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Down With the Chief

In Whose Honor?, a documentary created by Jay Rosenstein, focuses on the story behind the racial and cultural disputes behind The University of Illinois' old mascot, Chief Illiniwek. The movie featured many sources in the form of interviews. However, Rosenstein clearly focused his attention on one specific individual's experience with the chief. Throughout the documentary, Charlene Teters, a Native American woman who attended The University of Illinois, was featured several times in the documentary in order to discuss the racial discrimination associated with Chief Illiniwek (Rosenstein). From this, it became apparent that the documentary contained strong bias against the university's old mascot.

Throughout the documentary, Rosenstein utilizes several cinematography tools in order to make the audience sympathize with Charlene. One of the most effective methods Rosenstein uses is music. During several transitions throughout the movie, Rosenstein plays Native American flute music in order to develop sympathetic feelings within the audience towards Charlene (Rosenstein). This is significant because it shows that the director, Rosenstein, also sympathizes for Charlene and the Native American which explains the bias against the Chief. However, despite the bias, the documentary does well to provide a counter argument. Along with interview with Native Americans, Rosenstein provides interviews with supporters of Chief Illiniwek. The fact that Rosenstein provides the other side of the argument allows the audience,

no matter what side they take, to further engage in the documentary. However, even though the counter argument is provided, movies bias against the chief does not disappear.

The documentary, *In Whose Honor?*, provided arguments both supporting, and against Chief Illiniwek. Furthermore, it was very insightful regarding the Illini Native American Tribe and their values. However, despite this, viewers can't help but sense the heavy bias in the movie. Rosenstein places too much emphasis on Charlene's sob story and touches too little on the cultural and traditional value of Chief Illiniwek at The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. From this, it was very hard to become engaged in the documentary. However, *In Whose Honor?* provided everything necessary for a good documentary. It was insightful, culturally and historically accurate, and the cinematography was done very well. Ultimately, ignoring the bias, Rosenstein's documentary was very well made, and utilized all the aspects of cinematography effectively.

Works Cited

In Whose Honor? Dir. Jay Rosenstein. New Day Films, 1997. DVD.