



Episode 73 – Enter the Dragon (Movie Profile) | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hey there, everyone its episode 73 of whistlekick Martial Arts Radio, the only place to hear the best conversations about the martial arts, like today's episode where we dig deep into the classic martial arts film, Enter the Dragon.

I'm the founder here at whistlekick, but I'm better known as your host, Jeremy Lesniak. whistlekick, in case you don't know, makes the world's best sparring gear and some excellent apparel and accessories for practitioners and fans of traditional martial arts. I'd like to welcome our new listeners and thank all of you that are listening again.

If you're not familiar with our products, you can learn more about them at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com). All of our past podcast episodes, show notes and a lot more are on a different site, [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). Today's episode also has a full transcript with lots of photos, videos and links on the website. If you're listening from a computer, you might want to follow along with everything we've posted.

And while you're over there, go ahead and sign up for our newsletter. We offer exclusive content to subscribers and it's the only place to find out about upcoming guests.

As we did a few weeks ago with The Karate Kid, the original one, we're going to dig into one of, if not the most, influential martial arts films of all time- Enter the Dragon. A lot of our guests have cited Enter the Dragon as either a favorite movie, or even part of the reason they got into the martial arts. We decided it was time to dig deep and find out more about this classic movie.

We can start with the easy stuff. Enter the Dragon was written by Michael Allin, who also went on to write Flash Gordon. The director was Robert Clouse, who directed a number of martial arts films afterward, including Game of Death, which also starred Bruce Lee. And, in our first bit of trivia, Bruce Lee was an uncredited director on both Enter the Dragon & Game of Death. According to Fred Weintraub, the producer on the film, Clouse was the only one that wanted to direct it.

The rest of the cast of Enter the Dragon has some early appearances by actors who would go on to become stars, but they were nobodies back in 1973 when the movie was released. The other two major actors, at least for back then, were John Saxon and Jim Kelly. Saxon is still acting, and prior to Enter the Dragon he appeared in a lot of television roles, including Bonanza & Kung Fu. Jim Kelly became a bit of a cult star, filming several martial arts films after Enter the Dragon, including Black Belt Jones (with the same director, Robert Clouse) & Black Samurai.

Of course, it was Enter the Dragon that gave Jackie Chan his start, as an uncredited thug. Sammo Hung was an uncredited fighter. Pat Johnson, who has a black belt under Chuck Norris and is probably best known as the Referee in The Karate Kid, was an uncredited stuntman. Bolo Yueng, the prolific, muscled



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actor best known for his roles in Bloodsport & Double Impact, had a role in the film. His actual name is Yang Zse, but he took the name of his character to cash in on the success of the movie.

Made for an estimated \$850,000, the movie became a global sensation, grossing 21 million in North American and, ultimately, \$90 million worldwide. Filming was done in Hong Kong & Los Angeles but was shut down briefly when they found a dead body near the set. Everything was finished and released in theaters on July 20th 1973, but Bruce Lee had died just a short time earlier.

There were several other potential titles for the movie, including Blood and Steel as well as Han's Island and The Deadly Three. Every bit of dialogue and sound was added to the movie in post-production – they didn't record any sound when it was filmed. This was Bruce Lee's entrance to Hollywood, as well as the first Chinese martial arts film to be produced by a major Hollywood studio. The critics loved it, recognizing both his star charisma and his martial arts skill, it was the last film completed before his death. He did most of the choreography of the film himself, which is part of what made the movie so good. Bruce knew what he wanted to see in the movie, and as we can see from the uncredited roles I mentioned earlier, he had a lot of influence on the movie.

There have been some rumors floating around about a remake of the movie, most likely with Brett Ratner, who directed the Rush Hour movies. If that remake is going ahead, it's quiet, because all of the rumors go back to 2015 and have very little to substantiate them. Still... what more could they do? Would you even want to see someone try and remake the movie?

At one point during the fight scene with Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee hit Jackie pretty hard, which he apologized for. But that wasn't the only time Lee inflicted pain. During one of the scenes with Bob Wall, Wall missed a cue and ended up cutting Bruce's hand. Later on in the film, Bruce didn't pull one of his kicks and knocked Wall back so hard that he ran into someone else and ended up breaking both of the other man's arms.

That impressive fight scene at the end, the one many refer to as the Hall of Mirrors, actually used over 8000 mirrors to set up. The inspiration for that scene came from a restaurant in Hong Kong there the producers ate lunch. That snake scene where the snake is guarding the secret entrance to Han's drug lab? The snake was a poisonous snake and did bite Lee during shooting. Fortunately, though, the snake's venom gland had been removed.

Back in 2004 Enter the Dragon was classified as "culturally, historically, and aesthetically significant" in the US and set for preservation at the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress. Speaking of significant culture, the casting agents had a hard time finding women to play prostitutes, so they hired real ones. And the homeless people in the film were actual homeless people.

During filming one of the extras challenge Bruce Lee to a fight, promptly lost, and was sent immediately back to work. The economics of filming in china were such that it was cheaper to have labor build things



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by hand rather than hire the materials or even with power tools. A great example – the bars of the prison cell were made by hand-shaving pieces of wood rather than buying wood that was already round.

What's your favorite part of Enter the Dragon? Does it hold a special place for you? Maybe you think it does, or doesn't, deserve all of the credit it receives. Whatever you think, we want to hear from you. Seriously. Head on over to the website, [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) and leave us a comment. While you're there, you can check out the show notes, and see the great photos and videos we posted. There's even a 3 minute summary of the movie we found where the audio is a rap song written to describe the film. I can't make this stuff up.

If you want to find us on social media, we're on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest & Instagram – all with the username [whistlekick](#).

If you want to be a guest on the show or maybe you have an idea for a show topic, like we did with today's show. If you do, go ahead and fill out the form on the website. And don't forget to subscribe to our newsletter so you can stay up on everything we do. You can learn more about our products at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com).

That's all for today, so, until next time, Train hard, smile and have a great day.