

MOONLIGHT

The coming of age drama film “Moonlight” was created in 2016, based on a true story and directed by Barry Jenkins. This film follows a young African American boy from Liberty City, Miami who is struggling with his identity while trying to get a grasp on his sexuality. Separated in three parts, it follows his journey through childhood troubles, teen angst, and adulthood realizations. When we first meet the main character Chiron, we see that even at this young age he is already struggling with not only his identity but sexuality as well. The guidance that he has is limited due to his father being out of the picture and his mother becoming addicted to drugs. While there were people to step up and care for him on an emotional level, Chiron is left to unscramble his sexuality alone throughout this entire tale.

Where the movie is filmed, Liberty City, Miami, is notoriously one of the most poverty stricken areas in the United States. With a majority of the population being African American, the struggles that are faced here are ones that can seem impossible to overcome. Since we know that this story is based on one that is true, we can only imagine how difficult it must have been to grapple with your sexuality while trying to face everyday problems. Being black whilst gay in America can be alienating especially when you have no support system. In this film we see that Chiron lacks support, and has no one to validate his feelings or to even make sure that he is doing ok emotionally. Throughout the entire story we see him struggle to find safety in friendships and relationships.

Chiron’s story about finding inclusion is a heartbreaking one and one many still face to this day. While there has been groundbreaking improvement within the LGBTQ+ activist movements, there are still people much like Chiron who are

being left behind due to a colonial mindset that has been in place since the beginning of time. In chapter four of “Introduction To LGBTQ+ Studies: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach,” it is mentioned how, “Colonial Europeans established norms of marital reproduction and a sexual double standard within gender roles, which rendered what fell outside of these two ideals unacceptable” (Pomerleau). This outdated way of thinking continues to damage our youth, especially those who do not have the proper support systems in place to deal with the unacceptance from an entire global community. While we have a long way to go there are more resources available to those in poverty stricken areas such as Liberty City, where the main character of “Moonlight” resides and as also mentioned in chapter four of “Introduction To LGBTQ+ Studies: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach,” “History in the United States has witnessed profound transformations in meanings, the social construction of identities, and how LGBTQ+ people have used collective action to fight for rights and equality (Pomerleau). If only the main character had resources available to him so that he could better understand himself and those around him.

I would absolutely recommend this film to others and appreciated watching a story that was based on a true one. I found that it truly captured the essence of being black, from the hood, and misunderstood by those around you. Jenkins was able to capture the struggles of adolescence and the hardships of growing up without support. The main character Chiron ends this story still trying to figure out his identity and what it means to be a gay black man in America and that is ok. It made the story more realistic with it ending without the main character having it all figured out. In real life, it can take an eternity to figure out who you want to be or who you will choose to love, this story illustrates that perfectly, and just like Chiron, we are all trying our best.

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