that gives you what you want, maybe it's cobra Kai for some, maybe it's a Daniels karate or Miyagis karate and I really like how they did that in the show that it wasn't a this one's good, this one's bad, it's this one's this way and this one's that way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright let's wrap it up here, if you had to put a numerical score on this. First let's decide on a rating system, I'm as nerdy as they get so I tended to fall to the 1 to 10 kind of thing you know, if we had to rate this on a scale 1 to 10, 10 being perfect, what score would you give this?

Brendan Goodall:



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I had given a nine. It had a lot of things it still has some room for improvement for me and granted I haven't rewatch the series yet I might do that before my month is up, but it it's a rock-solid darn near perfect for me like it's a good, it gets a goon 9.

Scott Bolon:

I'd have to, I'd say 9.5 and for those basically the same reasons there is one character in the show that I have I've written it down a couple times where I'm trying to figure out what the purpose of this character is other than to be just a pure annoyance and it's and I can't say it never mind. But the whole time I'm just trying to figure out what this character's purpose is, maybe it's a long play, boy I hope it is but other than that I really don't know I really have almost 0 gripes of any litter, of any legitimacy and I mean I've watched it twice already, I'm ready to watch it again the third time with my son. It was that good.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If I'm going to attempt to be objective and separate my emotional response from it, it's still an eight to a nine but in this is going to come up in another episode possibly episode 300, there were some things that came up for me emotionally in watching this that have been trying to articulate my entire life I finally figured some stuff out from watching the show not to say that it's therapy, but the entire time I was watching it I felt like the show was written for me.

Scott Bolon:

did you feel like it helped you crystallize some things you already kind of where there but you hadn't put it all together?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I wasn't even asking the questions. This II is help me ask the question and answer it

Scott Bolon:

I picked up on some of that, I'm gonna assume we're talking about the same thing you know with the very obvious pop-culture context of bullying and what it is today, it's almost like it stays the same but the technology changes.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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There was to have her on the bullying but that that actually wasn't what it was for me. Alright. Well, I should know I should've done some research but I didn't when does, do we have a date for season two yet?

Scott Bolon:

2019 is all they said.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What son of a gun?

Scott Bolon:

I know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

This is the problem with shows released like that. Binging them this is this is the worst.

Scott Bolon:

It's like that with the Marvel shows on Netflix and it's like you know, it's like oh gosh when is the next daredevil coming out? Is there you know or I don't know. But they've gotta get this one now, and then now this one's in line and yeah I know it's terrible.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Somebody in and honestly Marvel is probably the only media conglomerate that has the diversity to make this happen but imagine if they were to link it all together, you know so daredevil comes out and then you know maybe the next few weeks of like agents of shield on TV you know kinda continue the story and then maybe it drops out a little bit too you know a major motion picture in the theaters and then you know then Jessica Jones comes out on Netflix and then there's even something on Hulu whatever. But you know like if you want to really go deep with the plot you can follow through on all the various channels but

Scott Bolon:

now unfortunately 2019 let means a minute watch it again a few times



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Scott Bolon:

oh darn

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'll watch it in reverse [00:53:58.18] of one big flashback.

Scott Bolon:

I don't know how I don't know if that works well but let me know because I'm probably like I said, I'm probably gonna watch 3rd time here with my son and my daughter.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right on. I'm curious to hear what their feedback is how old is your daughter?

Scott Bolon:

she's nine and my son's 10 so

Jeremy Lesniak:

Maybe we can get a review from the two of them see what they thought. All right of course we talk about a bunch of stuff today so if you're new to this show you can find links to quite a few episodes that we referenced previously whistlekickmartialartsradio.com of course we will link to the episodes from Master Goodall and sensei Bolon because they've both been on the show before. But I want to thank everybody for tuning in and thanks for joining me today gentlemen.

Scott Bolon:

don't my pleasure

Brendan Goodall:

I had to do it

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Alright, I hope you enjoyed that conversation. If you did, if you want even more you can stick around now for the solo, the bonus content, sort of the behind-the-scenes, that's really what this is. I'm giving you behind-the-scenes because in a sense, I messed up I'm good to share with you anyway because why not? What's the worst that could happen you could not listen to it. Well I've already spent the time recording so I might as well share with you, check out and I hope you get some value out of it. I'm not going to a separate out you're with the end, I kind of already rolled one in there so if you are going to shut off now, I want to thank you for listening but you're not going to get the trademark sign off unless you listen the whole darn thing. Hope you're having a great day.

Hey what's going on everybody here is episode 297 of whistlekick martial arts radio and today I'm going to give you a completely unscripted, uneven noted review first impressions of the new YouTube red series that falls along the storyline of karate kid, cobra Kai. A couple of quick notes for getting to that though this is [whistlekickmartialartsradio](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) and you can find the show notes at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com because I am one of the least creative persons ever. Persons see? Maybe I'm creative because I just made up words. I think its word like a legally used word. Any way you can go there and you can find other episodes and other stuff you can sign up for the newsletter, you can get a link to whistlekick.com which is where we sell stuff that if you're traditional martial arts you would be interested in. From apparel to training gear to accessories to more stuff there's always more stuff coming so if you're listening to this in the future, there will be more stuff than the one I'm recording because that's what companies try to do we try to grow and we are growing.

Alright so here we go. Cobra Kai, the series that I suspect created more YouTube red sign-ups than anything Google and YouTube could've imagined and if you're not aware what I'm talking about, with YouTube red. YouTube Red is you tube's paid to service it allows you access to certain premium content like the Cobra Kai series as well as the ability to save shows, to listen the things in the background of your fan of YouTube for music then you might be interested in you to read it's 9.99 a month with a 30 day trial at least as of right now. Now I listened, I watched the entire cobra Kai series in a day. 10 episodes 22 minutes apiece so they're stacking it as if it could've been on television commercials because a 30 minute shows actually 22 minutes of content, you didn't know that? And it was really good. We're gonna talk about why it was really good, talk about what I liked, what I didn't like, some of my emotional responses some of some other thoughts. But just going in I enjoyed it and I found myself unable to really step away. No part of that is because I didn't have to try that hard because with the sheer number of people that reached out looking for my feedback on cobra Kai, I felt like I had to get that done I had to be able to answer those questions I had to be able to put together this episode which unfortunately is coming out later than I wanted it to. If I'd really been on my game I would've been able to watch the day came out and had one of the first reviews out because I feel kind like wheat we should here at whistlekick, be able to do that but just because of the way my schedule was falling it was days before I could get to it was nearly a week after release before I could get to it but I moved everything around and I plowed through got some solid couch time, I think about three hours that they not all once



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I bounced back and forth I got my other work done. But I didn't hate it I hated sitting that long but I didn't hate what I was watching. In case your concern I'm absently not going to give away any spoilers, not one because I hate when people do that. I assume if you're interested you've probably seen a trailer or two kicking around the web it is not a spoiler to say is that cobra Kai as a series follows along with Danny and Johnny, many years later as they're adults I believe they make some references to specifically how old they would be but I don't remember. I'm gonna say 40s 50s and they have their lives and their lives have been very separate but then of course because it's what creates the conflict that drives the show, their lives come back together once again. There are on of things happening in the show that fans of the karate kid movies are going to love especially the first one. I don't think it's any secret to say that the karate kid movies got worse. There's something magical about the first one, the second is okay the third one and it just kinda goes down from there. And of course the remake the kung Fu remake with Jaden Smith Jackie Chan doesn't fall in that universe so it's really not a part of this conversation. Of course Pat Morita is no longer with us so he is not in the series I suspect that he would have been.

Now there are couple things that I find really interesting on the backend. First off while there is a lot of homage paid to the original film there are even some kind of flashback some excerpts of that movie brought into it for context which is surprisingly effective and well done. I'm not a big fan of flashbacks when they happen to be shows and movies they feel abrupt most of the time this felt pretty good, it seemed to work. I felt like the complete lack of really reference to Pat Morita as a person was disappointing for example there is a moment where we see a tombstone for Miyagi and the date that they have Miyagi dying is not the date that Pat Morita passed away. And that's just surprised me because it felt like it would've been a really obvious easy way to pay homage to that man. To the man that really made the karate kid movies what they were. It would've been really hard to have nearly anyone else play that role and had that movie as effective to balance out Ralph Macchio's character. So found that disappointing of course anyone who is listen to the show knows my respect my love for sensei Fumio Demura and while he may or may not have been invited I know nothing about that back end there, I still feel like there could've been a way to reference him. You know, I didn't see any of that kind of fun Easter egg stuff that I think I would've liked to see as someone who is watched that movie so many times. Now it's not to say that the show doesn't pay homage incredibly effectively. The relationships between some of these characters are very similar to the same as Miyagi and Daniel, the student-teacher relationship as portrayed in that first movie is honored and repeated. Not exactly, it's not it doesn't feel derivative it feels similar but stands on its own and I think that that's the summary I would give of the series is that it is not derivative, it is not the same thing over again because if we were to do the same thing from an early 80s movie as a TV show now, it would be derivative it would be hokey and people would want to make it through the first couple episodes. But it's not, it is very modern but without being out of left field if you are at all familiar with the stories from the movies this is going to feel like a continuation and that is the part I was most excited for and most fearful of that they would take this thing that I loved as a kid, honestly that I still love is an adult and ruin it. Now we're not going to give anything away here to say that the fight scenes in these shows aren't gonna win any awards, but



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I will say that I appreciated the way they were done. This isn't high wire work this isn't crouching Tiger hidden Dragon, but what is simplicity. Some of the very hallmarks of the karate kid movies with at times some solid martial arts come through here. The choreography is very appropriate to the story and to the way the story is told. And I think the last thing I want to talk about because I know that we've got some plans to bring on a roundtable to talk about the show and I know working to get into way more detail, the thing I want to talk about the most important thing for me is that I feel like this series was made for me. I feel like I'm in a sense the exact person that they had in mind. I'm not saying personally that when they made the seriousness of this is for Jeremy. But here I am, I'm in my late 30s I grew up with these movies, I grew up with martial arts while I don't have children of my own, the ages of the children in the movies, in the show are close to the ages that I would have most likely if I had kids, one of my friends have kids similar in age a lot of the challenges happening in People's lives of people's professions are similar to challenges that happen in my life and that makes the shows incredibly relatable.

There are elements in there that I think people of all ages would appreciate but when I look at these shows, I don't see them made for people who didn't grow up with the karate kid movies. I don't know that someone you know who's 10-12 years old right now is going to enjoy these shows as much and honestly there there's a bit of content in there that you know, mostly language that you know kind of pushes it into that PG-13 slot and I said I don't see 13 to 15 to 17-year-olds digging this and that's okay but when I watch it, I feel inspired. I have similar feelings I had as a kid watching the karate kid movie and watching some of these other movies from the 80s you know, Van Damme, and these other films that made me proud to be a martial artist. And let's face it there is a lot of content these days it makes us proud to be martial artists, no I don't know the martial arts skill and context that all the people behind the show have and interestingly enough Will Smith is behind this movie in part, but somebody somewhere at least one person gets it. They've done it right they've done a great job and my hope now is that there is a season two and then it's done as well. There are some surprises throughout there are some people that pop in that you might not have expected and I was pleasantly surprised at the complexity of the characters. You may be familiar with the sort of alternative theory of the karate kid that Daniel is actually the villain, that first came out from an episode of how I met your mother and actually we've talked about at least once on the show and I think I found video and embedded it one of the show notes pages, I forget which one frankly it doesn't really matter but I just gave it to that that the theory is that you know if you watch each situation you know it's really it's Daniel's the villain John is the hero. Well, this show kinda plays on that. There are not super defined traditional hero and villain positions, protagonist and antagonist, you could argue every character from episode to the next who is it that this is on the right path and I think that that is something that is refreshing, something I like to see. Because let's face it life is complicated, our lives are complicated and none of us make the right decision all the time. Alright. I'm gonna leave it there. I would love to hear your feedback I would love to know what you think of these shows if you watched them and if you haven't watch them, I would encourage you to. Because if you're a fan of the show you're probably going to enjoy these shows. Now if you're refusing to or you know you stopped part way if you didn't like them I want to know that too. I



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want to know how these shows, how cobra Kai connects with you as a martial artist. You can leave comments on the show notes page whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. You can email me directly jeremy@whistlekick.com you can comment on social media related to this episode were [@whistlekick](https://www.instagram.com/whistlekick) lots pf good options for that. So I want to hear from you. That's all I've got for today. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.