

Darren Wilson Shakes Up Expectations With Latest Film

On June 18, I will be releasing my latest film, *The Greatest Fight*, which follows UFC/WWF legend Ken Shamrock as he stares down the end of his illustrious fighting career and has to come to grips with an entirely new identity. He is no longer a fighter, but is in fact a child of God. Yes, this movie is about a Christian who beats people up for a living. And quite honestly, I have absolutely no idea how it is going to be received.

The Greatest Fight is a movie 6 years in the making, and it is wildly different from anything else I've ever done. It's not a "God adventure" like the films I've become known for, and it quite frankly is pushing the boundaries of what a "Christian film" can be. It's raw, brutally honest, violent, and is focusing on one person's story as opposed to my typical globetrotting search for God.

Here's how it came to be...

It all started 6 years ago, while I was actually finishing up my second film, *Furious Love*. I was sitting in my studio (which at that time was in Chicago) when my assistant received a phone call from someone claiming to be representing a guy named Ken Shamrock. Never heard of him, I said. But since the caller seemed to think this was a big deal, I decided to Google him. Wow. He was apparently a legend in the mixed martial arts world, and even had a big time stint in the WWF (he was frequently a nemesis to The Rock). They had mentioned that he was interested in possibly having me make a movie about him, and this was honestly the last thing I wanted to do. I was knee deep in *Furious Love* and was already starting to prep my next film, *Father of Lights*. I don't even like fighting, so why would I add something like this to my plate?

But I was intrigued enough to at least talk to the guy, and before our first conversation I had my own conversation with the Lord—telling Him exactly what I thought about this idea. “Lord, you know my heart and you know I have no desire to do this. So if this is from you, then you’ve got to make it super clear to me, because as of right now there’s no way I’m saying yes to this movie.”

And it was with this highly guarded mindset that I answered the phone to talk to a guy I had no intention of filming.

Fifteen minutes later I hung up the phone, sat there for a second, then picked the phone back up and called my wife. I have to make this movie, I told her. In fifteen minutes God had not only softened my heart to the idea, but He’d positively lit it on fire. This was a story I needed to tell, although I wasn’t exactly sure why yet. But there was one more thing I had to do before I fully committed my time (I had no idea it would be 6 years!), energy, and money to making this thing. In order to do my due diligence, I knew I had to meet Ken face to face, and there was one question in particular I had to ask him.

I flew out to his house in Reno, Nevada, and met Ken and his lovely wife Tonya, along with some of his kids and grandkids (yup, he’s got grandkids and he’s still fighting). After seeing his training facility and the usual get-to-know-you stuff, we sat down at his kitchen table and I was finally able to ask the question that would decide if I was going to do this or not.

“Ken, I just have to ask you man, how do I know you’re sincere in this and not just trying to cash in on the “Christian crowd?”

I realized it was pretty direct, but this was probably my biggest concern. After all, just doing an ounce of research on Ken’s life was enough to show me that he wasn’t necessarily

the model citizen for most of his life. So what had changed?

Ken didn't miss a beat. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "Look, I've been approached by a number of people in Hollywood wanting to tell my story, but I've always knew they wouldn't be interested in the God stuff. But honestly, that's all I'm about now. Then a few months ago I saw your movie, *Finger of God*, and I knew you were the guy. Obviously if you made that movie you aren't afraid of a little controversy (which you're definitely going to get with me) but more than anything I knew you wouldn't take out the God stuff. That's why I think you're the only one who can tell my story."

And with that, all my apprehensions melted away. My only ask from Ken was that he let me tell the story as I saw fit, and that he let me be honest. That, in turn, was all he asked of me. Be honest.

Fast forward years later, and Ken is now sitting in my studio, and I'm hitting play on the computer to show him the finished film. I'm honestly scared to death. I've gotten to know Ken well over the years, and he can be an intimidating guy if he wants to be. Plus, he could bend me like a pretzel anytime he wanted to. I knew what he was about to watch—knew that it wasn't the most flattering portrayals of him, but I also knew it was definitely something we both wanted.

When the movie ended, I turned in my seat and looked at him. His face was like stone. Did he like it? Was he going to beat me up?

"Well?" I asked, with a little hesitation.

He just nodded his head a little, then said, "It's definitely honest. I'm going to have some explaining to do to my kids when they watch this, but I love it."

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After six years I am finally on the cusp of revealing this film to the world, and I'm just as nervous as I was sitting in that little studio with Ken. Over four films I've been able to build a lot of trust with my fan base, and they are used to seeing a certain type of movie if it has my name on it. But this film is such a departure that I'm curious what kind of reaction people will have. I've always said that *The Greatest Fight* isn't for my core fans; it's for their neighbors. For the most part I make movies in an attempt to wake up the sleeping giant of the church, to set them more on fire for the things of God and the Spirit. But this movie is different. This movie is for people who are struggling, who don't have a relationship with God, or who are angry inside and are desperately looking for a release. It is violent, yes. It is very raw, yes. It is not your "typical" Christian film, but in my mind, it is exactly what a Christian film should be: honest, real, and full of hope.

To watch the trailer for *The Greatest Fight* and purchase tickets, [click here](#).