Valerie Walker

Film Connection

Mentor: Ray Templin

April 13, 2016

**Contrast and Comparison of two documentaries:**

**“Overnight” (TROY DUFFY) & “Burden of Dreams” (Werner Herzog)**

Upon viewing the films, I find that the two documentaries are distinctively different, to say the least. For example, the majority of the footage in the Overnight documentary showcases bartender and band member, Troy Duffy, and his new found aspirations as the up and coming Hollywood film director for his screenplay “The Boondock Saints”; a story of two vigilante brothers exacting revenge on mob criminals. On the other hand, Burden of Dreams follows the established German filmmaker Werner Herzog’s epic quest to film the movie “Fitzcarraldo,” the story of Brian Sweeny Fitzgerald, who intends to build an opera house in the middle of the jungle. The documentary Burden of Dreams captures Herzog’s over the top tumultuous obsession and chaotic problems while trying to make a famous film, while the documentary, “Overnight,” captures Duffy’s over the top know-it-all, self-centered ambitions to become a famous film maker. Throughout the “Overnight” documentary, there isn’t a huge amount of footage of a behind the scenes look at the making of “The Boondock Saints” film. The movie’s main focus is Duffy’s narcissistic, sociopathic and manipulative ability to be a puppeteer of his band and anyone who is in close vicinity. Although, “The Burden of Dreams” documentary focused on in depth “on location” footage of Werner Herzog’s daily difficulties in the rain forests of South America with casting problems, losing both of his featured actors half way through the film; (Jason Robards) because of dysentery due to filming in the jungle, and (Mick Jagger) because of a prior contract, causing Herzog to recast and start the film over. Herzog also had to move his location because of a border war between tribes of Indians, many of which were extras on his film. Plane crashes, diseases, attacks by Indians in addition to other incredible hardships did not deter the film maker though. Similar to the tenacity of Troy Duffy, who in the face of a complete Hollywood “turn around” refused to give up on his goal of completing the film “The Boondock Saints;” although most of his hardships seem to be self-inflicted, stating at one point that, “Success has nothing to do with how you live your life and how you treat your friends really, if you got the goods, you got the goods, no matter what kind of “f---up” you are.”

Subsequently, psychological snares plagued both directors, to the point in which, Herzog seemed to be “going mad” because of all his calamities and massive amount of money he had invested into his project, but Duffy seemed to be “already mad” when you consider the fact that his project; was funded by studio executive and film producer, Harvey Weinstein along with Miramax Films, whose investment of $300,000 for Duffy’s script, “The Boondock Saints,” and $15 million to allow the new film director to make it into a movie was sacked mainly because of his egotistical ideology.

 “Overnight” exposes the “rags to riches to rags” story of how Duffy ultimately abuses his new found fame and ruins a promising career in the film industry because of his inflexible need to be in control and in charge of everything and everyone even though he has never made a feature film. While Burden of Dreams shows a well-known director who is adamant about getting his film completed “by any means necessary,” even up to the cast pulling an entire steamship up a hillside using only block and tackle or bull dozer, or crew members walking off the set and/or the risk of life and limb of himself and others. Herzog once stated, “Without dreams we are like cows in a field,” consequently, the two documentaries capture both director’s wildest dreams as they turn into nightmares.