

Green mile



The Green Mile (1999) The movie I'll be reviewing is The Green Mile, filmed in 1999. The first time I watched this movie was in in order to take my finals. However, due to the movie being 189 minutes long, there wasn't enough time to watch it all. Luckily, my uncle had it on DVD, so he kindly let me borrow it to watch at home. I prefer watching movies in the dark to get a proper cinematic experience, so I decided to order a pizza and started watching it at night. I watched it from the beginning again so its' plot and my reflections of it were fresh in my mind. My mom also watched it with me because she heard it got good reviews, but she'd never seen it before. The majority of Green Mile is set in a Death Row prison ward in 1930's America. It stars Tom Hanks as guard supervisor Paul Edgecombe, who meets new inmate John Coffey, played by Michael Clarke Duncan. Coffey is portrayed as a 'slow-witted gentle giant', whose even afraid of the dark, convicted of raping and brutally killing two young girls. He also appears to have miraculous healing powers, which ultimately heal Warden Moore's terminally ill wife. The film ends with John Coffey's execution in the electric chair, but not before he realizes the true killer of the two young girls, a new inmate called William 'Wild Bill' Wharton. Coffey offers to share this information with Edgecombe through his visionary powers. Edgecombe is then torn between letting John 'walk out', or be executed. However, John tells him that he is ready to die as there is too much pain in the world. I thought The Green Mile was a very powerful film and piece of acting from start to finish. Almost every scene had me gripped and fixated. I especially liked Tom Hanks's character, and I viewed him as a fair and moral prison guard. For example, he made it clear to Percy (an irritating prison guard) that the prisoners on death row had enough torment to deal with without the guards exacerbating

the situation. All the other prison guards (excluding Percy) came across as likeable, and treated the prisoners as 'human beings'. However, this made me feel a bit uncomfortable because I had it worked out in my head that the prisoners were on Death Row for a reason, and what they did to be there must have been pretty brutal. This made me question whether I'd be so tolerant if I worked as a prison guard on Death Row. I really liked Michael Clarke Duncan's portrayal of John Coffey. I was touched by John's situation and I felt stressed and anxious for him the whole way through the movie. I even wanted to help him escape and prove his innocence to the world. My favorite parts of the film related to John's power to heal people. For example, I felt emotional when John healed Prison Guard Moore's terminally ill wife. The thought that 'miracles' could happen in such a serious film about a 'real life' topic was unfamiliar for me, as supernatural events usually only occur in sci-fi or Buffy the Vampire Slayer. On the negative side, I thought the length of the film was too long because as gripping as it was, it was difficult to pay attention without taking a break, which made me lose the rhythm of the film. I also disliked the build up to the mock execution scene because I thought it was in bad taste how all the actors could laugh at such a serious issue. I thought the most shocking and upsetting scene was during one of the prisoner's executions in which a dry (instead of wet sponge) was used. The noise the electric chair generated, along with the prisoner's scream, and smoke and fire which eventually burned through the prisoner's mask was very disturbing, and I don't think I'll ever be able to forget it. I also didn't like watching John's execution. I was urging and half expecting someone to rescue him whilst he was sitting in the electric chair. This is because I'm not used to seeing the 'good guys' die in films. This made me

feel powerless and emotionally drained by the time the movie had finished. I half felt like I'd been cheated out of the last 3 hours of my life, knowing that John had died. The camera angles used in the Green Mile really intrigued me and added to the overall effects of the movie. For example, at the beginning of the film, there was a close up of John's eyes (as an old man in a retirement home). The camera really caught the fear, anxious and haunted look in his eyes, which gave me the impression that he may have been emotionally scarred from his time as a prison guard on the 'Green Mile'. Another noticeable camera angle was when John first came out of the prison truck. For the first couple of minutes, the camera only focused on his feet and body, and the viewer could not see his head. I felt this dehumanized John before the viewer had actually been introduced to him. Visually, the film uses a lot of lighting effects to convey different moods of the film. At the beginning of the movie, there is a big thunder storm and it is very dark despite being daylight. I thought this symbolized the dark side of the story, in which the viewer was about to be introduced. There were however beautiful visual effects in the film too. For example, there were fireflies in the moonlight when John healed Moore's wife. I thought this highlighted John's gentle nature, which convinced me he was an innocent man. Music was also used to great affect in the film and added to the suspense and emotions conveyed in every scene. For example, in the scene in which John is pictured with the girls he supposedly killed, the music gets more and more dramatic as the police and searchers close in on the girl's bodies. The music reaches its dramatic climax when John is sitting with the girls, crying that he 'couldn't stop it'. Green Mile set me on a roller coaster of emotions, ranging from believing that miracles can actually happen, to utter devastation and

anger with John's ultimate and untimely death. I would fully recommend this film to any movie goer, especially to those in favor of the death penalty. The film shows the 'human side' of prisoners on Death Row, many who seem to suffer from mental illness. The fact that John was innocent has reinforced my belief that America should abolish the death penalty.