

# Good hoop dreams essay example

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



Any time I watch Hoops Dreams I always conclude that this is the best documentary of all times. It is a film that is rich of heart breakings, complexities and ultimately deep rewarding ending. The co-director who also sums up as the producer, Steve James, brilliantly uses high school hoops to explore societal issues affecting the African-Americans such as class, race and access to quality education in the modern America. The storyline for this film is so theatrical and captivating to the point of appearing to be crafted from fiction. It follows the careers of two high school boys, William Gates and Arthur Agee, from Cabrini-green Housing projects in Chicago, who share the same dream of a college scholarship and eventually landing into NBA. The movie is very dramatic as the two boys prepare to join St. Joseph's, a predominantly whites catholic school that is well-known to nurture talented basketball students and also boasts of shaping the career of the legendary NBA superstar Isiah Thomas.

My reactions to this film largely emanates through how Steve James artfully manages to balance suspense and triumphs with pathos. It makes me realise that, for anyone who is being lured by the often extraordinary highs of their athletic or sporting life, the lows can also be equally significant. This film particularly interests me because it starts as a simple sports documentary but somewhere along the way it turns into a drama and melodrama that has been packed with a number of outrageous moments that make the audience want to cry. It reveals the saddening situation of the struggles or hurdles that an African-American child goes through before they can reach their ambitions. I am of the opinion that this film's superiority goes well beyond the category of a student's film. The fate of the two boys begins with their

encounter with Earl Smith, a renowned talent scout for several white high school that often recruits impressionable grammar school children.

In regard to the social problems that affect both Arthur and William Agees, it is evident that poverty surpasses them all. In fact, the film begins with the panoramic view of downtown Chicago. We are given a quick glance of neighbourhood that makes up Williams and Arthurs isolated world. We see the city's elevated train system, known as El, running through the surroundings that overlook the notorious rise housing projects. There are children all over the streets playing amid poor housing and unkempt surrounding. Unlike William who skills in Basketball developed very fast, and he easily found his way to the Varsity team, a good summer job and full tuition fee catered for, Arthur skills developed slowly and Coach Pingatore did perceive Arthur as a star material. In return, Arthur was literary locked out of school in the middle of an ongoing semester and only to land for a summer job at a pizza hut where he was being paid \$3. 25 an hour. This was a big blow to Arthur and his mother. The issue of poverty is made vivid when the mother of Arthur addressed herself directly to the camera. She says: “ Do you all wonder how sometimes I am living? How my kids survive and how they are living? This is enough to really make people want to go out there and just lash out and hurt somebody”

Indeed, her family was surviving on a \$268 a month aid, at the same time, her 18 year old son Arthur's \$100 payment was cut off. To add onto their shortcomings, their electricity and gas supply was turned off during the winter, and, therefore, the family had to use a camp lantern for light. In addition, it becomes impossible for Arthur to graduate from his Chicago

school, Marshalls, without getting the transfer credits from St. Joseph in Westchester; the suburban school that once recruited him, then dropped him, and had refused to release his transcripts until tuition arrears amounting to \$1, 300 have been paid. Ironically, this debt would not have been there if the Scout had not found Arthur on the playground and offered to offer him a scholarship. Therefore, it becomes evident that the rich schools go to the poor city, not to help the worthy students but only to find best basketball players.

The other social problem that manifest itself is the importance of education in our society. Although St. Joseph's school administration will always tell prospects and the camera that they normally value a child education more than the issue of sports, the coaches are never bothered by the students grades. In fact, when the coach realised that there is no hope in Arthur becoming a basketball superstar, Arthurs education came to a standstill. Nonetheless, it has also been intertwined in the minds of these ghetto youngsters that basketball is the only thing that can take them out of poverty. They also do not value education on their part. For instance, Arthur admits that he has never put much emphasis in academics, therefore; it beats logic when he does not care about it; something as vital as getting an education, while they sports and entertainment rose to unimaginable levels of prominence. I perceived St. Joseph high school to be the equivalent of a factory where well-educated white coaches have been employed to be always in charge of barely literate, impoverished black youths.

Critically analysing the situation in this film, the problem of differential treatment is the key factor that makes the inner city youths want to become

sports stars. For the system to function effectively, racist and classist society must be avoided. They are the biggest limitation to equality even among school going children. This manifests itself when Arthur is not able to interact with white people at St. Joseph when he returned there for a visit. He feels uncomfortable because during his days at St. Joseph, he never got a chance to relate with as many whites as he was doing; he, therefore, finds himself at a place where there were 99% blacks.

In conclusion, according to my analysis, this film does not contain villains, not even St. Joseph school, but the general perversity of the American peoples values are nakedly on display. However, according to my observation, the social problems that I have discussed are being solved. There has been a great improvement about how the whites nowadays perceive the blacks unlike in 1994 when Hoop Dreams premiered. This can be supported by the fact that we are currently under the authority of a black president, a thing that was unimaginable two decades ago. Additionally, many youths are nowadays not solely dependent on the issue of sports being the only vehicle out of poverty; education is more value than it used to during the production of this film.