

Jiu Jitsu is a 2020 American science fiction martial arts film directed and co-written by Dimitri Logothetis and starring Alain Moussi, Frank Grillo, JuJu Chan, Tony Jaa and Nicolas Cage.^{[3][4][5]} The film is based on the 2017 comic book of the same name by Dimitri Logothetis and Jim McGrath.^{[6][7][8][9]} The film was a box office bomb, grossing less than \$100,000 against a budget of \$25 million, and was critically panned.


Plot

Every six years, an ancient order of expert Jiu Jitsu fighters faces a vicious race of alien invaders in a battle for Earth. For thousands of years the invaders have lost to Earth's defenders, up until now. Earth's future is in jeopardy.

In a jungle in Burma (Myanmar), Asia, Jake Barnes, a celebrated war hero, is running away from shuriken under the command of Brax, the powerful invader leader. Jake ends up on an oceanside cliff, where he is hit by the stars, falls into the ocean, hits his head and blacks out.

Wylie, a senior Jiu Jitsu fighter, rescues Jake from the water and gives him over to the care of two Burmese fishermen. They stitch up Jake's cuts and take him to a nearby military outpost, assuming that he came from there. After foreboding miscommunication between an inexperienced translator and one of the fisherwomen, Jake is left at the outpost and starts to regain consciousness. But he must regain his strength! Puzzled by the mention of a comet that comes every six years and a hole in a temple opening, the operatives set about figuring out where Jake came from. An intelligence officer, Myra, tries to interrogate Jake but he appears to have amnesia, with no recall of events leading to his being found in the water.

After a fight sequence Myra injects Jake with a truth serum, but this proves ineffective on what he divulges. She decides it is probable that he actually does not remember, but while discussing this with other operatives, Keung, advanced Jiu Jitsu fighter, begins to work his way through the base, besting fist and gun alike. Keung is unfazed by repeated attacks by men in balaclavas and fatigue uniforms, who he lays flat. Gunfire and the sound of feet against chests, heads and the like

<i>Jiu Jitsu</i>	
 <div> <div>ALAIN MOUSSI FRANK GRILLO JUJU CHAN</div> <div>WITH TONY JAA AND NICOLAS CAGE</div>  </div>	
 <div>Theatrical release poster</div>	
Directed by	Dimitri Logothetis
Screenplay by	Dimitri Logothetis <div></div> James McGrath
Based on	<i>Jiu Jitsu</i> <div></div> by Dimitri Logothetis <div></div> Jim McGrath
Produced by	Dimitri Logothetis <div></div> Martin Barab <div></div> Chris Economides
Starring	Alain Moussi <div></div> Frank Grillo <div></div> JuJu Chan <div></div> Tony Jaa <div></div> Nicolas Cage
Cinematography	Gerardo Madrazo
Edited by	Danny McDonald
Music by	Mocean Worker

alert Myra and the others that indeed something is up. After more fighting, Keung approaches Jake who he recognizes with a special handclasp. Keung exclaims "We gotta go" and Jake accepts this chance to leave his captors. Their departure from the base confirms that Jake, too, is skilled in the art of using his limbs in defense against others.

Jake then reunites with three other fighters who seem to know him but he does not remember who they are or what his mission is. As they try to leave to head back to their base, soldiers turn up again. The three other fighters defeat the entire unit easily but Jake gets grabbed by Myra. She tried questioning him again back at the military base but he simply tells her she should leave. They then decide to move out from the army base as they try to escape but they are hunted down by an alien called Brax. The group confronts Brax at the temple and fight him. During the fight, it is revealed that Brax has a weakness to fire and uses that to his advantage. Jake manages to cut down Brax with a sword and shove a grenade in his gut before it heals up. He kicks Brax into the portal and it explodes finally ending the alien race.

Production companies	<div>Highland Film Group</div> <div>Coprod Media International Limited</div> <div>Double Tree Entertainment</div> <div>Acme Rocket Fuel</div>
Distributed by	The Avenue Entertainment
Release date	November 20, 2020
Running time	102 minutes
Country	<div>United States</div>
Language	English
Budget	\$25 million ^[1]
Box office	\$99,924 ^[2]

Cast

- Alain Moussi as Jake Barnes^[10]
- Frank Grillo as Harrigan^[11]
- Nicolas Cage as Wylie^[10]
- JuJu Chan^[11] as Carmen
- Tony Jaa as Keung^[11]
- Maresse Crump as Forbes
- Ryan Tarran as Brax
- June Sasitorn as June
- Dan Rizutto as Franz
- Rigan Machado as Victor
- Rick Yune^[11] as Captain Sand
- Marie Avgeropoulos as Myra^[11]
- Jack Kingsley as Hector
- Eddie Steeples as Tex

Production

It was announced in March 2019 that Cage and Alain Moussi were cast in the film.^{[12][13][14][15]}

Filming took place in June 2019 in [Cyprus](#) and included a glimpse of ancient [Bagan](#) temples in [Burma](#).^[16]

Release

Jiu Jitsu was released on November 20, 2020 by The Avenue Entertainment.^[17] In its debut weekend, the film was the eighth-most rented title on [Apple TV](#) and ninth on [FandangoNow](#).^[1]

Reception

On [Rotten Tomatoes](#), the film has an approval rating of 28% based on 46 reviews, with an average rating of 3.8/10. The website's critical consensus reads: "*Jiu Jitsu* pits an ancient order of warriors against an alien invasion -- yet despite that appealingly bizarre premise and a cast that includes Nicolas Cage and Tony Jaa, it's the audience that loses."^[18] On [Metacritic](#), the film has a [weighted average](#) score of 28 out of 100, based on reviews from 11 critics, indicating "generally unfavorable reviews".^[19]

Simon Abrams of [RogerEbert.com](#) awarded the film one and a half stars.^[20] John DeFore of *The Hollywood Reporter* gave the film a negative review, noting that it "has all the barely-motivated action and sci-fi trappings of a middling videogame and, well, at least a little of the dramatic value."^[21] Tambay Obenson of [IndieWire](#) graded the film a D.^[22] Jeffrey M. Anderson of [Common Sense Media](#) gave the film two stars out of five.^[23] [Slant Magazine](#)'s Steven Scaife awarded the film one and a half stars out of four.^[24] Chris Bumbray of [JoBlo.com](#) gave the film a 5 out of 10.^[25]

Fortress of Solitude praised the film describing it as: "An action-packed, 90s-style camp film that's all about entertainment".^[26] "Flyckering Myth" also had a positive reaction, Tom Joliffe writing that: "With a stellar cast, non-stop fights and stylish direction, this proves to be an enjoyable throwback that will please genre fans".^[27] Polygon called the film "extremely satisfying".^[28] Dan Jackson of [Thrillist](#) gave the film a positive review, writing "Luckily, *Jiu Jitsu* gets the most important aspects of a junky movie like this right."^[29]

Darren Murray from Martial Arts Actions Cinema rated the film 3 out of 5.^[30] Brent McKnight on Giant Freakin Robot also gave the film a positive rating.^[31]

[Film School Rejects](#)'s Rob Hunter promoted the film positively, noting that, "[...] while it neglects to include any jiu-jitsu... it does give viewers plenty of action beats and a few fun thrills".^[32]

Kristy Puchko of [IGN](#) gave it 6 out of 10 and wrote "*Jiu Jitsu* feels like a deeply 2020 movie in that it is a barrage of WTF choices that hit without mercy until you either give in and go with the flow or just go mad. Or, hey, maybe both." She also questioned some of the film's visual design choices, such as using animated comic book panels and a saturated color scheme.^[33] J. Hurtado of [Screen Anarchy](#) reviewed the film negatively, calling it "an Adderall addled mess of a film that attempts to scratch a gonzo action itch that would be better served by hitting up a playlist of stunt demo reels on [YouTube](#)".^[34]

Jiu Jitsu had a cumulative worldwide gross of \$99,924 ^[2] against a budget of \$25 million.^[1]

Future and lawsuit

In 2021, Logothetis announced that he would not be returning to Cyprus to shoot the film's planned sequels or his next film *Man of War*.^[35] He and the film's producers announced their decision to pull out of Cyprus completely, stating their intention to take legal action against the Cypriot government due to the continued non-payment of almost €8 million which the film's investors are owed by the government per the terms of their contract.^[35] *Jiu Jitsu* was made under the cash rebate scheme launched by the Cyprus Investment Promotion Agency (CIPA).^[35] The producers said that a report by Cyprus' auditor general Odysseas Michaelides on the CIPA in general and *Jiu Jitsu* was completely false, ignorant of how such schemes operate, and potentially defamatory.^[35]

One of the film's producers, Chris Economides, called the government "incompetent" and guilty of a "tragic failure" that has resulted in filmmakers becoming "mired in petty local politics".^[35] He explained that this will cause producers to go elsewhere, since similar schemes operate all over Europe.^[35] He said, "What it means for Logothetis to leave includes the \$120 million which he'd agreed to bring to Cyprus to make three other films. It includes *Man of War* which is [budgeted at] \$37 million [and] it includes *Jiu Jitsu 2* which might be another \$24 million."^[35] He also mentioned his belief that the \$600 million Czech investment fund behind *Jiu Jitsu*, which also backed five other films at the same time, would "surely not be coming back here after all that's happened".^[35]

Economides said that he did not see auditor general Michaelides as dishonest but merely uninformed, stating, "[Michaelides] only started taking an interest in the sector in 2019, because of the scheme. I've been in this business for 40 years."^[35] He especially noted the unfairness of Michaelides wrongly pointing out supposed irregularities without first asking for an explanation, as well as "exceeding his remit to become a film-critic-general" by examining the film's box office and critical reception despite the fact that these are irrelevant to the rebate scheme.^[35] The producers also put out a statement showing that the government actually stands to make roughly €960,000 from *Jiu Jitsu* when the rebate money (assuming the film makes money) gets stacked against the direct and indirect taxes it can collect from the film's contribution to the local economy.^[35]

Economides also said that *Man of War* was "all set to go" and that contracts had been signed with local crew who have now lost their jobs, and locations had already been found in the Nicosia area that would double as California.^[35] The continued non-payment, coupled with the auditor general's report, led to the local bank that was lending money based on the rebate to cancel the deal and state that the scheme did not seem reliable.^[35] Logothetis said, "I can no longer make the movie [in Cyprus]. I'm not going to make *Man of War* here. I'm going to take it somewhere else. [...] If you don't pay on time and you don't treat a producer properly, they're going to leave. And so, you win. Everybody wants to win an argument—fine, you won the argument. We're gonna take our movie, take our money, and we're gonna go somewhere else. Thank you."^[35]

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External links

- *Jiu Jitsu* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9624766/>) at *IMDb*



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