

A Grand Slam Comeback For Mickey Rourke in "The Wrestler"

January 15, 2009



By Mary Montserrat-Howlett

HOLLYWOOD(RushPRnews)01/15/09--Mickey Rourke has made a *grand slam* comeback in Darren Aronofsky's "The Wrestler", playing despondent, aging 80's wrestler: Randy "The Ram". With striking parallels between Rourke's real life and the character he portrays, Rourke himself admits, "I get them confused". As Rourke struggles to overcome all the mistakes of the last thirteen years of his life, "The Ram" tries to rekindle what's left of his wrestling glory days- blasting memorable heavy metal music and driving around in a pick-up truck. If this is the role that could win Rourke the Oscar, it is also the role that came with a fight.

Rourke tells RushPRnews, "[Aronofsky] took a big chance working with me because everybody told him "You're making the wrong decision"".

According to Aronofsky, "Every single financier on the planet said 'no' to this movie at least once, and the reason was Mickey." But Aronofsky believed in the film, he believed in Mickey, and he says, "The great victory of this film is that they were wrong."





Not that Rourke was going to have any time to mess around anyway. According to Rourke, Aronofky made it very clear who was going to be calling the shots... “You’re going to listen to everything I say, you’re going to do everything I tell you and you’re never going to disrespect me in front of the crew... And I’m not going to pay you.”

Well, whatever Rourke may have lost financially, he certainly gained back in respect and recognition. This movie had no money; it was shot in a documentary-style, with the use of a hand-held camera; but Rourke is so engaging you can’t keep your eyes off the screen for even a moment.

Rourke’s physical challenges playing “The Ram” were just about as tough as the emotional ones. Rourke went from 192 pounds to 235 pounds in the six months of training for the film. He even hired an Israeli cage fighter as his trainer, “And this guy took his job seriously”, he says. “I got disciplined real



quick with him.”

And that was just the training part. Wrestling practice is when he really began to fear for his life. “I think I had three MRI’s in one month”, he says. “I remember calling my agent and saying I don’t know if I can do this and being too scared to go to a real doctor and hear what they were going to say.”

But Rourke stuck through the pain and exertion and pulled through when

almost no one believed in him and as anyone who has had his fair of rough patches, he is thankful to those helping him along the way . As Rourke said during a recent Oprah Winfrey's interview, “ I met a few good men along the way. A priest , Father Peter, a shrink, Steve, and my new agent David. David put his life on the line for me. And my dogs.”

In the role that was made for Rourke as much as he was for the role, this has the true markings of a comeback performance. The difference between Rourke and “The Ram”? “Randy wants one more chance and he ain’t gonna get it,” Rourke says, “I’ve been lucky, I got another chance.”

About the author:

Mary Montserrat-Howlett, RushPR' Assistant Managing Editor and reporter covers politics, environment and entertainment. Her writing career took off two years ago, with articles predominantly dealing with minority rights in the workplace. She has a vested interest in social issues and in her spare time, enjoys to work on a series of short stories and scripts.

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