

# Final Weapon

October 4, 2010

11:03 AM MST



Poster of Final Weapon

*Final Weapon*

Final Weapon is a dramatic short film that takes viewers through the fast-moving odyssey of an aging Chinese warrior making a fatal choice upon his last battle. This action-packed movie stars famed [Tai Chi](#) Master [Ren Guangyi](#) and famous action movie star Michael Woods. The celebrated Classic, Alternative & Punk Rock n' Roll legend [Lou Reed](#) appears in this fast-moving film which is fueled by his Avant-garde music ([Street Hassle](#), [Finish Line](#), [The Spirit](#), and [Set The Twilight Reeling](#)). Movie producer, writer, director, and actor [Brandon Van Vliet](#) and [Nicole DuCane](#) also appear in this movie.

The 15-minute film was screened at this year's [Action on Film](#) International Film Festival in Pasadena, CA on July 24th, 2010. Master Ren Guangyi is a Tai Chi [martial arts](#) champion and has won numerous titles and awards both in China and in the U.S. Master Ren is an inheritor disciple of the Chen Style Tai Chi. He was featured on the cover of [Kung Fu Tai Chi Magazine](#) five times. This was his first time acting in a motion picture. It seems like his action skills have transferred well to the silver screen,

earning him first Runner Up in the category of “Breakout Action Star – Male”. The film also won an award of “Best Action Sequence Martial Arts Short”. Last week, this movie also got a rave review at the [Coney Island Film Festival](#), which is rated one of the top 25 film festivals in the nation. Some film industry experts also thought that the music and sound effects were done very well.

Final Weapon is an action drama about holding, passing, using, and protecting an ancient form of martial art that when employed, renders the user invincible for 20 minutes, after which he/she dies. Final Weapon offers a poetic expression of universal themes with diverse characters and a textured story that dramatizes the fatality and vitality that comes with truly determining one’s own fate. It was written and directed by [Stephan Berwick](#), a Western pioneer of mainland China martial arts, who was an early 'foreign' actor in the Hong Kong action film renaissance of the 1980s, under the famed director, [Yuen Woo-ping](#) and action star [Donnie Yen](#). Berwick performed in box-office movies, such as *Tiger Cage* and the *In the Line of Duty* series. As an advanced Tai Chi and martial arts practitioner, author and senior instructor, Stephan Berwick explains that Final Weapon explores the question of who is more important - those who are given the fatal responsibility to use overwhelming power or those given the task of protecting it.

Final Weapon was filmed and edited in Minnesota and Wisconsin, in high definition, with a highly experienced and talented crew from the Twin Cities. Master Ren told Tai Chi Examiner that the film was shot in three days. Actually, most of the crew/actors never met each other before. However, after a few rounds of rehearsing, the natural bond among them was cemented and kept them extremely productive. The dynamics and chemistry worked remarkably well and they were able to complete the shooting within their timeline. They did not use stunt doubles for the action sequences in the movie. With deft skill, Ren never hurt anyone even though he was throwing power punches and kicks. His kicks simply brushed off the opponents without actually touching them but you can’t tell from the movie. Without any wiring or special effects, Master Ren delivered the explosive power of Tai Chi.

The film was produced by Berwick and Jose Figueroa, in association with Minnesota-based production houses, Restraining Hollywood, [Rolen Motion Pictures](#), and [185 Media](#). [Sampson Rolen](#) edited and colorized the film, the director of photography was Sam Fischer, and the make-up artist was Laura Hart, with costume advisory provided by Hollywood costume designer, [Donna Berwick](#), who last designed the costumes for famous [Spike Lee's “Inside Man”](#). Restraining Hollywood is an Indie film and music video producer and has made dozens of music videos and four movies in the short span of operation since the fall of 2003.

But with the success of this short film, we certainly hope Hollywood will have a full-length movie on Tai Chi soon so the world can learn the true beauty and strength of Tai Chi.

**EXTRA:** at the deadline of this article’s publishing, I received the news that Final Weapon made the first round cut to be part of a small group of short films chosen by the [First Glance Film Festival](#) for

an online competition. This is a cool event focused on new film makers on both coasts. The next phase is the online competition, which began just this weekend. Now you can be the judge. You can register on the site at no charge, to vote on the films in competition. Voters must watch at least three films online before voting. Please spread the word about Final Weapon. And ask your family and friends on it. There is a good probability that this short film will be made into a full-length movie if it continues doing well at film festivals.

## **SUGGESTED LINKS**

- [Lou Reed: A highly celebrated Tai Chi practitioner and promoter](#)



**Violet Li**

Tai Chi Examiner