

### Reviewing The Conflict Behind Chief Illiniwek

Many controversies become muddled with emotion and opinions. Jay Rosenstein captured the essence of the conflict between the University of Illinois and Charlene Teters through his documentary, *In Whose Honor*. Through strong editing and directing choices, Rosenstein demonstrated the strong beliefs that both perspectives held. In addition to editing and director's choices, the acting, music score, and cinematography helped ease the audience into understanding the difficult subject matter.

Rosenstein's editing assisted the audience in understanding the relevance of the topics discussed. To help the audience understand Teter's contrasting opinions toward Chief Illiniwek, Rosenstein chose to overlay Teter's comments with Chief Illiniwek performance. In one of her interviews, Teter mentioned her admiration towards Chief Illiniwek headaddress was met with conflicting opinions towards Chief Illiniwek's dance. Following that statement was a brief video of Chief Illiniwek dancing (In Whose Honor). This overlay helped the audience understand the degree of accuracy behind Chief Illiniwek's costume and the offensive nature of the imitational dance. The cinematography of this documentary primarily focused on the Ken Burns effect. The editor panned across multiple historical pictures in attempt to animate them. This documentary would pan across the faces of all the supporters as the narrator mention the admiration for Chief Illiniwek (In Whose Honor). This effect helps audience members understand the focal point of each picture.

Rosenstein's directing choices created a documentary that focuses directly on the inception and progression of the Chief Illiniwek controversy. A large part of the film is dedicated towards informing the audience on the offense that Teter took from Chief Illiniwek and the

progression of Teter's protest (In Whose Honor). By doing so, a deeper understanding of the roots of issue is shown to the viewers. Rosenstein also chose to provide a rebuttal to both sides of the argument. Rosenstein often used a "back and forth" style which left an impression of debate (In Whose Honor). This style greatly enhanced the understanding of both opinions through parallels. As a result of this style, audience members gained respect for both sides of the debate. They were able to understand that both sides valued tradition. The only issue I found with the editing is the cliché nature of the use of newspapers to symbolize progression and the abuse of fading screens to transition between frames (In Whose Honor).

Many other film tools assisted in the creation of such a stellar documentary. The acting in the documentary was very natural and believable. Real raw emotions are displayed throughout the whole film. Teter's tears towards the abuse of her culture appealed strongly to the pathos of the audience (In Whose Honor). The music score help mold the environment perfectly. The slow tempo and crescendos used by Rosentein during description of the history of Native American culture created a sense of respect and empathy. A much more uplifting and faster paced guitar sound track was often used to symbolize progression in the protesting movement (In Whose Honor). Many of the techniques used affect the emotion of the audience. The editor skillfully manipulated the rhetorical triangle to emphasize pathos. Audience members found themselves slowly supporting Teter's cause as the documentary progressed.

Ultimately, Rosenstein was able to create a masterpiece documentary that provided insightful information on the different perspectives behind the controversy of Chief Illiniwek. Though not completely perfect, the documentary was able to satisfy my curiosity behind the controversy in an accessible manner.

Works Cited

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