

Good essay on pursuit of happiness film evaluation

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It is written in the United States' Declaration of Independence that everyone was created with the unalienable right to " life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." These very words were written by Thomas Jefferson many years ago, and they still ring true today. Many people have attempted to pursue happiness many different ways because each have their own opinion as to what happiness is to them. One such story was made into a film that was written by Steven Conrad and Gabriele Muccino directed. Released on the 15th of December 2006, " The Pursuit of Happiness" is a PG-13 movie that has violence and moderate language. The film is a rag to riches story which features the main character rising from a low time in his life to finding happiness. " The Pursuit of Happiness" is based on the real hardship and success of Chris Gardner's life. Gardner is a salesman who is down on his luck. His wife leaves him after becoming frustrated at living in poverty; he is nearly broke, and he is left to raise his five-year-old son alone. As a result of having very little money, Chris and his son become homeless. Despite his hardships and all the stress involved with being poor, he carries on pursuing his dream to become a stock broker. According to Chris, " If you want somethin', go get it. Period." (Muccino, 2006) In the end, he reached his goal and became a successful multi-millionaire stockbroker. In the movie, Chris Gardner is played by Will Smith and Jaden Smith, the son of Will Smith, plays Gardner's son. The movie, while depressing at the beginning, has become an inspiration to many people.

The film starts in 1981 when Chris is attempting to earn money by selling bone scanners to medical centers and doctors in the area of San Francisco.

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While the machines are heavy and bulky to keep carrying around, it is the connections he make with people that Chris love the most about his work. Even though he is a great salesman, he feels his path in life will lead him to something better. However, at the moment, life is not so grand for Chris and his family. Played by the actress Thandie Newton, the character Linda is seen having to work to jobs in an attempt to make ends meet. Unfortunately, working two jobs is not enough for them because they have not been able to keep up with their rent payments. Meanwhile, Linda and Chris's young son, Chris Jr., is attending a daycare center where the word " happiness" is misspelled. Chris is annoyed at the misspelling since he believes details, even small ones, does make a difference. He tells those in charged that " happiness" is spelled with an " i", but the word becomes part of the title of his memoir and later, the film based on his life. Cracks are beginning to form in Chris and Linda's relationship.

Unable to cope with their daily financial pressures, Linda decides she had enough with living in poverty. She leaves with their son. She knows that their son is what Chris cares about the most in life, so she returns Chris Jr. to his father. While she does express to Chris that she is disappointed in how his life turned out, she knows that he will do anything and everything to provide for their son. Linda takes a job in New York working in a relative's restaurant. Chris's hardship is becoming more and more difficult.

Chris's financial condition worsens. His money is running low, and he is still behind in some payments. He and his son are evicted when Chris fell to pay his rent. They can temporarily live in a motel but are also thrown out due to the lack of payment. Chris and Chris Jr. sleep anywhere they can find that

were safe for them. In one instance, they slept in a bathroom of a BART station. The experience is terrifying for both father and son. To subdue their fears, they passed the time pretending that they were in a cave hiding from dinosaurs. During the same time that he was homeless, Chris persistently pursued his stockbroker career. No one in his workplace knows that he is poor and homeless. His efforts were successful because he was chosen by a highly respectable and influential stock brokerage firm. Chris was able to get the internship after a top officer from the firm witnessed Chris solve a Rubiks Cube in a short period during a taxi ride. Since most people who can quickly solve a Rubiks Cube are known to be numerically gifted, it is clear to the top officer that Chris has a gift for numbers. There was one drawback to the internship. The work the interns had to do was unpaid and in the end only one out of the twenty intern would be hired at the end of the internship. This news was really bad for Chris because he needed money.

The workers at the stock brokerage firm were highly competitive over their clients. There were rules that the interns had to follow with regards to how they handled the firms' clients. However, being a good salesman and an equally competitive person, Chris bent the rules. He decides that he would visit a CEO at his home to land a new account. Instead of being angry with Chris, the CEO invites Chris and his son to a football game in San Francisco. The football game gave the father and son their first look at how the top rich people were treated. Unfortunately, since he was new to stock breakage, the CEO refuses to allow Chris to hand his stock accounts. At the end of the film, Chris wins the one spot in the stock brokerage firm. At first he cannot believe what was being said to him but later, he becomes very happy and grateful

for the position in the firm. He realizes that gaining the position means he and his son would no longer be homeless or have to worry about money. The film does give many people hope that achieving happiness is possible.

The film's tone is one of compassion and determination. Many of the scenes were compassionate because they show the care Chris had for his son. Even when Linda was placing blame for their financial situation on Chris, he remains loving and compassionate. Another example of a compassionate scene is when Chris Jr. questions his father about his mother's departure. The determination tone comes from Chris's persistence at pursuing his dreams. While he was poor and homeless, he did not let either of those situations get in the way of him being compassionate or from following his dream to becoming a stock broker. His determination to use his gift for sales and numbers lead to him gaining employment and a better life for him and his child. It is clear from the movie that the idea of happiness means something different for each.

In "The Pursuit of Happiness," Gardner appears to be chasing material items such as money and what it could buy him rather than the idea of happiness. For Gardner, gaining employment at the stock brokerage firm meant he would be able to pay his bills on time and have a home. When he was asked what was the secret to success, Chris answered, "here's the secret to success: find something you love to do so much, you can't wait for the sun to rise to do it all over again." (Gallo, 2012) His determination to improve his life comes from his need and want to protect and provide for his son. However, while Chris was able to improve his life in the 1980s, time is tougher now. It would probably have been more difficult

for Chris to move out of poverty if he started his journey today. The increasing gap between the poor and rich as well as the shrinking middle class makes rags to riches journeys very difficult for many people. All in all, the movie was a great film with great actors and actresses that helped to give life to the Chris's story.

“The Pursuit of Happiness” is a story about how a man’s determination and use of natural skills took him from a world of poverty to one of riches. On the way to the top, Chris’s wife left him, he is evicted from his home, and he has to raise his young son with barely any money. Through it all, Chris remained compassionate and hopeful. He pursues his happiness and goals by becoming an unpaid intern and competing with other interns for just one spot in a firm. In the end, he was able to land the stock brokerage job that leads to him becoming happy.

References

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