



The highly compelling, 10-episode DirecTV drama series *Kingdom* is a visceral family saga that takes place in Venice, California against the backdrop of the Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) subculture. Former MMA legend and gym owner Alvey Kulina (Frank Grillo) is so focused on turning his youngest son, Nate (Nick Jonas), into a prized fighter that his oldest son, Jay (Jonathan Tucker), was too unfocused and unpredictable to become something good. Fans will remember Frank Grillo as the badass Brock Rumlow a.k.a Crossbones who will soon be seen going head to head against Captain America in *Captain America 3: Civil War* (2016). He also played MMA Coach Frank Campana in 2011's *Warrior*, and starred in the *Purge*: *Anarchy*.

In *Kingdom*, Alvey (Grillo) owns and runs a mixed martial arts gym called Navy St. Gym in Venice, California, with his

girlfriend, Lisa (Kiele Sanchez). He helps people workout and trains fighters along with his sons, Nate and Jay. Jay has a drug and alcohol problem, but puts it aside to start fighting again. Ryan Wheeler (Matt Lauria) used to be a great fighter until he was sent to prison after a few mistakes in his life. After Ryan's release, Alvey wants him to be his trainer as it would be good publicity for the gym. Lisa is opposed to this, as she and Ryan used to be engaged, but eventually goes along for the sake of the gym. Alvey and Lisa are actually struggling to keep their gym afloat. Their best hope is Alvey's son Nate. Alvey's estranged wife, Christina, goes in and out of his and their son's lives due to being a drug addicted prostitute. All of this creates the environment for a high pressure drama series, while floating on the fact that *Kingdom* is, at heart, a show about fighting.

It's very easy with shows like this to exaggerate certain aspects. Over-the-top characters being too positive, too negative, too macho or too weak. The plot being too simple or too accidental. This show makes none of these mistakes. From the beginning to the end it feels real. Imperfect characters, no clichés and realistic action create very enjoyable entertainment.

The casting is spot on and acting is very good. Camera-work might seem shaky at times, but that's a style the director seemed to go with. The action sequences kept the pace up and were choreographed quite well. The strain, exhaustion and determination of the fighters is extremely well shown. In an interview with *Collider* about the origins of the show early last year, Frank Grillo said, "My agents just sent me the script and I read it and was like, this is great. I want to talk to the guy

who wrote this. So, Byron [Balasco] and I had a Skype meeting and within about half an hour, I was like, "If you want to go down that road, I'll go down that road with you." It was instantaneous. I was like, "I'll take less money. I don't really care about that. If we can do the show, that's fantastic."

The show has already garnered a decent fan following among people who love action shows and fighting, but that being said, the show is indeed focused around fighting and hence it might not be for everyone. If you enjoy boxing and mixed martial arts, it's a must watch for you. On October 17, 2014, after the success of the first season, DirecTV announced the renewal of the series for a 20-episode Season 2, 10 scheduled to air in late 2015 and 10 to air in 2016.

by Showbiz Desk



COMING SOON

INSIDE OUT

MEET THE LITTLE VOICES INSIDE YOUR HEAD

Pixar's newest movie will be set inside the head of a young girl, Riley, where five emotions - Joy, Anger, Disgust, Fear and Sadness, try to lead the girl through her life. Growing up can be a bumpy road, and it's no exception for Riley, who is uprooted from her Midwest life when her father starts a new job in San Francisco. Like all of us, Riley is guided by her emotions - Joy (Amy Poehler), Fear (Bill Hader), Anger (Lewis Black), Disgust (Mindy Kaling) and Sadness (Phyllis Smith). The emotions live in Headquarters, the control center inside Riley's mind, where they help advise her through everyday life. As Riley and her emotions struggle to adjust to a new life in San Francisco, turmoil ensues in Headquarters. Although Joy, Riley's main and most important emotion, tries to keep things positive, the emotions conflict on how best to navigate a new city, house and school. The movie will be released on 19 June 2015.