

FIGHTING THE FIRE

Film Review

Thomas Laresca, *Novel & Film Writer*

Film Producer: "I Can't Breathe (God Forgive Them) (NY)"

I really enjoyed the movie. I found it very interesting looking into what a first responder must go through. The movie also addresses a very important topic - mental health.

The acting was terrific. James Dickey, who played the lead character, Brian Cook, did an amazing job of bring to life the struggles of a responder trying to find a way to combat his demons before they destroy him and everything he loves.

Angela Baker, who played his wife, Melanie, was fantastic in her role. It is difficult to portray a character who is both supportive and at the end of her rope at the same time. I found myself feeling as sorry for her as I did for Brian.

I was also impressed by Brayden Lacer, who played Brian's son, Drew. Witnessing such emotion from a young actor was truly amazing. He and his sister, Maddie (played by Kaitlyn Kemp), faced not only the agony of living through their father's struggles, but faced a devastating loss of their own.

The scenes with the responder meeting were so emotional and gut wrenching. I found it hard to watch at times. In fact, I had to stop the film, gather myself, and go back to it. Hearing those stories being so emotionally presented by talented actors was truly masterful. Simply put – it was powerful!

Fighting the Fire is a very well-made movie. I have worked with the writer/director, Bobby Lacer, on a previous project about my real-life true story. He and his crew did an amazing job of bringing the story to life, so I am not surprised by the quality of this film or the amazing story-telling of the script. It is very thought-provoking, especially for people that may be struggling with PTSD, anxiety or other mental issues.

This movie really struck home with me as my dad was a firefighter, and he struggled his entire life with not being able to save a young child. The horrors he faced throughout his career were many. This film presents the struggles of first responders in a way I have never seen in any other film. It also teaches people, responders or otherwise, to seek help from others. Don't face your struggles alone. There are people who love you and want to help.

It is a truly masterful film. I am hoping for sequel. 10 stars from me!