

## Film Review: Peter Berg's Brutal 'Lone Survivor' Lacks Context

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 9, 2014 - 1:12pm

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Imagine a version of "Saving Private Ryan" that takes place entirely on the beaches of Normandy. It would have a visceral power purely through the horror of the recreation of war. However, it would lack the context of the rest of the narrative and lead one to question why the cinematic trip was worth taking. War is Hell? We got that. And we know that the men of "Lone Survivor" are heroes beyond what film can really capture. But watching them get torn apart by enemy bullets doesn't automatically have dramatic resonance. Important subject matter alone does not make for rewarding, accomplished filmmaking and there's not just not enough here beyond what borders on military torture porn to justify a look.



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

In 2005, four Seal Team 10 members embarked on a mission to capture or kill Taliban leader Ahmad Shah in the Pech District of Afghanistan's Kunar Province under the code name Operation Red Wings. Overseen by LCDR Erik S. Kristensen (Eric Bana), the quartet included Matthew Axelson (Ben Foster), Danny Dietz (Emile Hirsch), Michael P. Murphy (Taylor Kitsch), and Marcus Luttrell (Mark Wahlberg). The mission included a large chunk of time in which the soldiers would be out of radio communication as the hill they had to descend to the village in which Shah was holed up didn't exactly have a cell phone tower. The men took their position and waited for the right moment to attack.



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And then disaster happened in the form of potential collateral damage. The men are discovered by goatherders, including a young one, and a tough decision must be made. In one of the film's best scenes, the men discuss how to deal with the discovery. Kill the innocent people? It's not only morally wrong but could damage the cause overall if the bodies are discovered and their murder traced back to American soldiers. Let them go and risk them warning the villagers? It could lead to the deaths of these brave young men. Needless to say, there's no easy answer and things get very bad before long. Bullets fly, RPGs are fired, and tragedy ensues. For about an hour, we're pinned down on that mountain as skin is ripped apart by gunfire and the cacophony of bullets piercing the air is deafening.



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*"Lone Survivor" stars Mark Wahlberg, Emile Hirsch, Ben Foster, Taylor Kitsch, and Eric Bana. It was written and directed by Peter Berg. It opens on January 10, 2014 and is rated R.*



Lone Survivor

*Photo credit: Universal Pictures*

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