

Gandhi (movie) essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Gandhi premiere on November 30, 1982 in New Delhi, India. The 190 minute film was wonderfully directed by Richard Attenborough and well written by John Briley. I found this film difficult to “ briefly” summarize, however I would like to share a short timeline of events through the film’s eyes. The movie opens with a message with message from the filmmakers which explains their approach to the problem of filming the documented complexity of Mahatma Gandhi’s life. The message goes on to explain how there is no way to give each year, event and person involved in Gandhi’s lifetime its specific impact.

The opening scene in the movie is that of Gandhi’s January 30, 1948 assassination in New Delhi, India by Nathuram Godse, a man whose bow towards Gandhi was previously rejected. Surrounded by family, friends and supporters during the assassination, Gandhi softly says “ Oh, God” as he is shot. He soon after falls to the ground to his death. Afterwards, the film shows a brief funeral scene with many attendees. During the next scene viewers are taken back to 1893 in South Africa where a young lawyer by the name of Mohandas Gandhi is thrown off a train for refusing to move to the third class car even though his ticket placed him in first class.

Because of this event, Gandhi sees through to start a non-violent protesting organization for the civil rights of Indians. Gandhi is arrested several times while in South Africa as well as one scene that affected me emotionally where Gandhi is beaten by an officer with a baton for throwing the government’s passes in the fire, one by one. After this, the pass laws were changed by General Smut, much to the dismay of the Indian people. Gandhi goes on to challenge these changes by asking Hindu’s and Muslims alike to

join together and do not obey these new laws; however do not turn violent toward anyone.

Soon after the movie shows Gandhi in prison once again and General Smut has summoned him to his office. Once arrived to meet with General Smut, Gandhi is offered freedom from jail as well as Indians will receive rights in South Africa in return for Gandhi's departure from South Africa and back to India. Gandhi accepted. Events in South Africa had made Gandhi a very well-known man in India and in 1915 he along with family in tow, arrives in Bombay, India which is where the following scene takes place. I immediately noticed that he was no longer wearing a suit, but instead the traditional clothing of the Indian people.

Upon returning to India, the film depicts Gandhi taking on the English once again with the backing of millions of Indian supporters seeking independence from Great Britain. This done by once again forming a non-violent protesting organization. From here the film goes on to show violence brought to Gandhi's followers, supporters, and the non-violent protestors by officials using force with gunfire, batons, etc. Afterwards, Gandhi was again imprisoned several times in India with one occurrence resulting in a six year sentence. Eventually Gandhi helped pave the way for India's independence however it wasn't all over.

India began to divide between Muslim's and Hindu's and it was settled that the North and Eastern parts of India would be given to Muslim's and called Pakistan and Hindu's would be left with the rest of India as their homeland. Thus happening all against Gandhi's wishes. As scenes move on, Gandhi

takes ill, and it becomes known that he has gone on a hunger strike due to the violence between Muslims and Hindu's. At one point it is clarified that Gandhi refuses to eat again until the two religious groups end the war on each other.

The two sides do eventually stop fighting; however India remains divided throughout the remainder of the movie. At the end of the movie as Gandhi walks outside, weak and carried, viewers are confronted with the scene of Gandhi's assassination. Once the scene blacks out, you hear his words again, " Oh, God". This movie proved to be emotional for me. I was drawn into believing I was actually watching these events as they were happening. Ben Kingsley, who plays the role of Mahatma Gandhi, was extraordinary.

His acting skills were that I believe drew me into the film so deeply. The first time I saw this movie was approximately fourteen years ago in high school and I have favorable memories of this being a wonderful movie that depicts the life of Mahatma Gandhi, and once seeing this movie again I still feel the same way and maybe even a little more encouraged by his life. I do however feel that there were missing events in the movie but I am with the understanding of why. Perhaps these events were combined or not written in the script for reasons stated in the opening message from the filmmakers.

I was surprised to find out through watching this film that Gandhi had children and was married to a faithful wife who stood by his side and also was imprisoned several times for the support of her husband. Yet another thing that ultimately surprised me was the violence that the Indians took, with no violence what so ever and yet they still believed, and still pushed

forward for their beliefs without violence. This I believe is an important lesson for all which is another reason this film is a great history and moral lesson for students and adults alike.