

PACIFIC RIM: UPRISING(2018)

- Released on March 23rd, 2018
- 1 Hour 51 minutes
- \$150,000,000 (estimated) Budget
- Directed by Steven S. DeKnight
- Written by Steven S. DeKnight, Emily Carmichael
- Double Dare You (DDY), Double Negative, Legendary Entertainment
- Rated PG-13 for sequences of sci-fi violence and action, and some language

QUICK THOUGHTS

- Marisa Serafini
- Phil Svitek
- Demetri Panos

DEVELOPMENT

- In 2012, prior to the first film's release, del Toro noted that he had ideas for a sequel, noting in 2014 that he had been working on a script with [Zak Penn](#) for several months
- In June 2014, del Toro stated that he would direct the sequel, and that it would be released by [Universal Pictures](#), Legendary's new financing and distribution partner, on April 7, 2017
- In July 2015, it was reported that filming was expected to begin in November, though production was halted following conflicts between Universal and Legendary
- As the sequel's future became unclear, Universal indefinitely delayed the film
- Still determined to have the film made, del Toro kept working and by that October announced that he had presented the studio with a script and a budget
- After the sale of Legendary to [Chinese Wanda Group](#) for \$3.5 billion, observers noted an increased likelihood of *Pacific Rim 2*'s production being revitalized because the first film was so successful in China
- In February 2016, the studio, and del Toro himself via Twitter, announced that Steven S. DeKnight would take over directing duties, with a new script written by [Jon Spaihts](#), marking DeKnight's feature directorial debut. del Toro remained on the project as a producer
- [Derek Connolly](#) was brought in on May 12, 2016, to rewrite the script again
- "I found out [Del Toro] was not available because of another movie. That was *The Shape of Water* as it turns out. Just that small little movie. Once I knew it was not him being given the boot, then I had to go through various stages of approval, the last one being Guillermo. Because he had to give his blessing, otherwise it was not going to happen. But we immediately hit it off because of our love for the genre, movies and comic books. It was like winning the lottery, and completely out of the blue — not what I was planning at all."- DeKnight

WRITING (Steven S. DeKnight, Emily Carmichael)

- Known for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, and *Smallville*. (Marisa's Shows!)
- "The writing process, I approached it very much like writing for television... So, we put together a writer's room for two weeks with half television writers and with half feature writers...I had, like, an eight page outline for the story, but there was a lot to be worked out. So, for two weeks, they helped me work out the story and name the Kaiju and name the Jaegers. We spent two days just on that."
- "I wanted to make the Pan-pacific Fighting Core a truly global fighting force. So I did away with nationalities of Jaegers and mixed up the pilots. You could have an English pilot with an American pilot, or Chinese pilot with South American pilot, really push that idea of unity. The biggest thing for that multinational cast was taking that narrative from the first movie and push that forward." - DeKnight

STORY/TOPICS

- Pressure of being the son of someone famous
- Class (Amara as the poor child)

- Love triangle
- Family ties
- Academy
- Evil corporation vs evil man
- Bringing back the Kaiju
- Action scenes
- Too many plotlines? (TV writers' instinct to fit everything in - except this time it's within 2 hours)

CAST

- Cast announcements began in June 2016, with John Boyega accepting a role, and news that Scott Eastwood was in talks appearing later that month
 - Further announcements took place in September and November
- A notable absence from the cast was [Charlie Hunnam](#), who could not join the project because of his scheduling conflicts with [King Arthur: Legend of the Sword](#)
- "I had originally planned a whole story with Raleigh Becket. And Charlie Hunnam is a wonderful guy, and I spoke to him about my plans — which he really liked — but unfortunately it was announced shortly after that he would be shooting a remake of *Papillon*, his passion project...I have a really, really cool way to reintroduce him. And I would love to see Charlie Hunnam alongside John Boyega, that would be a lot of fun." -DeKnight
- Of the diversity of the cast, Arjona says: "We have a Cuban, a Puerto Rican, a girl from the States, a guy from Hong Kong, a British actor of Nigerian heritage. There were so many different people and they threw us all together and we became a little family; that shows onscreen."
- "The size of the cast was something I'd never had to contend with before, there were people coming in and out every week. We had a huge number of Chinese talent, as well as talent from London, the U.S. and Australia. It was challenging, but also a lot of fun to see it all come together." Boyter (Producer)

JOHN BOYEGA (Jake Pentecost)

- Pentecost Definition (Symbolism): "the Christian festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his Ascension, held on the seventh Sunday after Easter.
- John Boyega is producing as well as playing the lead role of Jake Pentecost.
- "I had set up my own production company and went to Hollywood to introduce myself. One of the scheduled meetings was at Legendary, with Mary Parent and Cale Boyter. We talked about various projects, but at one point Mary said 'We're looking to do a sequel to PACIFIC RIM. Would you be interested in taking a look at a few things?' "I said 'yes, of course' and we went into the room next door where they had this incredible concept art on display, depicting me in this incredibly designed suit," he continues. "It was a fully developed pitch with Cale showing me all the amazing new elements for the film, featuring me." He laughs, "They cornered me, I have to say!" -Boyega
- "I was thrilled when I found out that John was interested. I met with him, and we were both very excited about the possibilities of what we could do with the franchise." -DeKnight
- "He definitely saw me every once in a while having a little freak out, to be like "I don't know what to do right now, I don't know how to do this." And he'd take me to the side and be like, "It's going to be okay, you got this. We'll break it down for you." And, you know, he didn't have to do that, but he's just such a great guy, genuinely, and he still checks up on me and how I'm doing. Yeah, so he taught me a lot." -Spaeny

SCOTT EASTWOOD (Nate Lambert)

- "I was always a fan of these monster films. Loved the Godzillas! I loved even the older films like the Ultramans or the King Kongs. So, for me it was. It was fulfilling that." -Eastwood
- "I took that sort of that mentoring role, which I played in the film. I took that sort of in real life. I tried to be the best. I tried to lead by example." -Eastwood
- "What I love about the film is that you're wearing these suits and operating these Jaegers, but you're still just a human being. You don't have special powers; you can get hurt or die. You're just

a human trying to fight in this war. I thought that was interesting. It wasn't mystical; it was based in reality." -Eastwood

CAILEE SPAENY (Amara Namani)

- The conscripted scavenger character 'Amana Namani', played by 'Cailee Spaeny', innovatively pilots her self made 'Jaeger', that has the call sign 'Scrapper', a term very aptly used from orthodox western boxing to describe a fighter that is small in stature but having strong willpower.
- "I met Steven, then had a day to take in his notes and prepare before I read with John. It was something I'd never experienced before, leaving an audition, feeling like I'd been working with a team. In a lot of auditions, you feel like the pressure is on you, but I didn't feel like that with Steven and John. It was very collaborative, and I got out of the room and thought: 'I have no idea if I'm going to get this part, but that was the most fun I've ever had.'" -Spaeny
- "When we were inside the com-pods it felt so realistic and detailed, there wasn't really much acting you had to do, cause you were actually in the suits, you were hooked up to the thing, they were yanking you across the com-pods, and then another day you'd be just doing all your scenes in front of green screen and you had imagined things right in front of you. It was such an on and off sort of thing and you really had to work your imagination. It was a good challenge for me." -Spaeny
- "I actually met with people who made the blueprints, and tried to get an idea of how a fifteen year old girl would actually make a jaeger like this. So I talked to the real geniuses who built her, I actually got, I learned how to weld. And I welded a piece to the actual set, which is crazy!" -Spaeny
- "Cailee's incredible. She lights up the screen. She's got a big career ahead of her. She brings that young innocence, but she has something about her that you can't put your finger on. She was so honest in her performance." -Eastwood

BURN GORMAN (Dr. Hermann Gottlieb)

- "I'd like to operate a Jaeger. I mean, really, it's never going to happen, I don't think. Yeah....I'd love to get into one of those. Except when they're practically filming, it's you know seventeen hour days in one of those suits isn't it? We've managed to avoid that so far." -Gorman

CHARLIE DAY (Dr. Newton Geiszler)

- Charles Peckham Day was born in New York City, NY, and raised in Middletown, Rhode Island. His parents are both music teachers - his mother, Mary (Peckham), is a piano teacher, and his father, Dr. Thomas Charles Day, was a professor of music at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island. Charlie plays both piano and guitar. He has Italian (from his paternal grandfather), Irish, and English ancestry.
- He attended Merrimack College in Massachusetts, majoring in art history. After graduating, he began acting at the Williamstown Theatre Festival and in small television roles. He supplemented his income by waiting tables and answering phones for a telethon selling a Motown anthology. He got his first agent after performing a funny blues song he'd written at a cabaret night.
- His big break came in 2005 after he pitched a home video he shot with his friends [Rob McElhenney](#) and [Glenn Howerton](#). This eventually became the hit series [It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia](#) (2005). As well as starring in the show, Charlie is also an Executive Producer and one of the writers. His breakthrough film role was [Horrible Bosses](#) (2011)
- He resides in Los Angeles with his wife.

TIAN JING (Liwen Shao)

- Jing Tian, who portrays Liwen, feels that her character "is a genius. Very few people on the planet can match her intelligence and work ethic. Having been the victim of the original Kaiju attacks, Liwen has devoted her life to stopping future ones. While she's amazingly successful professionally, socially she comes off as cold and unfriendly."

DIRECTING (Steven S. DeKnight)

- Steven S. DeKnight was born in Millville, New Jersey, USA. He is a producer and writer, known for [Daredevil](#) (2015), [Spartacus: War of the Damned](#) (2010) and [Angel](#) (1999)
- He is married to [Jaime Slater](#)
- “Thankfully, I had all this experience in TV. If I had not written and produced and directed shows in television, I would never have been able to have made such a huge undertaking.” -DeKnight
- “I took everything I learned from writing and directing and producing in television and applied it to this movie. This movie was basically the same as doing that, just times 100. It was everything was just supersized.” -DeKnight
- “I took inspiration from everything I grew up loving. I’m really a child of the late ‘70s, early ‘80s, so for me there’s a lot of Ultraman, Space Giants, Johnny Sokko and His Flying Robot.” -DeKnight
- Attended the University of California, Santa Cruz where he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in theater arts and went on to earn an MFA in playwriting from UCLA.

PRODUCTION (Dan Mindel)

- Principal photography on the film began on November 9, 2016, in Australia
- On December 14, 2016, the official title was revealed to be *Pacific Rim Uprising*
- In February 2017, three new Jaegers for the film were revealed
- On March 8, 2017, filming started in China
- Filming was completed on March 30, 2017
- “Dan Mindel, our DP came on, I asked him about doing [2.40 aspect ratio] and he said ‘I love 2.40! We should shoot in anamorphic and not spherical.’ I said ‘Now you’re talking my language!’ Obviously, there’s a reason Guillermo shot 1.85 in the first movie, because of the size of the Kaiju and Jaegers size, and having that extra top and bottom really helps out. It was not easy framing the action in 2.40 in a movie like this, but it was a challenge we call felt we wanted to take on for those cinematic reasons.” -DeKnight
- Majority of production took place at Fox Studios in Australia, with exteriors lensed in multiple places around Sydney and Brisbane.
- Scenes were captured on the sound stages at Wanda Studios in Qingdao, China; those were followed by location work at Mount Fuji in Japan, in Seoul and Busan in South Korea... as well as at waterfalls and glaciers in Iceland.
- Crew of 500 on set at Wanda Studios alone
- was the first U.S. production to be filmed at the massive, state-of-the-art Wanda Studios.
- “I come from a drawing background,” Peter Chiang explains, “so I storyboarded a lot of the visual-effects-heavy sequences, designing a lot of the action beats for Steven, so that his approval or comments on them would lead to the pre-visualization process. A team of three companies — Halon, Day For Night and The Third Floor — all did various parts of the pre-visualizations. Then, during the shoot, we captured plates with Dan Mindel and his team, and then finished in postproduction with computer graphics.”
- During the acquisition process on set, Chiang’s team gathered data about every aspect of the live-shooting strategy — lenses, camera heights, focal lengths and lighting conditions. A huge team of data wranglers captured photographs and carried out LIDAR scans all over the sets and locations. “A huge volume of data was captured during the live shoot,” says Chiang. “This information was invaluable to us during postproduction. When we place large robots and Kaiju into the scene, it enables us to light them the way that Dan lit them in the plates.”
- “The film takes place in 2035, so we needed to create a slightly futuristic look by adding CG to the present-day plates, which had to blend seamlessly as though it had been physically built. The depth of field, how the sun was in that particular environment, all of that information is key to us seamlessly blending our work into the preexisting plate. It’s harder because it’s daylight, but it was a great challenge and gives a great look.”

EDITING/VFX (Dylan Highsmith, Josh Schaeffer, Zach Staenberg)

- Several techniques help vfx artists from Double Negative animate the 2,000-ton and 240-foot tall robots as convincingly as possible, including previsualization (previs), motion capture, and even staging scenes with toys

- Halon, The Third Floor, and Day For Nite were the previs companies involved on *Pacific Rim Uprising* (other visual effects studios on the show included Atomic Fiction, Territory Studio, Turncoat Pictures, and an in-house team)
 - Chiang says the first stage of previs was mostly 'narrative' in nature. When he came on-board as vfx supervisor, he began breaking specific sequences down with further storyboards and even employed toys from the first *Pacific Rim* film directed by Guillermo del Toro as maquettes to plot out action and camera angles. "We had what we called the 'toy table,'" said Chiang. "We used that as a guide to start re-designing the sequences and making sure that everything that we were doing in visual effects was supported by what could be filmed for real."
- "You always push it as far as you can until people start screaming you are out of money. You do as much as you can with the resources you have. You always push it right up to the edge. You squeeze every last dime out of the budget you can to put it up on the screen. We were very fortunate to have Peter Chiang, my visual-effects supervisor, and the company Double Negative spearhead the lion's share of the effects." -DeKnight
- "I didn't want to do was repeat Guillermo's phenomenal visuals of shooting these fights in the rain at night. So, we did most of our action sequences during the day, which is technically a hell of a lot more difficult on the visual-effects department, when you can't hide anything and it's all broad daylight." -DeKnight
- In some previous giant robot-themed films, one of the common go-to methods for selling the weight of a giant robot or creature has been to slow everything down and sell the scale that way. That's certainly a lesson Chiang says he learned from watching the first film (the robot and creature visual effects of *Pacific Rim* were mostly completed by Industrial Light & Magic). But for the sequel, the decision was made to approach the animation slightly differently.
 - "We worked it out that one seventh was the speed that everything would move at the right scale," said Chiang. "But it would be a very slow and boring sequence if we animated it that way. So we used artistic license and cameras in order to cheat the look and feel, and keep the pace up."
 - Since the Jaegers did have somewhat similar anatomy to humans, the gross movements of the robots came initially from motion capture, overseen by Double Negative animation supervisor Aaron Gilman. This gave the fights a certain martial arts feel, although each robot effectively had a different style.
 - One of the challenges was translating the human motion capture into a massive steel mech. "Obviously a human moves with loads of rotations," said Chiang. "If you look at a robot's knee joint, it's not as flexible and only moves in a certain way. So a lot of that motion capture data was then edited, and certain axes taken out so that it went down to the raw fundamentals before keyframing."

TRIVIA

- The codename of three kaijus combination seen on Newt's handheld tablet screen, is Megakaiju. It refers to combination of Power Rangers' zords forming bipedal mecha, Megazord. (I knew it!- Marisa)
- In the final battle between Kaijus and Jaegers, you will find Unicorn Gundam statue and Anaheim Electronics name on building
- Bracer Phoenix is the second Jaeger to have three pilots, after Crimson Typhoon from Pacific Rim (2013)
- The giant kaiju made of the several smaller ones resembles Slattern the Category 5 from Pacific Rim (2013). They were the biggest kaijus in their movies, they used their tails to damage Jaegers, (Slattern used them to hit Striker Eureka's chest and to stab Gipsy Danger's back while the giant kaiju used them to rip off the legs of Saber Athena and throw it into a building.) and they used their environment to damage Jaegers. (Slattern shoved Striker Eureka into massive sea rocks while the giant kaiju shoved Guardian Bravo into several skyscrapers.)

SOUND/MUSIC (Lorne Balfe)

- Composer John Paesano was originally slated to be writing the score for the film, replacing the first film's composer Ramin Djawadi. However, in January 2018, it was announced that Paesano had been replaced by Lorne Balfe
- Composer John Paesano recorded a score in December 2017 at the Synchron Stage Vienna, that was not used.
- Balfe recently received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Original Main Title Theme (shared with Hans Zimmer) for GENIUS.
- Balfe earned his first Primetime Emmy Award nomination for the miniseries RESTLESS.

PROMOTION

- Warner Bros. Pictures, who produced the 1st film with Legendary Pictures until 2014 will release the film internationally. Universal, who collaborated with Legendary currently will distribute the film domestically.
- [Pacific Rim: Uprising](#) (2018) pushed back the release date from August 4, 2017 to February 23, 2018. It was later pushed back another month to March 23, 2018

BOX OFFICE

- As of March 29, 2018, *Pacific Rim Uprising* has grossed \$34.8 million in the United States and Canada, and \$122.4 million in other territories in the first weekend, for a worldwide total of \$157.2 million
- In order to [break even](#), the film needs to gross at least \$350 million worldwide
- In the United States and Canada, *Pacific Rim Uprising* was released alongside [Midnight Sun](#), [Sherlock Gnomes](#), [Unsane](#), and [Paul, Apostle of Christ](#), and was projected to gross \$22–29 million from 3,703 theaters in its opening weekend
- The film made \$2.35 million from Thursday night previews, down from the original's \$3.5 million, and \$10.4 million on its first day (including previews). It went on to debut to \$28 million, becoming the first film to dethrone [Black Panther](#) (which made \$16.7 million in its sixth week) for the top spot

RECEPTION

- RT: 46% Tatometer: 56%
- The website's critical consensus reads, "*Pacific Rim Uprising* won't win any points for subtlety or originality, but it delivers enough of the [rock 'em-sock 'em robots-vs.-kaiju](#) thrills that fans of the original will be looking for."
- IMDB: 6.0/10
- Cinemascore: B
- Mark Kennedy of [Associated Press](#) called the film "cheer-at-the-screen fun" and awarded it 3.5 out of 4 stars, lauding Boyega's performance and his chemistry with Spaeny, while also commending DeKnight for using daylight instead of the rainy night settings of del Toro
- Mel Evans of [Metro](#) gave the film 4 out of 5 stars, calling it "very loud, mighty fun, but not much more," while also applauding Boyega for his performance and noting his chemistry with Eastwood

SEQUEL/LEGACY

- *Pacific Rim Uprising* is a springboard for a cinematic universe, where DeKnight revealed "If enough people show up to this, we've already talked about the plot of the third movie, and how the end of the third movie would expand the universe to a [Star Wars/Star Trek](#)-style [franchise or series] where you can go in many, many different directions... You can go main canon, you can go spin-offs, you can go one-offs. Yeah, that's the plan."
- DeKnight also talked about the possibility of a crossover with the [MonsterVerse](#), as co-writer T.S. Nowlin is a member of its writers room