

12 angry men movie



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

16 Feb. 2008 12 Angry Men The film “ 12 Angry Men” is a critically acclaimed film directed by first time director Sidney Lumet and released in the year 1957. The film is about the court trial of an 18 year old Spanish-American boy who is accused of murdering his father. A jury consisting of 12 men is assigned the job of looking into the case. It is the duty of the jury to come up with a unanimous decision whether to acquit or convict the Hispanic. The movie is famous for the use of a single set. The entire movie was filmed in a single jury room with the exception of three minutes in the washroom. The movie for nominated for three Oscars(Best Director, Best Picture and Best Writing, screenplay based on material from another medium) and finds a place in the list of all time great movies. In 2007, the library of Congress chose “ 12 angry men” for preservation in the United States National Film Registry. Here, we analyze the dynamics of the 12 jurors and what might have influenced them in taking a decision in favor of or against the accused.

Story line

The movie begins with the scene in which the judge is seen giving instructions to a jury consisting of 12 gentlemen. The judge informs the jury that the defendant will have to take the electric chair if proved guilty. The jury is also instructed that their judgment should be unanimous. The jury then moves into the jury room where they get acquainted with the other members of the jury and start their work. The case which opens up as an open and shut case takes a turn when one of jurors (juror #8) decides to veto the decision of the other eleven jurors. He is able to convince the other jurors that the defendant should be acquitted as there is doubt beyond reasonable limit questioning the authenticity of the witnesses. However, the other jurors do not follow the juror #8 quickly. The juror #8 faces strong

argument from the other members which sets up the film. The jury decided to vote 12-0 in favor of acquittal and closing scene shows the twelve jurors leaving the jury room to present their findings of fact to the court.

Temerity of Juror #8

Juror #8(Henry Fonda) is the most important character of the plot as he is the first to veto the decision and question the authenticity of the witnesses. Though the juror #8 appears both confident and nervous at the beginning, as the discussion proceeds he succeeds in making the other jurors believe in his argument that there is doubt beyond reasonable limit in declaring the boy as guilty of murder. Juror #9 immediately supports the view of juror #8. Juror #5 and #2 also follow juror #9. After the elucidative argument by juror #8 most of jurors (#11, #6, #7, #12, # 1) decide to vote not guilty. However, #10, #4 and #3 continue to stand by their view that the boy is guilty. Also, juror #11 looked indecisive and kept changing his mind. The main turn around of events occurs when the juror #8 questions the uniqueness of the murder weapon (switchblade) by producing an identical one. Juror #10's bigoted point of view and comments makes the other jurors to question his integrity. Also, the reliability of the other witness is weakened when the jury comes to know that the witness may not have been wearing her spectacles at the time of murder after which juror #4 also votes not guilty. At last the adamant juror #3 also gives up and votes not guilty after looking accidentally looking at a picture of his son. Hence, juror #8 succeeds in convincing a group of varied personalities from the foremanship, juror #1, to the subdued, #2, to the stubborn,#3, to the unflappable,#4, to the energetic,#5, to the principled,#6, to the indifferent,#7, to the wise,#9, to the bigot,#10, to the proud American,#11, to the indecisive,#12. All the

twelve men are seen leaving the jury room to the court to submit their verdict in the closing scene leaving the viewers to decide the happenings inside the courtroom. Jurors #8 and #9 are the only ones seen exchanging their names. All the other jurors are known only by their number.

Conclusion

I personally feel that the judge would have acquitted the accused on the basis of “lack of strong evidence”. Juror #8’s (character name Davis) ingenious method of argument pictures the overall circumstances in which the murder took place look very shady. I am sure that the judge would have also ruled in favor of the boy like the members of the jury. I also feel that the questioning of the uniqueness of murder weapon and the validity of the other witness as strong points favoring the boy’s acquittal. The accused boy being a member of an ethnic minority group might have won the sympathy of judge in the courtroom. It was clear that the boy had won the sympathy of jury members especially after the racist comments passed by the juror #10. The use of numbers for jury members instead of names projects their personality better. The viewers care only about the personality of jurors as they do not have to remember their names. Overall it is a well written and well directed movie with exceptionally professional performance from the cast of the movie.

Works cited

Lumet, Sidney, dir. “12 Angry Men”.
1957. Orion-Nova Productions. 1957.