

## The War at Home: "Brothers," "Armored," "Everybody's Fine," and "Transylmania"

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 06 December 2009 16:35

---

- [Download Autodesk AutoCAD Architecture 2014 \(32-bit\)](#)
- [Discount - Cyberlink PowerDirector 9](#)
- [199.95\\$ Autodesk Mudbox 2012 \(32-bit\) cheap oem](#)
- [Buy Cheap Ashampoo ClipFisher \(32-bit\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Adobe Creative Suite 3 Web Premium](#)
- [Discount - Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium](#)
- [Download Lynda.com - Ruby on Rails Beyond the Basics](#)
- [Buy Cheap Infinite Skills - OS X Server 10.6 Snow Leopard Training MAC](#)
- [Discount - Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2013](#)
- [Discount - Pixologic ZBrush 3 MAC](#)
- [9.95\\$ Lynda.com - Up and Running with Photoshop for Photography cheap oem](#)
- [Buy OEM The Adobe Photoshop CS4 Book for Digital Photographers](#)
- [9.95\\$ Photoshop CC For Dummies cheap oem](#)
- [Buy Cheap Sony Vegas Movie Studio HD Platinum 11](#)



### **BROTHERS**

In director Jim Sheridan's *Brothers*, adapted from a 2004 Danish film of the same title, a stalwart Marine captain (Tobey Maguire) is captured, tortured, and presumed dead during his fourth tour in Afghanistan. Miraculously, however, he survives the ordeal, only to return home convinced - and not entirely without reason - that his loving wife (Natalie Portman) is sleeping with his ex-con brother (Jake Gyllenhaal). Even if the movie weren't a remake, this wouldn't exactly be the most inventive of plotlines, but there's still enough about

*Brothers*

that's raw, painful, and touching to make it satisfying melodrama regardless of its contrived design. Or rather, there

*would*

be, if you weren't so frequently distracted by all the capital-A Acting that's going on.

This isn't to say the film's performers are bad, necessarily, and several - Sam Shepard, Mare Winningham, and Carey Mulligan especially - are really quite fine. But miscast actors are almost always forced into working harder than they should have to, and despite (or maybe because of) their best attempts, Maguire, Portman, and Gyllenhaal aren't terribly effective; there's barely a moment when you sense they've stopped playing their archetypal characters and have *become* characters. Portman has a lovely gravity but is too inherently radiant and youthful to be convincing as a depressed, working-class mom - she's more like a really nice, really attentive

## The War at Home: "Brothers," "Armored," "Everybody's Fine," and "Transylmania"

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 06 December 2009 16:35

---

babysitter - and Gyllenhaal's bad-ass posturing is nothing

*but*

posturing, his drunken anguish as artificial as his ne'er-do-well's eventual, aw-shucks sweetness. (Portman's and Gyllenhaal's roles beg for Michelle Williams and Ryan Gosling.) As for Maguire, his character's trajectory might've been moving if you weren't so conscious of the strenuous effort behind it; with his bug-eyed paranoia and screechy, high-pitched emoting, the actor is so busy fighting his natural passivity that he routinely yanks you out of whatever realism

*Brothers*

can lay claim to.

Thankfully, though, there are two completely naturalistic, wholly believable portrayals on hand: Bailee Madison and Taylor Geare play Maguire's and Portman's young daughters with such unaffected poignancy and humor that they nearly wipe their adult co-stars clear off the screen. If you choke up at the movie, it'll likely be because of the stunningly graceful portrayals that Sheridan elicits from these two, who don't yet share 20 years between them; everything that Madison and Geare do, from trembling with sadness to happily joshing at the dining-room table, feels spontaneous, emotionally precise, and blessedly true. U2 may be playing over

*Brothers*

' end credits, but don't be surprised if, in your head, you're not hearing the Irish band so much as French crooner Maurice Chevalier singing "Thank Heaven for Little Girls."



**ARMORED**

Director Nimród Antal's *Armored* finds veteran armored-truck guard Matt Dillon telling newbie Columbus Short about an inside job that'll net them and their partners \$42 million, explaining that the plan is foolproof because "there are no bad guys here, only good guys." Considering that it's Matt Dillon talking, and that their accomplices include Jean Reno, Skeet Ulrich, and Laurence Fishburne, this is, of course, the pinnacle of irony. And

*Armored*

itself is just about the pinnacle of low-rent action thrillers: speedy, tightly plotted, and enjoyable as hell. Nothing that happens here will come as any great shock, yet Antal - as he proved in 2007's

## The War at Home: "Brothers," "Armored," "Everybody's Fine," and "Transylmania"

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 06 December 2009 16:35

---

### *Vacancy*

- is an expert genre helmer; he has a true gift for the building of claustrophobic tension, stages killings with imagination and verve, and knows how to get uniformly excellent performances from frequently ill-used actors. There isn't much

to

the movie, but there also isn't a boring scene in it;

### *Armored*

is the sort of smart, unpretentious throwaway entertainment that you'd almost thought Hollywood had forgotten how to make.



### **EVERYBODY'S FINE**

I'm sorry, but has Robert De Niro, like, *completely* given up? As much as some of us hated seeing him in constipated-tough-guy mode in last year's detestable

### *Righteous Kill*

, it's somehow even worse watching him play a saintly shnook in Kirk Jones'

### *Everybody's Fine*

, an aching mild piece of holiday treacle that finds De Niro's lovable codger schlepping cross-country to visit his recently estranged children (Kate Beckinsale, Sam Rockwell, and Drew Barrymore). The movie is like

### *The Trip to Bountiful*

without the pulse-pounding excitement of an extended bus trip to Texas - with one exception, everyone De Niro encounters is courteous, kind, and vaguely sad - and it's all so precious and maudlin that it wasn't at all surprising to hear a man behind me snoring at the end of the first reel. How he stayed awake for the 15 minutes beforehand remains a mystery.

# The War at Home: "Brothers," "Armored," "Everybody's Fine," and "Transylmania"

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 06 December 2009 16:35

---



was a scene from the movie "The War at Home" (It's a comedy about a couple trying to