

Blu-Ray Review: ‘Righteous Kill’ Represents New Low For Talented Actors

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 9, 2009 - 1:05pm

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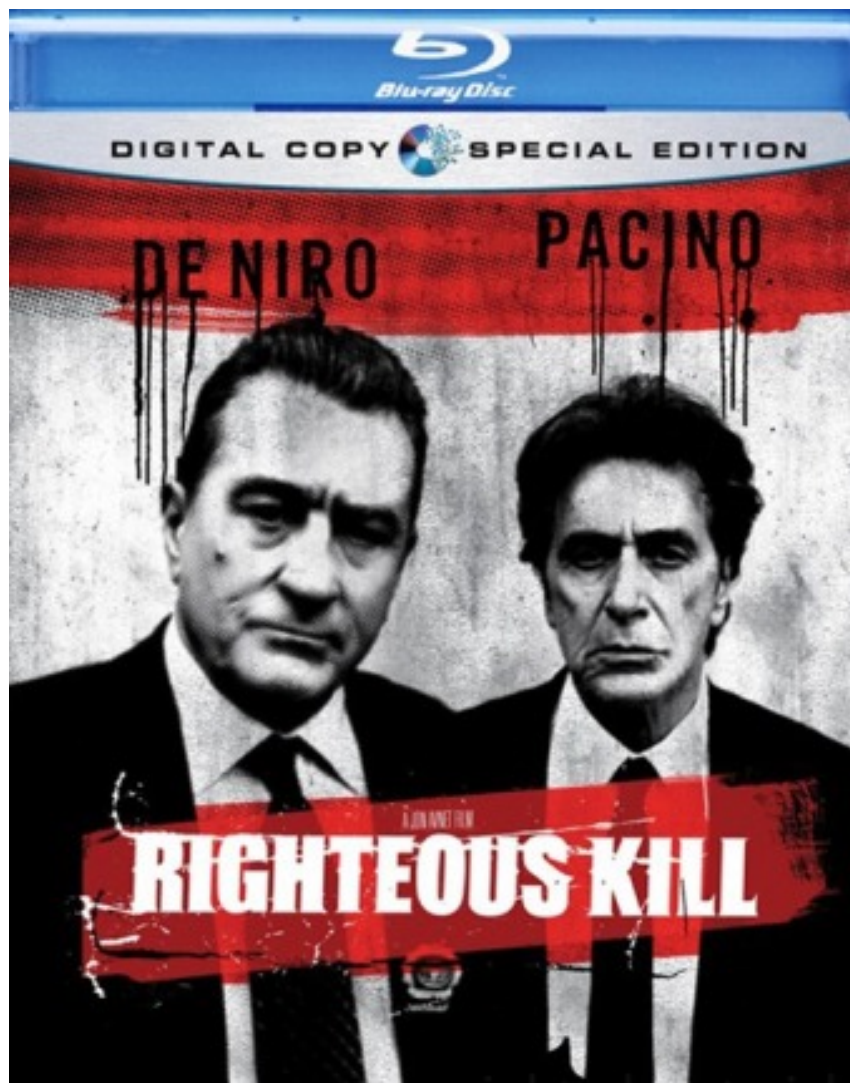
CHICAGO – “Is it *killing* time or is he just killing time?” If you don’t groan at a line of dialogue that shockingly horrendous then we’ve got a Blu-Ray release for you. Marking a new low in a baffling series of career decisions for two of the best actors of all time, “Righteous Kill” is as much an unqualified disaster on Blu-Ray as it was when critics ridiculed it and audiences ignored it in theaters.

Rarely has a film seemed *less* a part of the New York scene, but Detectives “Turk” (Robert De Niro) and “Rooster” (Al Pacino) have allegedly been partners for 30 years in the NYPD. They’re nearly ready for retirement when one last serial killer arrives on the scene. The bad guy in question is killing people who got off due to glitches in the system that let them go without jail time. In other words, they kind of deserve it, forcing Turk and Rooster to question whether or not he should really be caught.



Righteous Kill is released by Anchor Bay Home Video on January 6th, 2009.
Photo credit: Anchor Bay Home Video

The whole film is framed with the confession of one of the two men admitting that he was the serial killer, but, of course, there’s a predictable twist to the entire film that nearly everyone will see coming a mile away. Curtis ‘50 Cent’ Jackson co-stars as drug dealer, John Leguizamo and Donnie Wahlberg play detectives, Brian Dennehy the Lieutenant, and Carla Gugino a woman caught in the middle of the whole ugly affair. And I mean *ugly*.



Righteous Kill is released by Anchor Bay Home Video on January 6th, 2009.

Photo credit: Anchor Bay Home Video

Shouldn't the actors in a film at least stay awake while the cameras are rolling? You won't see many more half-asleep performances than Robert De Niro's mumbling, awful work in "Righteous Kill". It's as if director Jon Avnet purposefully plays up the worst habits of his two legendary stars. De Niro's always mumbled a bit and had trouble displaying too much energy in the second half of his career and he literally looks half-asleep during the majority of "Righteous Kill".

Pacino, on the other hand, well, we all know Pacino's weaknesses. They're the over-the-top tics that have made him so easy to parody. Think "Hoo-Ah!" from "Scent of a Woman". Pacino has a monologue near the end of "Righteous Kill" that feels like an impersonator doing an impression of this once-great actor. It's honestly sad to watch.

Pacino and De Niro definitely phone it in, but they're too talented to take all the blame for "Righteous Kill". That should be laid at the feet of Jon Avnet, a director who could politely be called uninteresting. After unleashing "88 Minutes" and "Righteous Kill" on the public in one year, it's clear that he no longer knows how to effectively tell a story, if he ever did. How often can one director not named Uwe Boll take credit for two of the worst movies of one year?

Al Pacino and Robert De Niro sharing the screen again since their magical teaming in "Heat" would have been a dream come true even just a few years ago. The sad fact of the matter is that neither of the best actors of the last thirty years are what they used to be and teaming them with one of the worst directors working today is only a recipe for disaster.

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The situation is not helped by Overture/Anchor Bay's lackluster Blu-Ray release. The video in 1080p is no better than it should be and sometimes a little flatter than you would expect on Blu-Ray. The Dolby True HD 5.1 track is good but not great, more than can be said for the movie it accompanies.

And the special features merit nothing more than a shoulder shrug. The behind-the-scenes featurette, "The Investigation," is dull and "The Thin Blue Line: An Exploration of Cops and Criminals" is about as insightful as a middle school term paper on the subject. Kids who are more testosterone-driven are more likely to become cops? You don't say. As for the commentary by Avnet, I'll admit it, I couldn't bring myself to listen to it. Not only is there no excuse for a movie as bad as "Righteous Kill," but I couldn't sit through watching these two great actors demean themselves another time. Once made me sad enough.

'Righteous Kill' is released by Anchor Bay Entertainment and stars Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Carla Gugino, Curtis Jackson, John Leguizamo, Donnie Wahlberg, and Brian Dennehy. It was written by Russell Gerwitz and directed by Jon Avnet. It was released on January 6th, 2009.



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