

American history x movie review

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American History X Movie Review American History X is a powerful movie about racism in today's society. It follows the life of a troubled teenager Danny Vinyard played by Edward Furlong, who looks up to his neo-Nazi brother Derek. Derek, played by Edward Norton is the leader of the local skinhead gang in Venice Beach, California. Derek was sent to prison for committing a hate crime against a black man, who tried to break into his house. Danny decided to continue down Derek's path of becoming a white supremacist while he did time for the hate crime.

Derek's mother played by Beverly D'Angelo visits Derek while in prison and tells Derek about his little brother following in his footsteps. Derek realized the errors to his ways and began to transform his life while in prison. In prison Derek met a black man that helped him transform his life. He helped teach Derek that hatred is why he ended up in prison. Derek turns his life around in prison after a traumatic experience with the help of one of his old history teachers, a black man, played by Avery Brooks.

When he is finally released from prison he comes home to find that his little brother Danny was on his way right to where Derek just came home from. After leaving one of the neo-Nazi parties, Danny and Derek finally get on the same page as Derek shares his brutal prison rape story with him. The character development showed Derek transforming from a dedicated white supremacist to a deeper, more compassionate human being. While the depiction of his brother Danny who was following in the earlier footsteps of Derek gave this film depth, and draws the viewer into the plot.

This film is rated R for the violence and language, which is essential to accurately portray the life and attitudes of this culture. Scenes showing the hate crimes committed by the gang members emphasize the ugliness of this group. The one scene that kept replaying in my head was the one that ended up sending Derek away for murder, a black and white scene of a black man with his mouth on the street curb and Derek brutally stomping on his head. The movie goes back in forth from black and white, then to color.

When it's shown in black and white, it's metaphorically showing Derek's narrow perception of his life. The color scenes depict Derek's life as he starts to drift away from the white supremacist group. Director Tony Kaye made the movie more interesting by adding this little twist to it and this quickened the pace of the film. With a run time of 158 minutes there are some moments where the film could bog down, but my attention was fixed to the story line the entire time. I definitely did not stop thinking about this film when it was over.

It really makes the viewer feel the need for tolerance. Edward Norton did a phenomenal job in the role of Derek Vinyard. He made the character come alive with hate and then was able to morph his character into a changed man. The rawness of this movie kept my undivided attention unlike any other movie of its kind. I would recommend this movie to anyone who likes drama filled movies. The viewer will leave the movie touched and have a new grasp on how racism affects our world.

At the end of the movie Danny realizes his beliefs of a white nation were misguided. His voice is heard making this statement from a paper he wrote

for his American History X class. "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature. " But is it too late from Danny to change his ways?