

= Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon =

Max Havoc : Curse of The Dragon is a straight @-@ to @-@ DVD action film directed by Albert Pyun and Isaac Florentine on the island of Guam in 2004 . Swiss actor Mickey Hardt plays Max Havoc , an ex @-@ kickboxer turned sports photographer . Max has to help an art dealer and her sister , played by Joanna Krupa and Tawney Sabley , flee from a yakuza clan trying to retrieve a valuable jade dragon statue . Aimed at the European market , the film was planned to kickstart a franchise , which would have included a sequel and a syndicated television series in the United States , but these plans did not materialize . A sequel , Max Havoc : Ring of Fire , was eventually shot in Canada .

The film was originally slated to be directed in Hawaii , but a series of mishaps led to filming on Guam . Most of the film was shot there by Pyun , including a cameo by Carmen Electra . A smaller part was added by Florentine to improve the film 's marketability , including added cameos by David Carradine and Richard Roundtree . It premiered on Guam in 2005 and on DVD in 2007 , earning around US \$ 250 @,@ 000 . Most critics reviews were negative , chiding the plot , casting and the cliché portrayal of Guam , but some praised fight choreography and the " so bad it 's good " value .

Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon has garnered press through lawsuits regarding its financing . Guam Economic Development and Commerce Authority (GEDCA) gave a \$ 800 @,@ 000 loan guarantee to producer John F. S. Laing , which was forfeited as the film failed to recoup the investment . GEDCA alleged Laing defrauded them , while he claimed Guam authorities promised him funding he did not receive . This kicked off a lengthy legal battle , ending with a settlement between Laing and GEDCA .

= = Plot = =

The story centers around Max Havoc (Mickey Hardt) , an ex @-@ kickboxing champion known as " Mad Max " , turned globetrotting sports photographer . Max quit kickboxing after accidentally killing a fellow boxer during an unlikely comeback in the ring , but still suffers from flashbacks to the fight . After a bar scuffle over a biker girl (Nikki Ziering) , his agent (Diego Walraff) sends him to Guam for a publicity photo shoot . There , Max encounters Tahsi (Richard Roundtree) , his former kickboxing coach , now an antiques dealer , and promises to catch up with him later . While photographing an outrigger canoe race from a jet ski , Max rescues Christy Goody (Tawney Sablan) , a vacationer who was about to be unwittingly run over by the canoes . In the process , he knocks over one of the canoes , earning the wrath its head rower , Moko (Pyun veteran Vincent Klyn) . He is also admonished by Jane (Joanna Krupa) , Christy 's sister , for his brazen driving . However , she later apologizes and agrees to a dinner date .

In the meantime , Tahsi is approached by a thief (Danielle Burgio) , who has fled to Guam with a stolen rare jade dragon and wants to pawn it , promising to return in 24 hours . Tahsi agrees , but does not promise not to sell it . Indeed , Jane Goody , who turns out to be a friend of his , visits his shop and buys the dragon , despite Tahsi 's reluctance . She later has it appraised , learning it is worth many times more than she paid for it , heightening her hopes of paying the tuition for her sister 's medical degree . Later , an enforcer (Arnold Chon) for the yakuza group Black Dragons , the original owners of the jade dragon , appears in Tahsi 's shop with the thief in a headlock , demanding the figurine 's return . Tahsi refuses to reveal Jane 's identity and is killed along with the thief .

Max and the Goody sisters are soon involved in a streetfight with henchwoman Eiko (Ji Ling) . After Max saves the sisters , and is involved in a further fight with Quicksilver (Johnny Trí Nguy?n) , he is contacted by the leader of the criminals , Aya (Marie Matiko) , who is also Eiko 's lesbian lover . The Black Dragons explain that the jade dragon is actually an urn containing the ashes of their former leader , Yoshida , and that they believe it holds mystical value and will stop at nothing to get it back . Max and the sisters agree to return the dragon at noon the following day in return for their own personal safety . They are helped by locals , including beach vendor Debbie (Carmen Electra) and Moko , with whom Max reconciled at the scene of Tahsi 's killing . Nevertheless , Jane

is torn between returning the figurine and protecting their lives , and ensuring that her sister finishes her M.D. The deal falls through as Jane 's cell phone battery dies , and she does not arrive at the meet in time . Max escapes the angry henchmen on a jet ski .

The head of the Black Dragons (David Carradine , credited as Grand Master) , pays a visit to Guam to take the matter into his own hands . It turns out that he is a man prominently seen ringside in Max 's flashbacks . The Black Dragons kidnap Christy , enticing Max and Jane to come to their hideout . Max and Grand Master reach an agreement that Max will fight Arnold Chon 's character to death . If Max wins , Max and the Goody sisters can go free . Max almost deals a deadly blow to the enforcer 's head , but stops himself at the last moment , sparing his life , yet winning the fight . He turns over the urn to the yakuza , and receives a priceless katana as a gift . Max and his allies celebrate the end of the adventure in a party . The film ends with Max embracing Jane Goody on a beach during sunset .

= = Cast = =

Director Albert Pyun cast Mickey Hardt as Max Havoc , as he was planning " toward European TV appeal , " based on Hardt 's role in the Donnie Yen film The Twins Effect and German TV series Puma : Fighter With a Heart (German : Der Puma ? Kämpfer mit Herz) , where Yen did fight choreography . He originally planned to cast Joanna Krupa as the younger sister , Christy Goody , with Jane 's part going to an established actress , but Krupa ended up playing the older sister , and local actress Tawney Sablan was cast in her stead in her first film role . Rapper Fat Joe and Taiwanese actress Shu Qi did not make the cast , according to Pyun , due to film 's financial problems . Billed as a top star , Carmen Electra appears in two brief scenes as a beach vendor , who flirts with Max Havoc when he returns a life jacket .

= = Production = =

According to Pyun , the idea of Max Havoc has existed since at least 2001 . At the time , he was asked to direct the film in Hawaii . After the September 11 attacks , it was decided that filming in Miami was more economically viable . Pyun said that Hawaiian film star Mark Dacascos was interested in playing the character of Max Havoc , but that he backed out after anthrax appeared in Florida . Bali was considered next for filming but the idea was abandoned after the terrorist bombing there in 2002 . The director and producer settled on filming on Guam , voicing their interest to Guam officials in late 2003 . Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon was supposed to be the first of two films to act as a backdoor pilot into a Max Havoc television series .

Filming began in March and finished in May 2004 . Some of the scenes were done in East Hagåtña Bay . Pyun had planned to shoot the film with a Vancouver @-@ based film crew , but after they were denied visas , he eventually had to resort to hiring a Los Angeles crew , which , he said , he later regretted . He complained about a lack of infrastructure for filming on Guam , as well as hostility from government officials once the film crew arrived on the island , and claimed that he was denied shooting on Waikiki Beach , which cost the film time and sponsorships . He also claimed he was not paid his director 's fee , calling the film " the worst financial decision [he] ever made . " Guam businesses and Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon crew members also reported not being paid for work on the film .

The producer , John F. S. Laing , blamed Pyun for the failure of the film . After the filming was completed on Guam , director Isaac Florentine was hired to touch up the film in Los Angeles in order to improve its marketability , adding around ten minutes of screen time in the process . Florentine declined screen credit , stating in a later interview that he " [did] n 't feel it [was] fair " to Pyun . The L.A. shoot took ten days , and featured David Carradine and Richard Roundtree , who were not part of the original cut .

= = Release = =

Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon premiered on Guam television on December 10 , 2005 . Because the film was poorly received and never played in theaters as promised , it was described as a " box office flop " by Guam 's press . In February 2005 , producer John F.S. Laing stated he had trouble finding a theatrical distributor for the film . As of 2010 , the film was reported to have grossed \$ 15 @, @ 000 on Guam and \$ 242 @, @ 229 internationally . On January 23 , 2007 , Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon was released on DVD in Region 1 . The DVD extras contained interviews and several text pages about the cast , a three @-@ minute trailer , a poster , a collection of still images from the film , and a calendar for 2007 featuring actresses from the film . The film was not rated by the Motion Picture Association of America .

A sequel , titled Max Havoc : Ring of Fire , premiered on September 12 , 2006 and on DVD on August 21 , 2007 . The film was produced in Canada and directed by Terry Ingram . Mickey Hardt reprises his role as Max Havoc , who comes to Seattle to do a photoshoot of a tennis champion played by Christina Cox , but has to deal with a street gang and organized crime , while Dean Cain plays the main antagonist . Max Havoc : Ring of Fire received mixed @-@ to @-@ negative reviews , being called a " run of the mill B @-@ movie . " On September 30 , 2009 , both films were released as a double feature on Blu @-@ ray in Germany .

= = Reception = =

Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon received mostly negative reviews . Reviewers were mostly focused on the film 's lacking plot and rampant cliché use . David Cornelius of DVD Talk described it as " the kind of moronic C @-@ level action flick that always stars some former martial arts champ " , noting that the controversy behind the funding of the film was more interesting than the film itself , and finishing with the advice to skip the film . Albert Valentin of Kung Fu Cinema was less critical of the film , praising choreography and Mickey Hardt 's performance in action sequences . Combustible Celluloid 's Jeffrey M. Anderson gave the film a neutral @-@ to @-@ positive review , mentioning " the overall ridiculousness of the film charmed [him] " , and commenting positively on the chemistry between Hardt 's and Krupa 's characters . Gene Park of Guam 's Pacific Daily News was , however , jarred by inaccuracies in the plot . He called the film a " guilty pleasure without the pleasure . " He thought the action editing was " epileptic " and compared the whole film to a travelogue . As of 2015 , review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes counts one positive and one negative review of the film .

Author Camilla Fojas later criticized Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon for its shortcoming as a promotional vehicle for Guam and its film industry , noting the colonialistic portrayal of Guam , especially in the parting scene where U.S. mainland @-@ based characters bid farewell to Chamorro people in a cliché fashion .

= = Litigation = =

At the request of producer John F.S. Laing and director Albert Pyun , the Guam Economic Development and Commerce Authority gave an \$ 800 @, @ 000 loan guarantee to Laing and his company Guam Motion Pictures Company (GMPC) to secure a third party loan from Comerica Bank in order to finance the film . GMPC was created by Laing on Guam to produce Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon , while Laing 's stateside company , Rigel Entertainment , was to handle distribution . GMPC was also supposed to produce a further theatrical film and two travel documentaries . In June 2006 , Laing defaulted on the loan to Comerica and the guarantee was forfeited . The rights to the film were subsequently auctioned by Comerica . A newly formed Canadian company , Up North Entertainment , Inc . , bought the film for \$ 83 @, @ 000 . Laing was listed as one of three directors of Up North Entertainment . Guam 's share of the foreclosure sale money was \$ 9 @, @ 090 .

The film has been mired in litigation on Guam and in California . Laing filed a case in California against the Government of Guam , alleging that he agreed to guarantee the collateral , but that the agreement was procured under duress , and that he was underpaid by Guam government for a series of public service announcements featuring Carmen Electra . In March 2008 , the case was

dismissed and Laing was ordered to pay Guam 's legal fees . Laing appealed twice and lost both appeals . GEDCA called Laing 's California lawsuit a " tactical maneuver " . Laing was also sued by the Government of Guam for fraud . Matthew Borden , attorney for the GEDCA , accused Laing of coming to the island with intention to defraud the government and people of Guam . In a retort , Laing claimed the Government of Guam pledged \$ 3 million in loans and other incentives if he were to come to the island and make Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon there . Guam officials denied making such a pledge and Laing admitted he did not possess any written agreements on the matter .

= = = Settlement = = =

A trial began in Guam Superior Court on February 13 , 2012 . After six years of litigation on Guam , a settlement was reached on May 11 . The GEDCA Board of Directors approved Laing 's offer of \$ 350 @, @ 000 in place of paying back the original \$ 800 @, @ 000 guarantee . The agreement stipulated that Laing would make a payment of \$ 250 @, @ 000 on June 30 , with the remainder paid by September 30 .

By the June deadline , Laing had made a payment of \$ 200 @, @ 000 . GEDCA requested the outstanding \$ 50 @, @ 000 along with the \$ 100 @, @ 000 remaining balance to be paid by Laing by the September deadline . When asked by a local talk radio station if the Max Havoc : Curse of the Dragon settlement money would be a windfall for GEDCA and could be used for future economic development projects on Guam , GEDCA administrator Karl Pangelinan stated that the money would barely pay for the legal fees incurred during the years of legal fighting with Laing . In September , Rigel Entertainment declared bankruptcy . On October 26 , GEDCA board met and established that Laing had made a partial late payment of \$ 75 @, @ 000 on the \$ 150 @, @ 000 still outstanding . A new deadline was set for January 31 , 2013 . Laing missed the January deadline , but in late February , GEDCA reported receiving the money , thus bringing the lawsuit to a close .