

## Gareth Evans Grabs “THE RAID,” Part Two

Written by Walter Bonner  
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Continuing our interview with Gareth Evans, writer/director of the knockout action bloodbath THE RAID: REDEMPTION (opening today from Sony Pictures Classics), which we began [here](#) ...

THE RAID’s hero, played by Iko Uwais (who also coordinated the film’s incredible fight scenes with Yayan Ruhian, who co-stars as ferocious henchman Mad Dog), harks back to characters played by Hong Kong action-cinema royalty, something Evans says is no accident. “I borrowed a lot from those guys, like Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, and tried to fuse them into what happens with Iko in the film. Jackie Chan always had a vulnerability about him. That’s really important when you’re doing an action film—that your audience feels the hero is in danger at some point, or at least vulnerable to a certain extent. There’s a moment in this film where Iko is walking down this corridor, and he’s so beaten up that if anyone came out at that point, he’s dead. That’s the end of the story for him. So it’s important to have that moment where the audience gets to see him at his weakest point before he gets to be bad-ass again.



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“But then there’s also this thing with Bruce Lee that I love—moments in his films like in ENTER THE DRAGON, when he kills Oharra by stomping onto his chest and cracking his rib cage. It’s so sadistically violent, and the intent is there. What I love about it is Bruce Lee’s response, his facial reaction, where he realizes that he gave in to that rage. And then there’s almost this sadness to it, where he realizes what he’s just done. So we riffed on that a little bit when Iko kills the guy using the broken door frame. When he slams the guy down onto it, there’s this look on Iko’s face where it’s kind of like, ‘Oh f\*\*k, what have I just done?’ That line has been crossed.”

Getting back to the influence of John Carpenter on THE RAID, the new score added for the film’s American release by Mike Shinoda of Linkin Park and Joseph Trapanese recalls the pulsing synth of ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 and other Carpenter classics, while at the same time sounding new and current. Evans says he didn’t mind Sony’s decision to take a different tack with the music. “It’s a great score, and I’m a huge fan of the original one, too. Both versions, to me, are really great for different reasons. Not to be too diplomatic, but it’s almost like a 50/50 split in terms of which one I want to hear at different points in the film.

“The decision to do the U.S. score came about before we’d even finished shooting the film,” he reveals. “We sent some footage out to the Cannes film market to get buyers interested, and one of the buyers, who was working for Sony at the time, saw the film, took to it and got on the phone with me while I was still shooting in Indonesia. I got on the phone with him, and he was talking about [the music] then. He said, ‘Look, we want to do it. Would you be open to the idea of having a new score put on it to help boost sales, marketing and interest in the film?’ It’s a way to market it, because at the end of the day, it’s an Indonesian action movie, you know? This precedent has a big push effect on it. And I was open to it because [I liked that] somebody else would interpret my film as well. I’d get to see how another person interprets it, which doesn’t happen often.

“When Mike’s name was thrown out there... Remember, back at that time, it was a small, low-budget independent Indonesian movie that was smaller than my first one. And to have that name come up, it was like, ‘F\*\*k, seriously? He’s gonna do it?’ And then, thankfully, he came on board. I’d just finished my version of the film with my guys in Indonesia, [original composers] Fajar [Yuskemal] and Aria [Prayogi]; they’re really great guys as well. I got on the phone with Mike and said, ‘I’m not going to give you notes, because if I do, I’m just going to be giving you the same stuff I’ve been telling my guys for two weeks. Why don’t you tell me your approach?’ And he told me he wanted to come at it more from a classical background, doing it more as a score and not as a collection of songs that would play on top of the film.

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“When he talked about getting Joe Trapanese involved, who worked with Daft Punk on the TRON: LEGACY soundtrack, it was like, all these things were just massive reassurances. And when they talked about influences from Carpenter and stuff like that, I said, ‘Go ahead. Just do it. I’ll give you the creative freedom to go and see what you come up with, then I’ll give you notes when you’ve done a full pass at the film.’ I was really happy with their work.”



The music’s not the only thing that changed for the American edition: the film had to have an altered title as well (it was originally just THE RAID), a decision Evans maintains was a legal one rather than originating with the studio. “It was one of those situations where, we wanted to keep THE RAID. Everyone involved wanted it called THE RAID, and that was it. But there was a clearance issue and a legal reason why we couldn’t use that. We tried right up to the last minute [to keep that the title], and we couldn’t put any promo materials out until we locked the title down. It was reaching that point where we had to start promoting, putting the trailers in cinemas and getting the posters out.

“So what happened was, we’d had ideas for sequels; we knew we were going to do part two and part three, so we toyed with the idea of these being called “THE RAID: BLAH BLAH BLAH.” When that happened, we were like, ‘Well, let’s just take that approach and apply it to the first one,’ because we’d worked for like five months raising awareness for a film called THE RAID, and if suddenly we had to change it to something else, all of that awareness would just disappear. And then REDEMPTION came up because, without giving too much of a spoiler, that was a subplot. It could be worse. It could be THE LEGEND OF THE RAID WARRIORS or something like that. My first movie was named MERANTAU WARRIOR, which didn’t really make sense either. But this wasn’t a studio thing, it was a legal thing; I wanted to clarify that.”

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Predictably, Sony plans on producing an English-language remake of THE RAID: REDEMPTION. Early rumors reported that Evans would helm the remake as well—claims that he is quick to shoot down. “I’m not gonna direct the remake. I feel like that film needs a fresh pair of eyes in order to do it. I’m not the right person to do that film, because I’ve kind of exhausted my ideas for all-in-one-building-type movies. But I’m going to go do the sequel next out in Indonesia, and after that I am looking to do something in the U.S. I’m looking to do something in English.

“But it’s one of those things where I’ve got to want to do the film,” he adds. “I’ve got to love the storyline. I’ve got a pretty comfortable life in Indonesia. I have a family there, stuff like that. If I’m going to do a project [in the States], it’s going to take me away from them for a while. And when that’s added to the equation, it can’t be just me being plugged into some franchise. It isn’t going to be me being unable to explore a story by myself and have my own feel on it. So I’m being a little cautious at the moment. I’m waiting for the right project to come along. Whether it’s something I write or something someone else has written, I don’t know yet. But fingers crossed I can get something set up, and do my thing out here.”

Evans is not only a fan of Hong Kong cinema; he loves U.S. action movies from the ’80s as well, particularly those starring the great bearded one himself, Chuck Norris. His favorite? “INVASION U.S.A. It’s the most f\*\*kin’ excessively violent movie! The villain in that shoots a guy to death in the cock! You can’t get more violent than repeatedly shooting somebody in the dick. So, yeah—INVASION U.S.A. I almost said LONE WOLF MCQUADE, but I went back to that one.” If the powers that be ever greenlight an INVASION U.S.A. remake, we’ve got the director.