

Avon Scholarship Awards Essay Contest 2022

Third Place Winner

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Judas and the Black Messiah

When it comes to films depicting black history or culture, I often find that many include stereotypes or misinterpret significant events. But the *Judas and the Black Messiah* is a hidden gem that truly highlights the Black experience and is an incredible film to look back on the rich history of Black historical actors. Learning more about black history is always a pleasure as it is so deep and powerful that the audience is able to understand important moments and revolutions in black history.

Judas and the Black Messiah takes place in Chicago during the late 1960s, after the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. With tensions being incredibly high for the black community and the government not properly serving their people, the Black Panthers focused on providing self-defense and carried firearms. The film sucks the audience in by showing the time of power struggles and liberation movements through the Black Panther Party fighting against racism and police brutality. In addition, the film evokes many feelings and emotions. There are moments throughout the film where you feel inspired, want to cry your eyes out, or even moments where you want to fight and make that sacrifice.

This powerful, high-impact film matters as it allows the audience to see a true story come to life and reveals parts of history many textbooks do not include. The Black Panther Party has been left largely untold, and there are many negative perceptions of the organization being a violent group. Although the Party's history is

often focused on the members dressing in all black, carrying guns, and being a violent organization, *Judas and the Black Messiah*, on the other hand, did not shy away from showing the entire scope of their ideology.

The film allowed us to get a glimpse of the various programs implemented and operated by the Black Panther Party so they could provide resources that the government was either not providing or of what was provided was of low quality. They showed breakfast programs and health care clinics that proved they were dedicated to improving the quality of life and uplifting their community.

Overall, the film showed the Black Panther Party in a different light. With proper depiction, the film retells significant events that should not be forgotten. The film is a great way to help people better understand how people lived and expand their knowledge.

Films including *Judas and the Black Messiah* have impacted my life in many ways, one particularly being that I am able to form new opinions on various geopolitical issues and change my attitude towards certain groups of people. It also provides an actuality of what happens in our society and opens our eyes to issues we may have ignored, communicating different ideas and stories. When viewing films, I often find myself reflecting on our world. Lastly, film has created a powerful sense of emotion and engagement for me. Hearing the dialogue, soundtrack, and being able to visualize all the elements of the story. Films immerse me into the story in a different way than a book. Film has a greater effect on me being able to comprehend the underlying themes and messages.