

FILM REVIEW “10 SEGUNDOS PARA VENCER” (10 SECONDS TO WIN)

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Abstract: The present work aims to review the movie “10 Segundos para Vencer” (2018), which deals with the trajectory of Eder Jofre, a true legend of national sport, highlighting facts that involve since his initiation in the sport under the tutelage of stern father, the early rise to the first world title, the loving and turbulent involvement with his wife Cida, and even the triumphant return to the ring after a period of inactivity and oblivion. The outcome of the work highlights the achievement of the world title in the featherweight category on May 5, 1973 and the inclusion of the name of Eder Jofre in the history of world sport as one of the greatest boxers of all time.

Keywords: Boxing. Athletes. Cinema as research object.

Resenha do filme “10 segundos para vencer”

Resumo: O presente trabalho tem por objetivo resenhar o filme 10 Segundos para Vencer (2018), o qual aborda a trajetória de Eder Jofre, uma verdadeira lenda do esporte nacional, destacando fatos que envolvem desde a sua iniciação no esporte sob a tutela do sisudo pai, a ascensão precoce até o primeiro título mundial, o envolvimento amoroso e turbulento com sua esposa Cida e até o retorno triunfante aos ringues após um período de inatividade e esquecimento. O desfecho da obra destaca a conquista do título mundial na categoria peso-pena em 05 de maio de 1973 e a inclusão do nome de Éder Jofre na história do esporte mundial como um dos maiores boxeadores de todos os tempos.

Palavras-chave: Boxe. Atletas. Cinema como assunto.

Reseña de la película “10 Segundos para Vencer” (10 segundos para ganar)

Resumen: El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo revisar la película 10 Seconds to Win (2018), que trata sobre la trayectoria de Eder Jofre, una verdadera leyenda del deporte nacional, destacando los hechos que implican desde su iniciación en el deporte bajo la tutela del sisudo padre, el ascenso temprano al primer título mundial, la relación amorosa y turbulenta con su esposa Cida, e incluso el regreso triunfante al ring después de un período de inactividad y olvido. El resultado del trabajo destaca el logro del título mundial en la categoría de peso pluma el 5 de mayo de 1973 y la inclusión del nombre de Éder Jofre en la historia del deporte mundial como uno de los mejores boxeadores de todos los tiempos.

Palabras clave: Boxeo. Atletas El cine como sujeto.

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The Brazilian feature film “10 Segundos para Vencer” (*10 Seconds to Win*, free translation) came in 2018 to the screens after a ten-year-long production. It was written by Thomas Stavros and directed by José Alvarenga Júnior. The production was coordinated by Thomas Stavros, Flávio Ramos Tambellini, Breno Silveira and Chico Abreia. The movie was edited by Sérgio Mekler. It is a drama that narrates the biography of the boxer Éder Jofre, one of the greatest boxers of the world.

The plot starts with Éder’s poor and humble childhood with his family in Parque Peruche, a neighborhood in São Paulo, where his father Kid Jofre – played by Osmar Prado – had a boxing gym.

The first scenes of the movie reveal that Éder came from two families with a strong boxing tradition. His father, Kid Jofre, an Argentinian naturalized Brazilian, was a boxing trainer and was said to have been a respected boxer in his country of origin. His mother, Angelina – played by Sandra Corveloni – carries the Italian family name Zumbano, and her brother, Antônio Zumbano, was the main athlete of Kid Jofre’s gym.

At first, the family relies financially on the matches disputed by Éder’s uncle, Antônio Zumbano – played by Samuel Toledo -, also popularly known as “Zumbanão”. Despite being an outstanding boxer, Zumbanão was prone to the bohemia lifestyle and, according to the movie, due to this fact and the frequent fights, his temperamental personality and the excessive alcohol consumption, he could not become the boxer Kid had in mind. Edinho, as Éder was called by his family, kept a close connection to his father and his uncle and always kept up their training sessions and the fights.

The night prior to the fight that could make Zumbanão the first Brazilian to fight in the United States, Edinho, who was taking a walk with his family in the neighborhood, stops in front of a showcase and is fascinated by a fire truck toy. His father, touched by this scene, promises the son that if his uncle wins the next fight, he will buy him that fire truck. In the morning of the fight, Zumbanão, who was being monitored by Edinho under the orders of his father, goes to the neighborhood’s bakery with the promise he would soon return. However, there he finds himself in a fight with old quarrels and ends up seriously wounded, which makes him miss the decisive fight. Kid Jofre’s frustration with the incident is emphasized by the scene of him sitting on the ring of his gym and being comforted by his wife. In this moment, Éder shows up and asks him to make him a champion.

Éder starts the boxing training with the father with great responsibility and with aversion to violence manifestations outside the ring – the opposite of his uncle Zumbanão, whose career was affected by his involvement in bar fights.

Over the years, Éder – now played by Daniel de Oliveira – has become a young man and he brings the news that he is enrolled in the architectural design at the São Paulo School of Arts and Crafts (Liceu de Artes e Ofícios de São Paulo). This news unsettles the whole family: the father asks Éder how he would continue his dedication to boxing. The uncle Zumbanão casts a disapproving glance. Éder argues that the boxing hasn’t improved the family’s financial situation. His mother, always in a conciliatory approach, attempts to convince the father to let the son study and follow his own dream.

In this moment, it is noteworthy that Kid advocates the educational aspect of the sport and explains to his wife that boxing does not merely mean striking one's opponent until he is down, but it requires a great deal of dedication and study to define the best strategy to ensure the victory.

Éder starts his architectural design course and decides to keep the sport to the sidelines, with trainings in the evening. This decision results in a harsh reprimand of his father and coach, but Éder seems to stand up for his decision. In this period of great dedication to his studies, Éder meets Cida, his future wife – played by Keli Freitas –, with whom he starts a love relationship, which distracts him from his training sessions.

From this moment on, the movie presents the plot's main connection, the one between Éder and his father, whose training methods are characterized by inflexibility and rigor. This tension between athlete and boxing trainer is linked with other narratives from other feature films about the sport. Even though the movie is based on a true story, a great number of real and fictional boxers come from humble environments and overcome the hardships during their careers, such as the real boxer Mohamad Ali (ALI, 2001) and the fictional Rocky Balboa (1974). As Rubio (2001) highlights, when addressing the role of the athlete and the hero myth, as well as when portraying that the athletes' life paths constitute a narrative that influences the collective imaginary and makes people identify themselves with the athletes by means of their dedication, deprivation and surpassing, so that they can overcome the hardships that were enforced upon them: "... this is the way how the myth or its search have been expressed throughout the sport career, leading to the formula of the nuclear unity of the monomyth" (p. 17, our translation), which, according to Campbell (2004) is constituted by the separation, initiation and the return.

This life path is presented in this movie, by demonstrating that in a moment of his life, Éder is about to abandon the sport to dedicate himself to this course, especially when the financial situation of his family worsens after the sickness of his brother, "Doga" – played by Ravel Andrade. Kid and Angelina talk about the costs of the treatment, stressing that they have neither money nor a champion to enroll in the next championship. In this moment, due to the need to defray the costs of his brother's cancer treatment, Éder decides to take part in the championship, however without telling his father, who only knew about his participation through uncle Zumbanão, who takes him to the gym to show that Éder was fighting. It seems Kid did not appreciate the son's attitude and refuses to guide his son on the corner of the ring, but he is finally influenced by Zumbanão to help his son out and achieve the victory. This is Éder's first official to be portrayed in the movie, in which he knocks his opponent out⁵ after a precise orientation of his father.

Considering the son's decision to dedicate himself exclusively to the boxing to bear the costs of his brother's treatment, Kid intensifies Éder's trainings, which result in several victories. To have an idea of his performance, alone in his first year as amateur boxer in the featherweight

⁵Once the referee counts until ten after a boxer falls, the fight is declared finished by knockout.

category, in 1957, Éder fought 12 times, having won 10 of them and drawn only two.

The presentation of the sequence of Éder's victories is interrupted to show the moment when Kid brings his son to fight in a state prison. Here, Kid tells his son about the importance of this fight, particularly for the ones who have nothing to lose, such as the inmates. When Éder is preparing to fight against one of them, Kid also explains the importance of counting the 10 seconds, thereupon the son promises his father that he will never hear the counting⁶. It is not possible to determine if this scene truly happened and if it is chronologically correct in terms of Éder's fight streak. Nevertheless, it is clear that the way the directors of the movie highlighted Éder Jofre's promise, who never heard the ten-second counting.

Due to Éder's victorious sequence in the sport, his family was able to afford Doga's treatment. Éder's victories also ensured the improvements of the family's life, at least the food (this fact is depicted by the contrast between the pasta they now eat and the thin soup in the beginning of the movie). The social conditions of the family are depicted throughout the movie, particularly when Éder shows interest in the architectural design course and his subsequent full dedication to the boxing to improve the financial conditions of his family.

Radio news and newspaper headlines are brought subsequently to the screen, showing the performance and the victories of the Brazilian boxer. After searching for additional sources, it may be noted that until his title as South-American champion in the featherweight category, Éder had fought 33 times, achieved 30 victories (20 by knockout) and 3 ties. However, after defeating the Chilean Cláudio Morrientos Moreno, keeping the featherweight belt and remaining the first place of the Latin-American ranking make it difficult to find new opponents. This way, Kid accepts the proposal of the entrepreneur Abraão Katznelson to bring Éder to the United States, making him the first Brazilian to fight in North America.

The Brazilians arrive in Los Angeles and Abraão manages to book a fight for Éder against Joe Medel, the second-placed of the world ranking. The negotiation between Abraão and the American agent leads to believe that the latter points out that it would be a very difficult fight for the Brazilian because of the quality of the opponent, as well as the fact that the fight would take place in two weeks and Éder would need to lose three kilos to be able to fight. Kid accepts the conditions and the movie depicts the drastic process of loss reduction, the food diets and the dehydration. The dehydration consists in the excessive loss of liquids to achieve the ideal weight. This technique is commonly used by athletes of several modalities that require the weighing of the fighters before the match, but it is heavily criticized due to the endangerment of the athlete's health, which can possibly lead to death (ARTIOLI et al., 2010).

During the press conference, 48 hours prior to the fight, Éder is ridiculed and, during the fight, booed by the audience, whereas Medel is heavily praised. The booing makes Éder somewhat insecure, but his father

⁶The counting refers to the 10 seconds counted by the referee. The fight ends if the athlete does not stand up after the 10 seconds.

reminds him that he is representing a whole country, which properly motivates him and leads him to defeat Medel in the 10th round by knockout.

Éder's first appearance in the USA presents two notable situations. The first consists in the ethnic prejudices Éder faces – not due to his skin color, but his nationality -, having been called a monkey because of the fact he is Brazilian. On the other hand, because of his representation of the Brazilian nation, Éder's patriotism is the element that makes him achieve the victory and be respected by the Americans. Even though during this time, boxing was predominantly practiced by black people, the racial prejudice was not depicted in any moment of the movie.

On November 18 1960, in Los Angeles, Éder fought against the Mexican Eloy Sanchez and won with a knockout in the 6th round, conquering the belt of the Bantamweight World Champion (*Peso Galo*, in Portuguese), which was the reason for his nickname, Galo de Ouro (Golden Bantam).

Back in Brazil, Éder is received as a national hero. However, against Campbell's argument, which was quoted by Helal (2003) in his study about the idolatry of the Brazilian soccer, in which the hero faces and overcomes obstacles regarded as unbeatable in order to bring benefits to the community, it seems that Éder wasn't motivated by patriotism or by the fact he achieved something no other Brazilian had ever done. What truly motivated Éder to dedicate himself to the boxing was, in this sense, not the representation of a nation, but rather the need to afford his brother's treatment.

Éder marries Cida and his family's social and economic rise become more visible. However, Kid demands that Éder focus on the boxing. Cida witnesses a phase of Éder's dehydration, which results in a conflict between both of them. The following scenes show Éder's dedication to the sport, whereas Cida faces alone the pregnancy and the first years of their first child. During a meeting in order to decide about his next fight, Éder finds out he will be a father for the second time, making him question his father and his team about the possibility to interrupting the trainings for some time. He says he doesn't have a social life and he would like to be closer to his family. Kid demands that Éder keeps fighting, saying that he will only allow his son to retire when he loses more than he wins.

The plot's unfolding then shows that, after having been defeated twice in Japan in 1965 by the boxer Masahiko "Fighting" Harada, Éder, who is now 30 years old, distances himself from the championships. The movie presents scenes that give the impression that the fighter was not motivated to win, with thoughts of resigning the sport for some time in order to spend more time with his family. This fact is conflicting with the documentary "Éder Jofre – O Grande Campeão" (*Éder Jofre – The Great Champion*, in free translation), which was produced in 2004 under the direction of Beto Duarte. In this documentary, the boxer tells about the lack of motivation he previously had had, asks the audience for forgiveness and does not justify his distance from boxing as a means to improve his social life.

In the documentary, Éder says he stayed three years away from the things, but the movie depicts a longer period. During this time, Éder appears idle and depressive after the audience seems to have forgotten him. His older

son asks his mother why his father doesn't work, which makes Éder a feeling of unease. In order to avoid the idleness, Éder engages in circus activities, demonstrating boxing fights to the audience. The movie neither shows a lot of information about his beginning in circus' life nor reveals how long he worked there. Secondary sources claim that his aunt, Olga Zumbano, would have been the responsible for the contact intermediation, given that she herself was the owner of the circus and also presented some boxing and *luta livre* fights (DUARTE, 2004).

In one of the performances in the circus, Kid was sitting in the audience and feels ashamed of his son. During a dinner offered by Cida to Éder's parents, Kid Jofre makes clear that he doesn't comply with his son's retirement, saying that his son is no clown to be in a circus. After this moment, Éder feels that his father misses him during the gym trainings, a fact that was later confirmed by his friend and sparring⁷ Silvano – played by Ricardo Geli. The boxer then decides to return to the rings and follow the way to the world title.

The downfall of his career, associated with depressive symptoms and the subsequent rise and return to the ring is also presented in other movies of the genre, such as *Foxcatcher* (2014) and the fictional feature movie *Southpaw* (2015). On the other hand, the aforementioned movies featured the sensational and opportunist media, a fact that is not found in “10 Segundos para Vencer”.

In the following scenes, the movie depicts two short scenes of Éder's fights in the featherweight category (two categories above bantamweight, in which Éder had become world champion in 1960). The movie makes the mistake of not explaining why Éder chose not to return to boxing in his first category, bantamweight, which is the reason for his nickname Galo de Ouro. It can only be presumed that the option to fight in the featherweight category (3,63kg above bantamweight) lies in the fact that Éder might have found it more difficult to lose weight due to his age (33 years), which would have made the weight loss process during the days prior to the fight even more aggressive and painful.

The final scenes of the movie focus on the fight against the by birth Cuban but now a Spanish national José Legrá, which would define the world champion of the featherweight category according to the World Boxing FÉderation. The fight took place on May 5 1973 at the Presidente Médici gym, in Brasília. Before the fight against Legrá, the movie presents two scenes, in which the father-son love between Kid and Éder is depicted, pointing out that there was not only a rigid relation between coach and athlete, but also a lot of love and admiration between father and son.

In the following scene, there is an important incident. When walking through the tunnel towards the gym, a member of the government informs Éder that the Brazilian president of the Republic, the Army General Emílio Garrastazu Médici, was attending the fight and would like to receive the gloves from the fighter after the end of the fight. Éder does not take this request into account, saying that he had already promised someone else the

⁷Sparring is the person with whom the boxer practices the punches. The term designates the boxer's partner, who has the function to absorb the athlete's punches and help him develop skills and enhance techniques that may be applied during a fight.

gloves to another person. Although there are no further details, the scene shows Éder's harsh and direct answer and position concerning the military government at the time, a clear sign of dissatisfaction with the interferences of the Brazilian Chief of State in the sports. It is noteworthy that this interference was no surprise, such as the incident involving the Brazilian soccer coach João Saldanha, who was going to dispute the 1970 World Cup and was dismissed from his position six days prior to the departure of the team to Mexico, a fact that may be explained due to Saldanha's refusal to invite the player Dario, from Atlético Mineiro, thus not complying with President Médici's preference.

Back to the movie's plot. After 15 rounds, Éder defeats José Legrá after a decision of the judges and is proclaimed Featherweight World Champion. The movie ends with real scenes of the historic fight and with the credits praising some relevant information, such as: Éder presents his father, Kid Jofre, the gloves he wore during the fight against Legrá; Kid falls sick and dies one year after his son's second world title; Éder Jofre is regarded as one of the 10 greatest boxers of all times; and, at last, the fact that Éder never heard the 10-second-counting every time he fought, thus fulfilling the promise he made Kid before his fame.

The movie failed to explore some relevant facts concerning Éder Jofre's trajectory in the sport. The Brazilian fighter took part in Melbourne's Olympic Games, in 1956. However, in the documentary about the boxer it is explained that his participation was somehow irrelevant. The movie also doesn't depict the fact that Éder also represented the soccer team São Paulo Futebol Clube when he became Brazilian champion in the featherweight category in 1957.

In short, the feature film presents a rich portrait of the main facts and plots in the family and sport contexts that played a major role in the life of the one who is considered the greatest featherweight boxer of all times. According to the press reviews, although the movie does not distance itself from similar movies of the genre, it brings out the emotions when depicting the family relations that contributed to the life path of the first successful Brazilian boxer. Nevertheless, prior to its release to the public, "10 Segundos para Vencer" was awarded during the 46th edition of the Gramado Film Festival with awards for best actor (Osmar Prado) and best supporting actor (Ricardo Gelli).

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