

EVEREST – Film at CONCA VERDE on 11.01.16 – Talk by Peter Anderson (from Wikipedia)

Everest is a 2015 survival film directed by Baltasar Kormákur and written by William Nicholson and Simon Beaufoy. The film stars are Jason Clarke, Josh Brolin, John Hawkes, Robin Wright, Michael Kelly, Sam Worthington, Keira Knightley, Emily Watson, and Jake Gyllenhaal.

The film opened the 72nd Venice International Film Festival on September 2, 2015, and was released theatrically on September 18, 2015. It is based on the real events of the 1996 Mount Everest disaster, and focuses on the survival attempts of two expedition groups, one led by Rob Hall (Jason Clarke) and the other by Scott Fischer (Jake Gyllenhaal).

Survival films

The **survival film** is a film genre in which one or more characters make an effort at physical survival. It often overlaps with other film genres. It is a subgenre of the adventure film, along with swashbuckler films (film di cappa e spada – like Zorro or Robin Hood), war films, and safari films. Survival films are darker than most other adventure films which usually focuses its storyline on a single character, usually the protagonist. The films tend to be "located primarily in a contemporary context" so film audiences are familiar with the setting, meaning the characters' activities are less romanticized.

Thomas Sobchack compared the survival film to romance: "They both emphasize the heroic triumph over obstacles which threaten social order and the reaffirmation of predominant social values such as fair play and respect for merit and cooperation."^[2] The author said survival films "identify and isolate a microcosm of society", such as the surviving group from the plane crash in *The Flight of the Phoenix* (1965) or those on the overturned ocean liner in *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972). Sobchack explained, "Most of the time in a survival film is spent depicting the process whereby the group, cut off from the securities and certainties of the ordinary support networks of civilized life, forms itself into a functioning, effective unit." The group often varies in types of characters, sometimes to the point of caricature. While women have historically been stereotyped in such films, they "often play a decisive role in the success or failure of the group".

Critical response

Everest has received generally positive reviews from critics. On Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds a rating of 73%, based on 190 reviews, with an average rating of 6.7/10. The site's consensus reads, "Everest boasts all the dizzying cinematography a person could hope to get out a movie about mountain climbers, even if it's content to tread less challenging narrative terrain." On Metacritic the film has a score of 64 out of 100, based on 39 critics, indicating "generally favorable reviews".

Jon Krakauer, author of *Into Thin Air*, denounced the movie, stating some of its details were fabricated and defamatory. He also expressed regret regarding Sony's rapid acquisition of the rights to the book. Director Baltasar Kormákur responded, claiming Krakauer's first-person account was not used as source material for the film and alleging that Krakauer's version conflicted with actual events.

The Everest disaster is taught as part of the leadership curriculum at Harvard Business School and INSEAD. As per the Business case studies, which are well researched, the Everest film narrative is counterfactual in a number of incidents as to what the survivors of the Everest disaster have actually stated.

The mountain

Mount Everest, at 8,848 metres (29,029 ft) is the world's highest mountain and a particularly desirable peak for mountaineers. More than 250 people have died trying to climb it.

Most deaths have been attributed to avalanche, injury from fall or ice collapse, exposure or health problems related to conditions on the mountain. Not all bodies have been located, so details on those fatalities are not available. Most bodies still remain on the mountain, even in cases of easy recovery.

The most dangerous steps on Everest are taken between 5,400 to 6,400 metres (17,700–21,000 ft), and there are steps that many climbers are actually able to avoid. This is because the Nepalese Sherpas they hire help install fixed ropes, carry gear, and break tracks on the route to the top.

The upper reaches of the mountain are in the death zone. The death zone is a mountaineering term for altitudes above a certain point – around 8,000 m (26,000 ft), or less than 356 millibars (5.16 psi) of atmospheric pressure – where the oxygen level is not sufficient to sustain human life.^[3] Many deaths in high-altitude mountaineering have been caused by the effects of the death zone, either directly (loss of vital functions) or indirectly (unwise decisions made under stress or physical weakening leading to accidents). In the death zone, the human body cannot acclimatize, as it uses oxygen faster than it can be replenished. An extended stay in the zone without supplementary oxygen will result in deterioration of bodily functions, loss of consciousness and, ultimately, death.

Plot

In March 1996, several commercial expeditions arrive at Mount Everest base camp to prepare for a climb to the summit. Rob Hall, who first popularized guided Everest climbs, is the leader of Adventure Consultants and Scott Fischer is the chief guide for competitor Mountain Madness. Rob's clients include Beck Weathers, an experienced climber; Doug Hansen, a former mailman pursuing his dream; and climbing veteran Yasuko Namba, who is hoping to complete her last of the Seven Summits. Also accompanying Rob's group is Outside Magazine journalist Jon Krakauer. Helen Wilton is Rob's base camp manager.

A month earlier in New Zealand, Rob says goodbye to his pregnant wife, Jan, and promises he will be home for the birth. At base camp, Rob receives a fax from her, informing him their baby will be a girl. He wants to name her Sarah, but Jan is against it.

Worried about crowding on the mountain, Rob persuades Scott to cooperate to reduce delays. On the summit attempt, Rob's group departs Camp IV before dawn, planning to reach the top and turn around by 2 p.m., the latest safe time that will allow them to return to camp before nightfall. They are delayed over an hour after discovering guide ropes are not yet installed on upper reaches of the climb. Beck has eyesight problems and stops. Rob tells him not to continue if his condition does not improve in a half hour. Scott hurries back to camp to help another climber but is intent on re-ascending. Rob warns him about excessive exertion.

Rob reaches the summit on time and is joined by other climbers including Yasuko, who jubilantly plants her flag of Japan in the snow. On the way down, Rob encounters Doug struggling just above the Hillary Step and orders him to turn back. Doug says he will not get the chance again and insists on continuing. Rob reluctantly agrees, and together they reach the summit after 4 p.m. Also at the top is Scott, exhausted and increasingly ill from high-altitude pulmonary edema.

As Rob helps Doug descend, a blizzard strikes the mountain. Doug's oxygen bottle runs out, and he becomes semi-conscious. No full extra bottles are stored on the route where Rob had asked them to be placed. Rob radios Helen to send someone up with oxygen. Doug, left alone briefly by Rob, unclips himself from the guide rope in his hypoxia daze and walks unsteadily along the extremely narrow path on the mountainside. A moment later he silently topples to his death.

Scott's condition worsens, and he tells fellow climbers to continue descending without him. He lies down—soon to die. Returning climbers reach Beck, his vision still impaired. The group becomes lost when the blizzard obliterates the trail. Three climbers go for help, leaving Beck and Yasuko behind.

Guide Andy Harris reaches Rob with the oxygen, which freezes shut. The two huddle together in the storm. While Rob sleeps, Andy hallucinates—as the camp doctor had warned can happen at high altitude—and begins stripping off his outer clothing. He loses his grip on the icy surface and slips out of sight, never to be found. In the morning, Rob radios Helen and tells her that Doug and Andy are gone and that his hands and feet are frozen. Helen calls Jan, hoping Rob will respond to her voice. Jan tells Rob that he must start moving. Rob tells her he is cold but comfortable and asks her to name their baby Sarah. He dies soon after.

Returning climbers tell the camp that Beck and Yasuko are stranded. The weather is too dangerous for a rescue. Helen calls Beck's wife, Peach, and informs her of the situation. In the morning Beck miraculously regains consciousness, sees that Yasuko has died, and stumbles back to camp alone, to the astonishment of everyone. He is severely frostbitten and desperately needs medical help. Peach calls the American Embassy and organises a helicopter rescue. The flight is dangerous because of the thin air, but the aircrew successfully makes the high-altitude medical evacuation. One of Scott's guides, Anatoli, finds his body.

Returning home, Helen has an emotional reunion with Jan, who later gives birth and names her daughter Sarah. Beck returns to his family, heavily bandaged. Closing titles inform the audience that he lost both hands and nose to severe frostbite and that Rob's body remains on Everest. Photographs of others who died during the expedition are shown.

Development

Baltasar Kormákur directed the film, about the 1996 disastrous expedition to scale Mount Everest, which was scripted by Simon Beaufoy and Mark Medoff, with early script adaptations carried out by Justin Isbell and William Nicholson. The film was produced by Working Title Films. Universal Pictures distributes the film in US. The film was produced by Tim Bevan and Eric Fellner, and started shooting in November 2013. In September 2013, Emmett/Furla/Oasis Films were set to co-finance the film,^[15] but in October they exited as co-financiers.

After the production start date of November 6, 2013 had passed, Cross Creek Pictures and Walden Media joined the production on November 12, 2013, and financed the film with \$65 million. The film started production on January 13, 2014, in the Ötztal Alps in Italy, after which production moved to Nepal and Iceland. On December 11, 2013, *The Hollywood Reporter* posted that South Tyrol's regional film board added \$1 million to the film's funding.

This 5th Film Show is sponsored by Anderson House – the Cambridge Centre for Bergamo, CRTDrills Lingue Bergamo – the language teachers' association, the MIUR Ufficio Scolastico – the Italian Ministry of Education and AEGEE Bergamo – the Association of Erasmus students. This is the first film in English for the year! There will be a further 12 films – 9 in English, 1 in French, 1 in German and 1 in Spanish. If you haven't got the full programme pick it up on your way out.