

Blu-ray Review: Riveting ‘Warrior’ With Tom Hardy, Nick Nolte

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 28, 2011 - 12:14pm

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CHICAGO – In much the same way that current movie goers are surprised to learn that a film as beloved as “The Shawshank Redemption” only made \$28 million on its initial run in theaters or that a drama that everyone can quote like “Fight Club” only made \$37 million, the box office gross for Gavin O’Connor’s incredible “Warrior” will shock future generations. It pulled in a measly \$14 million domestically (and only about \$9 more worldwide), meaning that most of you haven’t seen it. You must. You will eventually. And you’ll be stunned that Lionsgate couldn’t get it to more people. This is a great film, one of [my choices for the best of 2011](#) [14], and it was recently released on Blu-ray and DVD.



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

Perhaps it came too quickly on the heels of “The Fighter” and people weren’t ready for another work about fighting brothers but O’Connor’s film is a much darker, introspective work (and, to be honest, history will point to it as clearly the superior of the two). Whereas David O. Russell’s film (sometimes brilliantly) platys with archetypes — the fighter, the brother, the mother, the girlfriend — “Warrior” blends them all, blurring the lines between heroes and enemies. In fact, there are no enemies. The greatest enemy is the past, the baggage we carry into conversations and the fighting ring. This is a daring film, one that naturally is forced to use some sports movie clichés but does so in a way that feels unique.

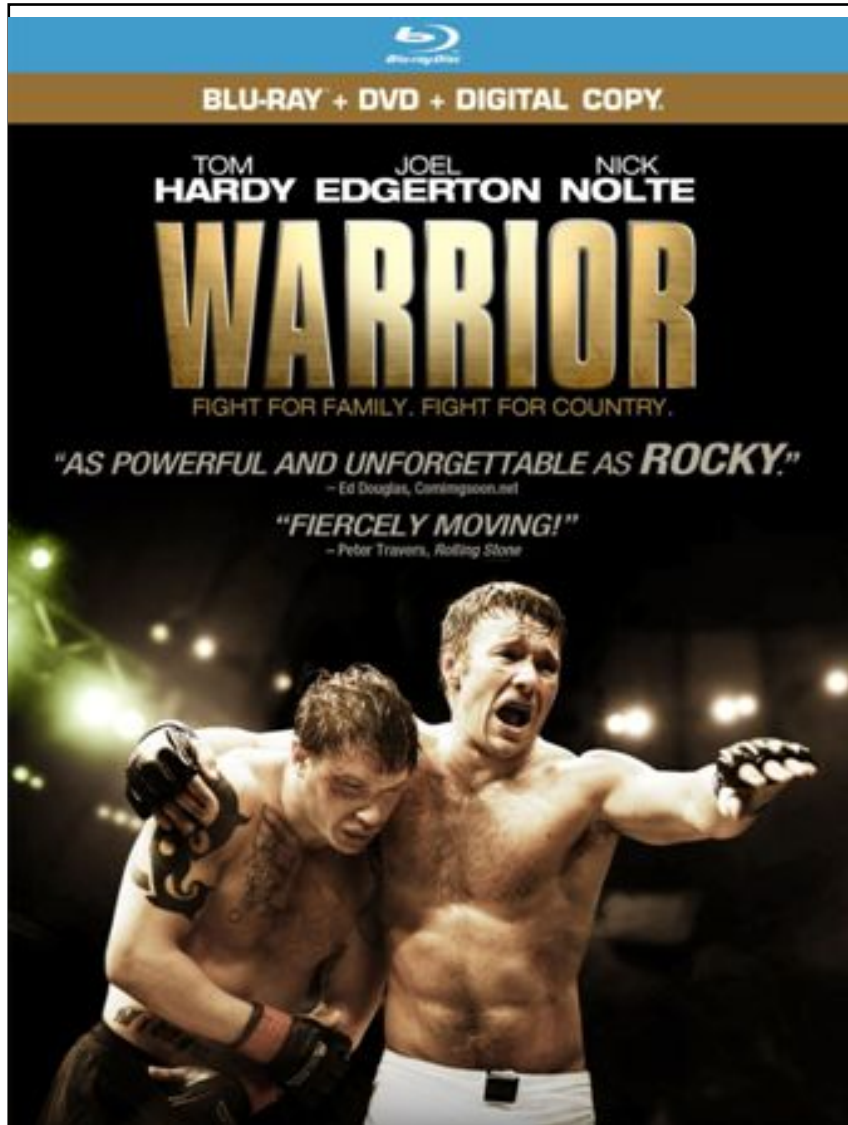


Warrior

Photo credit: Lionsgate Pictures

Tommy Conlon (Tom Hardy of “Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy”) has come home to his father’s place with some heavy baggage. Not only was he a soldier who saw intense combat overseas but he hasn’t seen the old man (Nick Nolte, giving the best supporting actor performance of 2011)

since he split the abusive alcoholic's home with his mother to escape dear old dad. Expecting to find Paddy in his typically-drunk state, Tommy seems almost angry that dad's been sober for almost three years. He didn't come to forgive him.



Warrior was released on Blu-ray and DVD on December 20th, 2011

Photo credit: Lionsgate

While the brutish Tommy heads down to the gym to work out some of his anger, the film switches to his more family-friendly brother Brendan (Joel Edgerton of "Animal Kingdom"). Brendan is more mild-mannered and shown smiling as opposed to his brooding brother. He has a family, a job as a teacher, and a gorgeous supportive wife (Jennifer Morrison of "House"). Brendan's family has been hit by the burst bubble. He's going to lose his home if he doesn't come up with some funds soon. The former MMA athlete returns to fighting in cash bouts in the parking lots of strip clubs, a choice that causes his suspension from school and creates some trouble at home.

Tommy and Brendan's arcs will rise apart from each other for a large majority of the film. In fact, they share only a couple of scenes (although they are, of course, the most pivotal in the entire piece). "Warrior" tells two parallel stories with the same intensity, attention to detail, and audience engagement. It's not long before both men are enrolled in Sparta, an Atlantic City MMA tournament designed to find the best fighter in the world. As Tommy and Brendan train, we learn little bits and pieces about their backgrounds and what got them to this place, culminating in some of the most riveting fighting sequences in the history of film.

"Warrior" could have been such a cliched mess. It sounds like it could have easily been a broad, Disney-fied redemption story, especially given the fact that O'Connor has delivered that before with "Miracle" (which is not to say that film is without value...it's great for what it is but nowhere near as impressive a drama as this piece of work). O'Connor takes his time, creating mood and atmosphere instead of focusing only on the fighting. This is a dark film about damaged people and one of its greatest accomplishments is how genuine that damage becomes for the viewer. We believe Tommy, Brendan, and Paddy not as iconic creations like Rocky or even Mickey Ward but as real people.

Audiences will surely find "Warrior" on Blu-ray, especially after Nolte gets more awards season attention and a likely nod for Best Supporting Actor, and they will find a package loaded with special features. Lionsgate fumbled the marketing for the film and the awards season campaigning (it's one of the few greats of 2011 that CFCA critics didn't get on screener) but they've put together a great release. It will add to the revisionist history that "Warrior" was the hit it deserved to be all along.

Special Features:

- o Full Contact Blu-ray Enhanced Viewing Mode
- o Redemption: Bringing Warrior To Life Documentary
- o Philosophy In Combat: Mixed Martial Arts Strategy
- o Simply Believe: A Tribute to Charles "Mask" Lewis, Jr.
- o Cheap Shots: Gag Reel
- o Brother Vs. Brother: Anatomy Of The Fight
- o The Diner: Deleted Scenes with Tom Hardy and Nick Nolte (with Optional Commentary)
- o Feature Audio Commentary with Filmmakers and Actor Joel Edgerton
- o Digital Copy Of Feature Film

"Warrior" stars Tom Hardy, Joel Edgerton, Nick Nolte, and Jennifer Morrison. It was written by Gavin O'Connor, Anthony Tambakis & Cliff Dorfman and directed by O'Connor. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on December 20th, 2011 and is rated PG-13.



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