

## Fantastic, Visceral ‘The Raid: Redemption’ Beats Up Hollywood Action Movies

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 23, 2012 - 9:52am

- [Assault on Precinct 13](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Die Hard](#) [4]
- [Gareth Evans](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [John Carpenter](#) [7]
- [Movie Review](#) [8]
- [The Raid: Redemption](#) [9]



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Gareth Evans’ “The Raid: Redemption” is a powerhouse kick to the gut of bored action movie fans. And the face. And the kneecap. And the balls. It’s an aggressive, adrenaline-fueled success in so many ways that it might make you like recent Hollywood action films less than you remembered. They weren’t this powerful, super-charged, or generally remarkable. For its target audience, I find it impossible to believe that “The Raid” won’t connect. In other words, if you like martial arts action movies, you have a new must-see.

Inspired by “Die Hard” and “Assault on Precinct 13,” “The Raid: Redemption” has a wonderfully simple action movie foundation. So many modern action blockbusters, especially those produced by the Hollywood machine, over-complicate their set-up on their way to bloating running times, too many speaking roles, and twist endings. Forget that nonsense. More often than not, the best action movies can be summed up as simply as “The Raid” — a team of SWAT members try to take a building that has been controlled by a ruthless crime lord. It doesn’t go well.



The Raid: Redemption

*Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics*

Imagine a rundown building in which every one of the tenants has at least a loose connection to the malicious gangster who runs it. Some work directly for him. Others serve as his spotters. But most are just poor people who owe allegiance to him as their landlord more than they do the cops trying to take him down. When the crime lord learns that a SWAT team is in the building, he gets a loudspeaker and announces that it’s every tenant’s responsibility to try and take them down. Kill some cops, make some powerful friends, and get free rent out of the deal. Sounds good.

Like a lot of martial arts films, "The Raid: Redemption" is purposefully light on plot as a way to build an outline for action. Each set piece leads to the next and Evans has staged some of the most notable action scenes of the last several years in his film. It's hard to pick a favorite but there's a sequence involving going from one floor to another the hard way, another involving an explosive elevator, and a few man-on-man-on-dozens-of-men fight scenes that make you laugh at the audacity of their creator. Not only does Evans envision action in a unique way — almost as if the Jackie Chan movies choreographed by Sammo Hung were directed by John Carpenter — but he pulls them off. We've had a lot of action directors with good ideas, but few have had the chops to execute them like Evans.



The Raid: Redemption

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

To be fair, "Redemption" may be too thin on plot for some. And the plot that does kick in as the film approaches its climax, including a surprising connection from "good guys" to "bad guys" doesn't always work. However, this would be a far more notable problem if Evans allowed the action of the film to sag long enough for the thin plot to be a concern. Every time one wonders if the storytelling couldn't be stronger, that sensation dissipates under the brutal power of the action.

There have been a LOT of movies inspired by the early works of John Carpenter but few have been this accomplished, powerful, original, and straight-up fun. There's a good chance that you won't see a better action movie this year.

*"The Raid: Redemption" stars Iko Uwais and Joe Taslim. It was written and directed by Gareth Evans. It was released on March 23rd, 2012. It is rated R.*



[10]

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