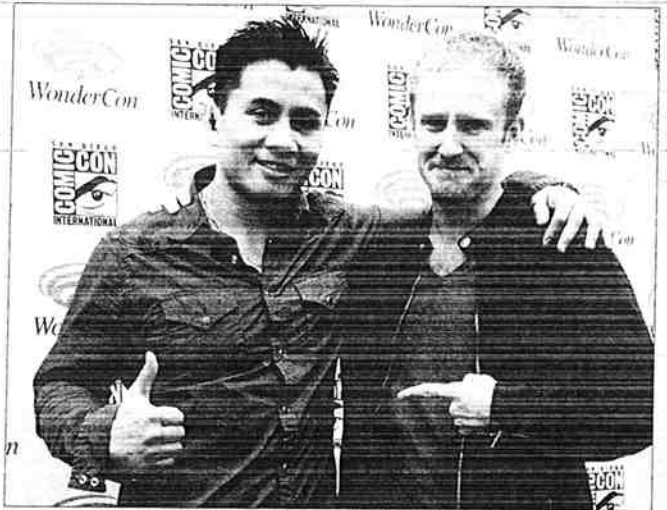


# CATCHING UP WITH CUNG LE: SANSHOU'S GOLDEN BOY TO THE SILVER SCREEN

By Gene Ching

Cung Le is on a roll. Last year, his dramatic victory over Frank Shamrock earned sanshou's "golden boy" the Strikeforce Middleweight Champion Belt. Le broke Shamrock's arm with a devastating kick. Shamrock returned to the cage on April 11<sup>th</sup> to face Nick Diaz. Had Shamrock won, he would have surely called Cung out. Cung said he would honor that rematch since Frank gave him the shot at his belt. But it was not to be. Diaz controlled that fight from start to finish, defeating Shamrock in the second round and leaving many to wonder if Shamrock's glory days are over. After the fight, Diaz didn't outright call out Cung, but he did say he felt Cung was "not a complete fighter." When you have a championship belt, there are many in line for the shot. Beyond Diaz, Strikeforce has a stable of potential middleweight fighters like Jake Shields and Phil Baroni. Most notable is former EliteXC middleweight champion Robbie Lawler. After EliteXC folded, Strikeforce sought to acquire their top signed fighters.

But since Shamrock lost, Cung isn't rushing to get back in the cage. At some point he will have to defend his belt, but he already has a full plate this year with promoting his films. "The great thing is that I have the four movies coming out this year," beams Cung. Cung's four films are *Fighting*, *Pandorum* (releasing September 4, 2009), *Tekken* (TBA) and *True Legend* (TBA). "All four of those movies are complete different genres of films. And it has different kinds of fights. *Fighting* has that gritty, street fight, martial artists versus a wrestler-street fighter. *Pandorum* is survival of whoever is on this ship. You got some fighting in there – I don't want to give anything away – but there's some really cool fight scenes in there. You got *Tekken*, which is a videogame made into a movie. My character is Marshall Law. Of course, I have to do what the fight coordinators ask me to do. The talent – if we don't listen to the director, we don't get hired – so I didn't get a chance to really put my signature moves in there. But I definitely got a chance to say, 'Hey, if you did this, it's going to make the fight a lot more dynamic.' There were little clips here and there where I was able to help add to the fight scene. And of course the last one, *True Legend*, I didn't do anything at all except for listen to Woo Ping. Whatever he asked me to do, I did." *True Legend* hails Yuen Woo Ping's first return to the director's chair since 1996. For the past twelve years, he's only been doing fight choreography.



Cung Le and actor Ben Foster (3:10 to Yuma, 30 Days of Night) at Wondercon in San Francisco CA.

With all his fight scenes already in the can, Cung is on promotional tours across the nation. It's a new frontier for

Cung to showcase his sanshou skills. "It's a tough world to succeed in. We want to use a combination of MMA fighters and traditional martial artists and the stunt guys to really bring more to enrich these action martial arts movies – make it more real and create a new era of fighting in film. I feel like I got something that people haven't seen yet. I've been saving it for my big film. I got four different movies with four different kinds of fights and I still haven't really got a chance to truly showcase what I can do. I'm just listening to directions right now, but this is like build up for that role that I have free range. Scissor kick everyone down!"



According to BoxOfficeMojo.com, *Fighting* pulled in \$11.4 million on its opening weekend and finished third behind *Obsessed* and *17 Again*. ☺

For a complete review of *Fighting*, see [www.KungFuMagazine.com](http://www.KungFuMagazine.com). Stay tuned to [KungFuMagazine.com](http://KungFuMagazine.com) for reviews of each of Cung Le's upcoming films, posted the week of their premiere. For more on Cung Le, check out our website archives for past cover stories and more exclusive e-zine articles, or visit his website at [CungLe.com](http://CungLe.com).

Cung Le as Marshall Law

