The Role of an Actor

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There's a debate brewing on Facebook and some entertainment websites about the lack of mention of HIV/AIDS by Matthew McConaughey and Jared Leto in their respective acceptance speeches for their roles in the film Dallas Buyers Club at this year's Golden Globes ceremony.

Many took the duo to task for the omission, while others chalked it up to nerves during their acceptance speeches or the fact that the Globes are notoriously a drunken affair and no place for social messages.

Here are a few comments from a recent Facebook post:

Perhaps the two actors listened to the backlash about the Golden Globes speeches. Here are the statements they each released about their Academy Award nominations yesterday morning.

Both McConaughey and Leto won for their roles at last night's Critics' Choice awards, and they reiterated their new talking points during their acceptance speeches:

"*Today you not only honor me but also all those around the world living with AIDS and all those we have lost to this disease. Thank you for recognizing them and recognizing their struggle through Dallas Buyers Club. This was a fascinating story told by a group of incredibly passionate and committed filmmakers who wanted to create something special and shine a light on a unique and important story.*"
--Jared Leto

"*I share this with the entire Dallas Buyers Club family of filmmakers, cast, and crew--and the real-life Ron Woodroofs and Rayons who continue to fight and live with dignity. Thank you.*"
--Matthew McConaughey

Is it the responsibility of actors and filmmakers to advocate for the causes they depict on film? Sure, it's great when they do, but don't the movies they make have far greater impact than an awards speech?

Despite the brouhaha, the multiple award wins for McConaughey and Leto continue to generate buzz for the movie--and hopefully for continued awareness of HIV/AIDS.

If McConaughey and Leto end up winning an Oscar at the Academy Awards, will they advocate for HIV/AIDS in their speeches? I hope so and will be tuning in on Sunday, March 2, to find out.

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