

'Lone Survivor' Outmuscles 'Hercules' to Win US Box Office

Lone Survivor, the true story of a failed U.S. Navy SEALs mission to capture or kill a Taliban leader in Afghanistan, collected \$38.5 million in U.S. and Canadian ticket sales, topping movie *Frozen* to win the weekend box office race.

The film stars Mark Wahlberg as Marcus Luttrell, the only one of four SEALs to return from the mission and who wrote the 2007 book on which the movie is based.

Frozen, a Walt Disney Co animated film and last week's box office winner, was second with ticket sales of \$15.1 million from Friday through Sunday, according to estimates from Rentrak.

The Wolf of Wall Street, a tale of greed starring Leonardo DiCaprio, was third with \$9 million, while this week's other new major release, *The Legend of Hercules*, starring fashion model and actor Kellan Lutz, was just behind, selling \$8.6 million in tickets.

Hercules was tied for fourth place with *American Hustle*, an awards-season favorite directed by David O. Russell and starring Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper.

Lone Survivor, directed and written by *Friday Nights Lights* director Peter Berg, was the subject of a Hollywood bidding war in 2007 won by Comcast Corp's Universal Pictures. The movie cost \$40 million to make, Universal said.

The heavily marketed film far exceeded industry projections of about \$23 million in domestic sales, including theaters in the United States and Canada. It was the second biggest January

opening weekend ever, behind only *Cloverfield*, which made \$40 million, according to Rentrak.

“You can’t make predictions on films like this,” said Nikki Rocco, Universal’s president for domestic distribution, adding “You just don’t know how the public is going to embrace it.”

But decent reviews along with what Rocco called “a grass-roots campaign to tell Americans that this is a story of patriotism and heroism, and you’re going to want to be a part of the water cooler conversation about it on Monday,” sent its box office sales soaring.

The film received a 73 rating from aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes. Audiences gave the film an A+ grade, according to CinemaScore, which measures ticket buyer reactions.

The Legend of Hercules, which was forecast to have ticket sales of \$8 million, is the first of two films based on the son of the Greek god Zeus. The second *Hercules* stars professional wrestler Dwayne Johnson, also known as “The Rock,” and is scheduled for release on July 25.

The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug was sixth with \$8 million in ticket sales. After leading the domestic box office during the last three weeks of 2013, the movie, the second of a three-part adaption of J.R.R. Tolkien’s 1937 novel, has hauled in \$242 million domestically and \$809 million globally.

Viacom Inc’s Paramount Pictures released *Wolf of Wall Street*. Warner Bros, a unit of Time Warner Inc, released *The Hobbit*. Sony Corp’s movie studio distributed *American Hustle*.

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