Blu-Ray Review: Oscar-Winning ‘The Blind Side’ With Sandra Bullock

Submitted by BrianTT [1] on March 22, 2010 - 11:22am

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CHICAGO – Most critics and industry types expected “The Blind Side” with Sandra Bullock to be a modest holiday season hit but if a single one of them, including the people who made the film, told you that they knew this would be an Oscar-winning Best Picture nominee that grossed over $250 million, they are straight-up lying. “The Blind Side” shattered all expectations and Warner Brothers has quickly and somewhat lazily shuffled it off to Blu-ray and DVD.

Blu-Ray Rating: **3.0/5.0**

We’ll get to the Blu-ray details but we should discuss the quality of the film itself. Unlike a lot of critic friends, I can see the charm of “The Blind Side”. It’s an old-fashioned crowd-pleaser that allows people to feel good about their fellow man. Yes, there may be difficult sections of the country, but we can all sleep better at night knowing there are people like Leigh Anne Tuohy out there to save the day.



The Blind Side will be released on DVD and Blu-ray on March 23rd, 2010..
Photo credit: Warner Brothers Home Video

It is unabashedly feel-good. Even the producers would admit that they undeniably overlook some of the darker elements of the true story of Michael Oher, but audiences, especially in our current tough times, sometimes want to focus on the inspiration more than the reason for it. The film could have been a more intellectual, honest exercise, but it’s still a feel-good movie that works on its own terms.



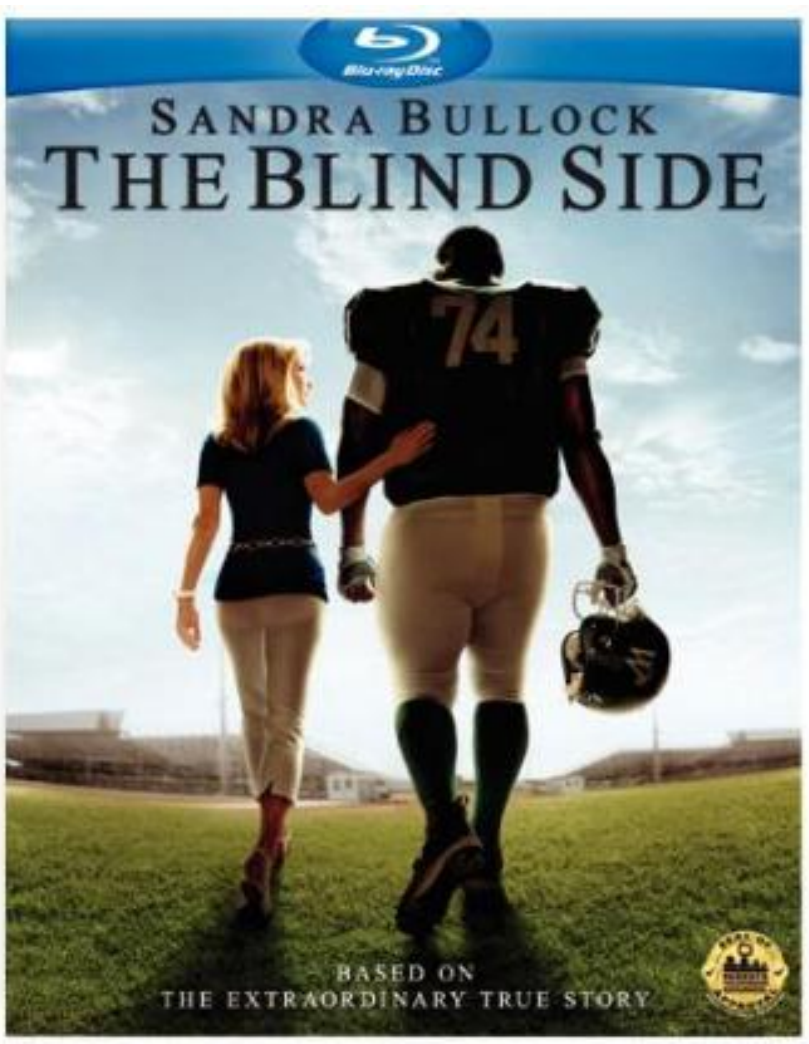
The Blind Side will be released on DVD and Blu-ray on March 23rd, 2010..
Photo credit: Warner Brothers Home Video

As for Bullock’s performance and her Oscar win, which has now sadly been overshadowed by the salacious coverage of the dissolution of her marriage to Jesse James, I like America’s sweetheart as much as anyone and I get why the Academy wanted to thank her for two decades of enjoyable filmmaking but there’s no way she deserved to win over not just any of the other four nominees but even snubbed actresses like Abbie Cornish (“Bright Star”), Maya Rudolph (“Away We Go”), or Tilda Swinton (“Julia”). But the Oscar is rarely given to the actual best performance of the year. There’s a lot more to it than that and many worse performances than Bullock’s have been handed the same prize, so let’s not hold it against the movie.

As for the film, I do wish they hadn’t turned the story into another one of a savior and focused on Michael’s story as much as Leigh Anne’s and they shouldn’t have commercialized the more controversial issues related to the NCAA in general, but “The Blind Side” never really pretends to be realism.

There was room in this story to make a truly thought-provoking, great film, but that doesn’t mean that the movie that was made didn’t end up a good one. Instead of an intellectual approach to poverty, football, and education and how they can intertwine, especially in the South, the producers of The Blind Side arguably took the easy way out by making a sentimental, feel-good film. But it still feels good.

Most films that make this much of an impact and actually land in the top ten grossers of the previous year come to the home market with lavish, marvelously-produced special edition releases. With that in mind, the Blu-ray of “The Blind Side” is slightly disappointing in that the standard DVD is bonus-free and the Blu-ray features an odd, scattered collection when a commentary track or comprehensive behind-the-scenes featurette would have been nice. Technically, it’s merely average with a video transfer that gets the job done but doesn’t impress as much as some recent WB releases. The audio mix is similarly satisfactory.



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Photo credit: Warner Brothers Home Video

Special features include:

“The Real Michael Oher: An Exclusive Interview” (10:02)

The charismatic and interesting Baltimore Raven finally gets some time in the spotlight to discuss the dramatization of his story in “The Blind Side”. What’s so striking about the interview is that it makes you realize how much Tuohy/Bullock has been the center of the press around the film and that it would have been nice to see more of Oher during the film’s release and wave of awards season publicity.

“Acting Coaches: Behind the Blind Side” (4:52)

The film features several legendary SEC college football coaches playing themselves and this mini-featurette details their casting and cameos.

“The Story of Big Quinton” (13:40)

The actor who plays Michael Oher gets some time in the spotlight.

“Sideline Conversations: Sandra Bullock & Leigh Anne Tuohy” (5:11)

Bullock and Tuohy interview each other in three mini-featurettes called “Becoming Leigh Anne,” “First Meeting,” and “Tuohy’s On Set”.

“Sideline Conversations: Director John Lee Hancock and Author Michael Lewis” (27:36)

Hancock and Lewis interview each other in some very detailed moments that almost serve the same purpose as a commentary track although one wonders if they could take half an hour to do these interviews, why couldn’t they sit down and discuss the movie for a track? Interview subjects include “Book to Screen,” “Finding The Blind Side,” “Gender Identity,” “Meeting Leigh Anne,” “Michael Oher,” “Miracles,” “Sandra and Leigh Anne,” and “Why The Blind Side”.

“Deleted Scenes” (7:07)

Four scenes that were correctly cut for time including “I’m the Designer,” “Lunch Ticket,” “Sizes,” and “Who You Looking For?”

‘The Blind Side’ will be released by Warner Brothers Home Video and stars Sandra Bullock, Tim McGraw, Quinton Aaron, Jae Head, Lily Collins, Kim Dickens, and Kathy Bates. It was written and directed by John Lee Hancock from the book by Michael Lewis. It will be released on Blu-ray and DVD on March 23rd, 2010. It is rated PG-13.


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