

An analysis of dangerous minds essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The education system in America is a mess, and someone needs to fix it. Students find school uninteresting and hate it. They would rather join gangs or sell drugs than study or learn from books or traditional classrooms. Cursing or mocking the teacher is often the norm, and discipline is rarely found in poor neighborhoods. Unfortunately, there are few heroes today who are willing to take the time or sacrifice themselves to help the community. But there are still a few who are willing to take the challenge, and when they are found, a movie is born.

This is the story of *Dangerous Minds*, a movie about the challenges of an unconventional teacher. But while, the acting and casting of the movie was excellent, the screenplay was unrealistic. *Dangerous Minds* is the story of a retired US Marine who becomes an unorthodox teacher who helps poor and disadvantaged Hispanic and African American kids. LouAnne Johnson, played by veteran actress Michelle Pfeiffer, applies as a teacher in Parkmont High School in Belmont, California, where she is accepted immediately.

She is called "White Bread" by the tough gang-banging, drug-infested students, who compare her Caucasian features with their lunch. But the next day, she makes up for it by coming to work in a leather jacket and teaching them Asian martial arts. They enjoyed it like drugs but quickly became disinterested again when she started teaching the traditional curriculum. Eventually she would try to teach them using unconventional strategies that raised eyebrows among conservative school authorities.

She introduced them to poetry by using the lyrics of pop songs. Tambourine Man by Bob Dylan became the hot topic of her class, which she used to

explain metaphors and symbolism. She also bribed them into participating or performing by offering rewards such as candy, high grades or trips to the theme park. LouAnne also became influential in the personal lives of her students. One of her students, Callie Roberts, who is very intelligent, suddenly becomes pregnant and drops out of school; so LouAnne tries to persuade her to return.

Johnson also pays personal visits to Raul Sanchez, who is involved in gang violence, and attempts to motivate his education by visiting his family and dining with him. Unfortunately, one of her superegoistic students, Emilio Ramirez, is wanted by an ex-con. She attempts to protect Emilio, but the school does not care; so he is eventually killed. Tired of her ordeal after one year of teaching, she announces that she is quitting. But her emotional students won't let her go, so she reconsiders. The acting in the movie was believable, especially Michelle Pfeiffer's excellent performance.

Her unconventional tough-love behavior was entertaining. She was charismatic, funny, passionate and driven in her desire to teach and make a difference in the lives of the less-fortunate. She makes women and teachers proud to be who they are. The casting of the other characters was also outstanding even if they were unknown actors. They were very talented. Brooklin Harris played the role of Callie Roberts. Renoly Santiago acted out the lines of Raul Sanchez. And Wade Dominguez played Emilio Ramirez. They fit well with their given roles.

The antagonists in the form of Courtney Vance as George Grandy, a school authority, along with Robin Bartlett as Carla Nichols, another conservative,

seem apt. The screenplay, however, seems too fairy-tale-like and unrealistic. There didn't seem to be any real sense of surprise and the lines sometimes seem to be unreal, especially the ending where the kids become very emotional and attempt to convince her to change her mind about leaving. It didn't seem to fit the psyche of tough high-school kids; it seems to be more of overacting.

The wisecracks that were thrown back and forth by the unruly students seem real, but the Cliches in the film should have been minimized to spice it up. The screenplay writer, Ronald Bass, also tried to play it safe by not using more offensive words that could have been more realistic. Michelle Pfeiffer, being a superb actress, however, was able to make do with the material she had, and she saved what otherwise may have been a disaster if another actress performed the role using the existing screenplay.

All in all, Dangerous Minds could have been better if the lines and story were more realistic. But the acting and casting made up for its weak screenplay. It was still enjoyable to see that there are still some people, even if they are very rare, who still want to make a difference in America. Hopefully, this movie will inspire all aspiring and existing teachers to be like LouAnne. Nothing is perfect in this world, and certainly this movie falls short too. But it is good enough to uplift those who need it and perhaps even to spark change in America.