

Film Review: ‘Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk’ Won Some of the Battles But Lost the War

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on November 18, 2016 - 1:08pm

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CHICAGO – War is an ugly part of our civilization, but it can be told beautifully. The complexities of battle are often dark and overwhelming, but inside of that there is also a light that reflects hope and love. “Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk” wants to show us both sides of the war, but despite the bright visuals it is still shrouded in problems.



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

Ang Lee is an accomplished storyteller with a growing penchant when it comes to visual style. His films tend to take on some deeper emotions with a focus on love and spirituality. “Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk” deals with the emotional scars of war, opportunists trying to profit from it, and coming to terms with their new reality and how war has fundamentally changed the way they view things. Lee tries to tell the story mostly through his gorgeous visual style, but that doesn’t hide the problems with the story itself.

Lee uses this film to make several statements about war and how soldiers are treated. This is all done through the characters in an effective, but unorthodox way that feels much more personalized than it has any right to be. During several scenes, the camera’s perspective shifts from third-person (like most films) to a first-person view. That means that when a character is talking to Billy Lynn, we see it through his eyes and it feels like it is breaking the fourth wall by directly talking to us, the viewer. This shift isn’t used haphazardly since the meticulous intention is clear. Lee wants to put us in their place and experience what the experience when a person talks to them. This is mostly used when another character is offering them their “wisdom” or just throwing them a diatribe, but it is the most affecting experience in the entire film.



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Billy Lynn (Joe Alwyn) during the showstopping halftime show in ‘Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk’

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Entertainment



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