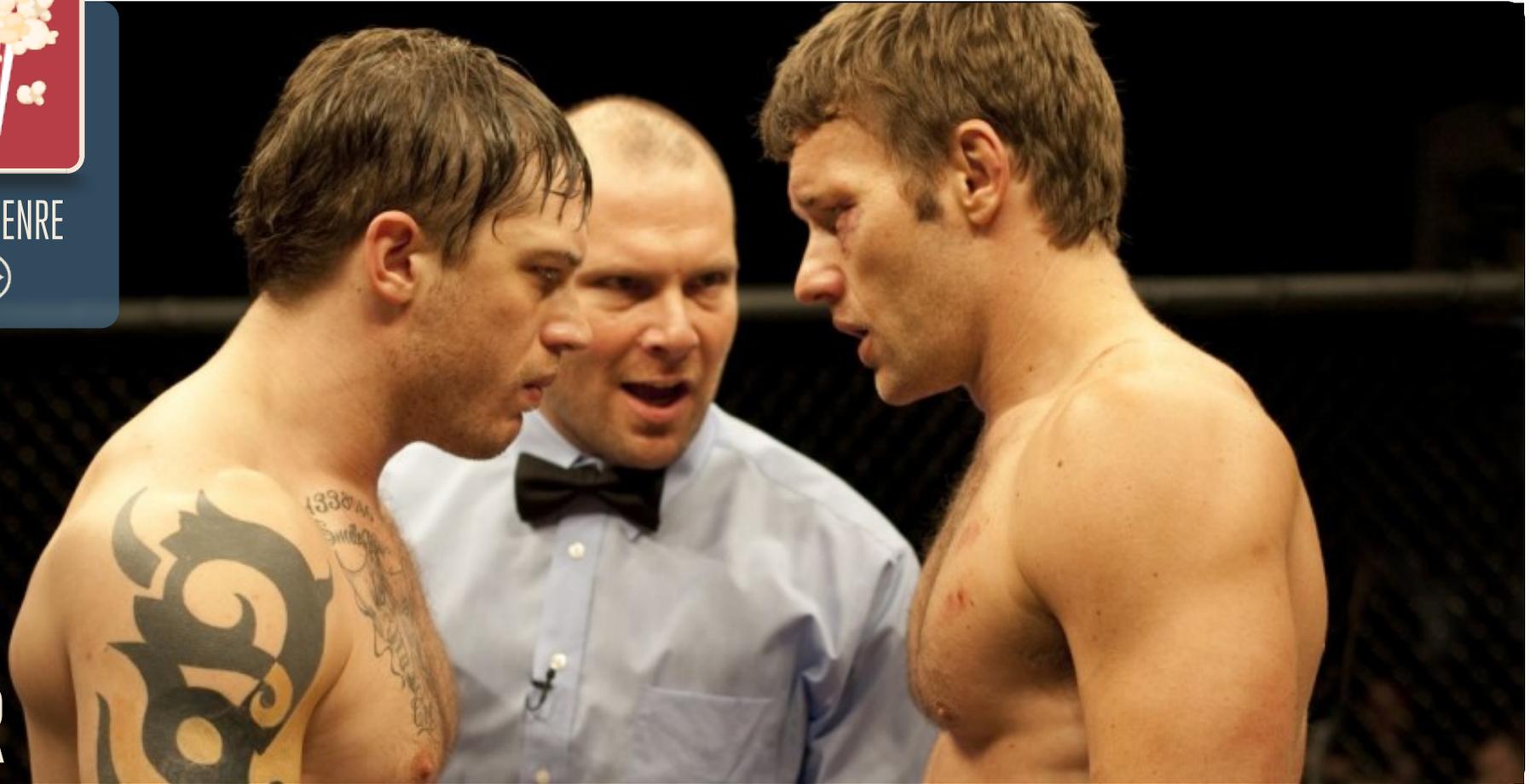


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WARRIOR

Movie Details

 Post Author: Matt Ho  May 6, 2013  0

OUR RATING



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BEFORE SUNSET

DIRECTOR GAVIN O'CONNOR

WRITER GAVIN O'CONNOR

US BOX OFFICE \$13.7M

RUN TIME 2 HR. 20 MIN. | RATED PG-13

YOUR RATING

GENRE DRAMA, SPORTS

WATCH THE TRAILER WARRIOR TRAILER

STARS Frank Grillo Jennifer Morrison Joel Edgerton Nick Nolte Tom Hardy

 3/5 3 votes

SYNOPSIS

Tommy Conlon (Tom Hardy) is a U.S. marine who returns home and needs a job. He reluctantly asks his recovering alcoholic/born-again Christian father Paddy (Nick Nolte) to become his trainer for a mixed martial arts (MMA) tournament, after discovering a \$5,000,000 cash prize. His brother Brendan (Joel Edgerton) is a former fighter-turned physics teacher with a family who's struggling to get by. The two siblings enter the cage and cross paths for the first time after years of estrangement.

REVIEW

It's a little hard to place *Warrior* under the "sports" genre because it's very much a drama at heart that, at times, makes the world of MMA secondary to the plot. Director Gavin O'Connor and co-writers Cliff Dorfman and Anthony Tambakis explore themes of estrangement, alcoholism, and reconciliation, allowing this to be more than a fight flick dependent on straight-up violence and sibling rivalry.

Warrior is an intimate look at a broken family long overdue for a serious intervention. It's a story filled



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It's no secret that Hollywood is running out of id [...]



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Margot (Michelle Williams) is married to Lou (Seth Rogen). The [...]



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son 3.1/5 351 votes SYNOPSIS Half Nelson is the featured version of Ryan Fleck's 19-minu [...]

U.S Box Office

Weekend Box Office for 5/3/2013	
Iron Man 3	\$174,144,585
Pain & Gain	\$7,511,315
42	\$6,055,327
Oblivion	\$5,642,335
The Croods	\$4,202,639

Source: *The Numbers* - Movie Box Office

Advertising

with intense emotions that draws you in from the start. The tension is restrained then released at all the right moments throughout. Positive comparisons to *The Fighter* and *Rocky* aren't unwarranted, but the film does set itself apart. The main characters, for one, aren't the archetype fighter personalities often portrayed in film. Brendan is the underdog against all odds, but he's not after pride, glory, or a major comeback; his return to the cage is a desperate last resort to provide for a family. Tommy is the bitter younger brother who'd normally be the childish, arrogant rival we love to hate. Instead, he's a broken man struggling with loss with which you sympathize. He's an interesting mirror to Paddy's former destructive self, but you respect his strong motivation to win for the widow of his fallen friend.

There aren't any actual villains either. Erik Apple's "Mad Dog Grimes" character is as close as we get to the film's equivalent of a Clubber Lang, but he's fairly minor and is quickly incapacitated. The whole point of the plot is for Tommy and Brendan to battle for the championship, which is essentially where their real intervention takes place since all words have failed the one time they meet outside the stadium. This is the most predictable part of the film, and yes, you'll likely figure out who winds up victorious too. However, you're placed in a strange paradoxical situation where you don't actually want to see the other person lose.

The casting is phenomenal and Joel Edgerton and Tom Hardy deserve huge praise for their dedication to the insane training they've undergone. It's clear that both actors lived and breathed the life of an MMA fighter because there's never a time where you doubt their authenticity. Everything you see in the choreography from the way they move, punch, kick and attempt a take-down is as real as it gets.

**The devil you know is better than the devil
you don't
-Paddy Conlon**

Edgerton is excellent, and he's finally able to show off his acting chops in a role that properly introduces him to the North American audience. He's admiring as a loving family man, passionate as a teacher, and inspiring as the underdog. Edgerton also delivers maturity and a sense of responsibility



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to the character's older brother mentality as he relentlessly tries to set things right. He's at his best in his final scene with Hardy, where he effortlessly switches between expressions of pain, anger, frustration, hesitation, and sadness.

Hardy once again shows why he's one of the best actors today. It's not the first time he's had a demanding physical role, having played the notorious violent prisoner Charles Bronson in **Nicolas Winding Refn's** 2008 film *Bronson*. He is a tremendous presence and he uses it to his advantage to capture Tommy's aggressive nature. Every time you watch Hardy fight, he's absolutely ferocious and brutal to the point where you know he's a guy you don't want to mess with. The strongest attribute in his performance though, is his ability to convey emotions through the eyes. Whether it's fiercely lit with animosity or wracked with pain, Hardy brings the appropriate balance to a complex character with a tough exterior, but one that is ultimately vulnerable on the inside.

Nick Nolte without a doubt steals the show from an already impressive cast. There's a good reason why he scored a nomination for Best Supporting Actor at the Oscars for *Warrior*. This guy grabs your attention whether he's silent or speaking, and he makes you really, *really* feel for his character in spite of his wrongs. His scenes, particularly with Hardy, can be difficult to watch because of the constant rejection and distrust Paddy faces as a former abusive alcoholic. Nolte powerfully persuades us that this is an individual so heavily buried with guilt and regret, that perhaps he's worthy of a second chance.

Honorable mentions also go to Jennifer Morrison and Frank Grillo. Morrison is solid as the wife who's disapproving at times, but is never a constant nag. Grillo as Edgerton's trainer is always believable whether he's coaching during sparring sessions, shouting instructions from outside the cage, or preaching his philosophy of fighting.

There aren't really any complaints with O'Connor's direction. I liked a lot of the over-the-shoulder shots because it added intimacy to the dramatic scenes. The use of split-screens and moving panels during Tommy and Brendan's training montage was a wise touch. The camera work doesn't get too shaky during the fight sequences and the transitions between close-ups and distanced shots were well-timed.

VERDICT

You don't have to like or understand MMA in order to enjoy *Warrior*. If you're looking for a mind-numbing, testosterone-filled experience, go look in the straight-to-DVD action aisle, because you



won't find it here. This is a film with a compelling story that dives deep into the dysfunctional relationship between its well-written characters that you find yourself caring about most of all.

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