

# Free research paper on critique of north country

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The movie "North Country" has many themes. The film discusses issues in the work place such as sexual harassment and violence. In addition, these issues are examined from three perspectives: the employees, the management, and the union. Employees, management, and the union each have their own agenda. This movie explores each agenda and how one group's interests may be contrary to the interests of another group. Since the movie is based on a true story, the events of the movie are much more shocking than if this would be a work of fiction.

The health and safety issues in "North Country" encompass physical, mental, and emotional health. Female employees of the coalmine are attacked and beaten by the male employees of the coalmine. After one female employee, Josey Aimes (Aimes), complains about the sexual harassment, she is savagely beaten at work. In another act of retribution, the male employees knock over the porta potty that Aimes is currently occupying. The chemicals or sewage material in the porta potty could have hurt Aimes. She could have been hurt by the fall in the porta potty.

Examples of the mental and emotional abuse include Aimes' first day on the job. Her new supervisor makes a comment about how he heard that Aimes looks good under her clothes. Another example is when one of the other female employees finds a fake penis in her lunch box. The women imply these incidents happen often. Everyone contributes to the sexual abuse problem.

The women contribute to the sexual abuse problem by not wanting to report the incidents. The men contribute to the sexual harassment by carrying out

the harassment. Management contributes to the problem by not doing anything about the situation. Even the union does not want to deal with the sexual harassment issue.

Female workers are portrayed as strong because they tolerate the abuse and do not let the abuse stop them from working. Male employees are portrayed as troublemakers by being so abusive. In the minds of the male supervisors, the females are perceived as the troublemakers whenever they do risk complaining about the sexual harassment. The employers are depicted as heartless as they have no sympathy for the women. In addition, women who do complain to management are told to “take it like a man” (North Country) and not to complain.

The union and union workers are revealed to be useless as sexual harassment continues during the union meeting where Aimes attends and wants to explain to the union what is really happening at the mine. This is a negative portrayal of the union.

Based on the events of the movie, the above portrayals are accurate. The men were highly inappropriate in so many ways. The women were strong and tolerated the abuse because they had families to support. The male bosses were typical by supporting their male employees. The union should have investigated the complaints sooner.

For decades, sexual harassment was tolerated in the workplace. This movie represents a landmark case in the creation of sexual harassment policies in the workplace. As a result of this case, sexual harassment is now defined in

employee handbooks across the country. Consequences for violation of the policy are now in place. Many corporations have educational meetings regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Sexual harassment is now virtually non-existent in the workplace so employee health and safety has improved.

## **Works Cited**

North Country. Dir. Niki Caro. Warner Bros, 2005. DVD.