

Blu-ray Review: 'The Last Stand' Marks Career Low for Schwarzenegger

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- [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#) [2]
- [Blu-ray Review](#) [3]
- [Forest Whittaker](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Johnny Knoxville](#) [6]
- [Kim Jee-Woon](#) [7]
- [Lionsgate Entertainment](#) [8]
- [Matt Fagerholm](#) [9]
- [The Good The Bad The Weird](#) [10]
- [The Last Stand](#) [11]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [12]

CHICAGO – “The Last Stand” may mark the first time Arnold Schwarzenegger fulfilled his iconic promise, “I’ll be back,” and the general public replied, “Who cares?” Designed as a comeback vehicle for the actor-turned-governor-turned-wannabe actor, this competently made yet instantly forgettable flick has already gained notoriety as one of the year’s biggest bombs. Hasta la vista, indeed.

Several factors could’ve played a role in the picture’s swift theatrical demise. Schwarzenegger’s heavily publicized affair and subsequent divorce, not to mention his tepidly received autobiography, kept his popularity at a record low, while the film’s sneering tagline, “Retirement is for Sissies,” may have turned off a great many working class moviegoers. Yet the biggest problem, as I see it, is Arnold himself. He is simply not a good actor. At all.



Blu-ray Rating: **2.0/5.0**

Sure, Schwarzenegger had the muscular physique of a steroid-dependent movie star back in the '80s, when he was required to do little more than rattle off billboard-ready catchphrases while maintaining a deadpan expression. He was the epitome of two-dimensional cool in “Terminator 2: Judgment Day,” but in “The Last Stand,” he resembles Tommy Wiseau with a tan. No longer can his embarrassingly stilted line delivery and forced facial expressions be played for easy laughs. This film needs an actor with the gravitas of Clint Eastwood or Henry Fonda to keep the audience engaged, and Schwarzenegger just doesn’t have it. He wouldn’t know a nuance if it was injected into his veins. Even the less impressive actors in this ensemble act him off the screen, with the exception of Johnny Knoxville, one of the rare actors whose screen persona has fewer dimensions than Schwarzenegger’s. It’s not really Arnold’s picture anyway, since he’s often left off-camera while the script basks in its wide array of supporting players: the good (Forest Whittaker, Rodrigo Santoro), the bad (Eduardo Noriega, Peter Stormare) and the weird (Luis Guzmán, Johnny Knoxville). If anything, this should’ve been Harry Dean Stanton’s picture, since he kickstarts the film’s adrenaline with his single scene as a gun-toting farmer. He’s so fearsome, he’d even make ol’ Arnie scurry off his lawn.



The Last Stand was released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 21st, 2013.

Photo credit: Lionsgate Entertainment

The most tragic thing about this doomed project is that it served as the English-language debut of Kim Jee-Woon, the enormously gifted Korean director of "I Saw the Devil" and, yes, "The Good, The Bad, The Weird." He certainly has a gift for staging effective action setpieces, and he demonstrates it multiple times in this film, particularly during the rather elegant climactic car chase through a cornfield. If Jee-Woon ever scores a hit on American soil, he'll be a shoo-in for "Fast & Furious 12."

"The Last Stand" is presented in 1080p High Definition (with a 2.40:1 aspect ratio), accompanied by English and Spanish audio tracks and is available in a Blu-ray/digital copy/UltraViolet combo pack. Special features include deleted/extended scenes, three featurettes and a half-hour making-of documentary where producers insist that it was their goal to show a different side of Schwarzenegger as part of his big screen reinvention. Instead of playing a square-jawed monosyllabic poster boy for justice, he plays a slightly older square-jawed monosyllabic poster boy for justice. His next projects include sequels to "The Terminator," "Conan" and "Twins" ("Jingle All the Way 2: Turbomen Assemble" has yet to be announced). So much for reinvention.

'The Last Stand' is released by Lionsgate Entertainment and stars Arnold Schwarzenegger, Forest Whitaker, Eduardo Noriega, Rodrigo Santoro, Jaimie Alexander, Luis Guzmán, Peter Stormare and Johnny Knoxville. It was written by Andrew Knauer and directed by Kim Jee-Woon. It was released on May 21st, 2013. It is rated R.



[13]

By [MATT FAGERHOLM](#) [14]

Staff Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

matt@hollywoodchicago.com [13]

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Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/mattmovieman>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/arnold-schwarzenegger>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blu-ray-review>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/forest-whittaker>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/johnny-knoxville>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/kim-jee-woon>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/lionsgate-entertainment>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/matt-fagerholm>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-good-the-bad-the-weird>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-last-stand>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
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