

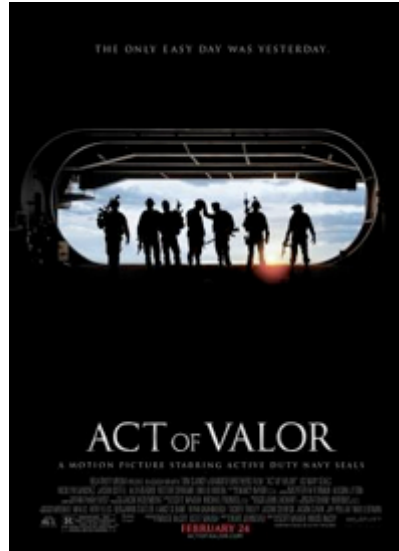


Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 25, 2012

“Act of Valor” Film: Navy SEALs Target Suicide-Bomber Plot

The film opens with the deployment of SEAL Team 7 to Latin America to rescue a female CIA agent who has been captured by a drug lord working closely with the Ukrainian mastermind. Team members soon discover that the web of connections among the protagonists is even more complicated than originally anticipated, and that their task does not end with merely rescuing the woman.

The drug lord is tied not only to the terrorist leader but also to a Russian arms dealer, the latter of whom the team must capture first. Once in SEAL custody, the arms dealer informs them of the suicide bombers — who will be using materials provided by the arms dealer.



The main focus of the movie — Team 7's challenge to reach the terrorist leader before his team enters the United States — provides plenty of violent and intense action as they chase their target from the Philippines to Somalia to the U.S.-Mexican border, all the while showcasing the heroism of the SEALs. *Act of Valor* also probes behind the outward exploits of this team, underscoring the sacrifice each man makes, and the impact of their profession on both their families and their own emotional well-being.

Because actual Navy SEALs played key roles in the movie, there's a level of authenticity throughout. The training exercises and action sequences are based on real strategies and operations performed by this elite group. For this reason, it seems almost absurd to discuss the merit of the acting, as most of the film is as close to real as possible. However, in scenes where the SEALs are expected to give compelling performances that do not include their real-life work, the “actors” unsurprisingly fall short.

One of the film's underlying implications — that there are seemingly terrorists around almost every corner waiting to kill Americans — may disturb Americans who daily recognize such an idea being used by the federal government as a rationale to strip away their liberties through an ever-expanding web of federal laws and agencies (the [Patriot Act](#), the [NDAA](#), the TSA, etc.) in the name of “security.”

The film's title aptly captures its prime theme: valor. The SEALs are prepared to sacrifice all for what they feel is a worthy cause, and for each other. In fact, in the film's narration, we're told, “If you're not willing to give up everything, you've already lost.” The men's total focus on the mission is best exemplified when a SEAL (who nearly died in a violent skirmish) regains consciousness and immediately asks whether they accomplished their task. The men are like machines programmed to carry out their duty first and foremost, and all else comes second.

Act of Valor is clearly intended to glorify the American military in general, and of course particularly the Navy SEALs, who have gained popularity following their reported killing of Osama bin Laden. The SEAL



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team in this picture is depicted as all good guys, ones who are excellent at killing the bad guys, but do not hesitate to hold their fire whenever a civilian is in the way. Upon their return home, they feel no cause for a guilty conscience, having carried out their mission without complicating their own morals or ideals of right and wrong.

Valor's realistic but gory violence, frightening and intense situations, and strong foul language prevent it from being fare for the younger family members.



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