



The Raid

Tsui Hark

Hong Kong, 1991, 100 minutes
Colour/35mm

Production Company: Cinema City Entertainment

Executive Producer: Dean Shek

Producer: Ching Siu-tung

Screenplay: Tsui Hark

Cinematography: Lau Moon Tong

Editor: Lau Ka Wai

Art Director: Chung Yi Fung

Principal Cast: Dean Shek, Jackie Cheung, Tony Leung, Chu Kong

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Imagine seeing *Raiders of the Lost Ark* after not sleeping for a week and consuming copious amounts of coffee. The cartoon violence would go miles over the top, the already kinetic camerawork would leap into your face, the otherwise simple story would suddenly seem frighteningly complex, and just about everything — especially the fighting — would look really cool. And now there is no need to use artificial stimulants to achieve this nirvana, thanks to Tsui Hark, master of the Hong Kong action film. Constructed somewhat like an Oreo cookie, with spectacular action sequences at the beginning and the end, with rich comic relief in the middle, *The Raid* is simply a treat to watch. Tsui Hark and producer-star Dean Shek manage to cram every genre element from the current Hong Kong cinema into this 100-minute romp. Gambling, sword fights, bedroom farce, really big guns, kitschy musical numbers, ninjas, beautiful clothes, and lots of explosions are just a few of the treats in store. Not to mention another great performance from Jackie Cheung (Paul from *Bullet in the Head*). Dr. Chou, an old doctor, is abducted by strange tribesmen to treat nationalist soldiers suffering from poison gas administered by the evil Manchu empire. After using his ancient cures successfully, Chou wants to help in the struggle against the emperor, but the Colonel is not interested. Undeterred, Chou manages to gather together a motley crew of fighters. Participants include his niece, her erstwhile boyfriend, a gangster-union organizer (Cheung) and the assistant to the emperor's lover. They all intermittently fall in love and fight gruesome battles to destroy the (surreally stylized) poison gas factory. Sound complicated? Just sit back and enjoy.

Tsui Hark was born in Vietnam in 1951. He studied film in Dallas, Texas, and from 1970 to 1975 he attended the University of Texas in Austin. On his return to Hong Kong in 1977, he began to make films for television. His first theatrical feature film, *The Butterfly Murders* (79), was a huge commercial and critical success. In 1984, he founded his own company, Film Workshop, and acted as a producer on such hits as *A Better Tomorrow*, *A Chinese Ghost Story*, and *The Killer*. He continues to work as a producer, director, and actor. Films as a director include: *Dangerous Encounters of the First Kind* (80), *All the Wrong Clues* (81), *Zu: Warriors from the Magic Mountain* (83), *Shanghai Blues* (84), *Peking Opera Blues* (86), *A Better Tomorrow III* (89), *Swordsman* (co-director) (89), *The Masters* (89), *King of Chess* (co-director) (91), *The Raid* (91).