Rubin “The Hurricane” Carter Essay, Research Paper

Rubin “Hurricane” Carter

The movie that was analyzed was “The Hurricane” starring Denzel Washington. The movie was based on a true story, which was about a boxer who was wrongfully accused for murders he did not commit. Rubin Carter had been a victim of racial prejudice since the age of 11. From that time on he had been haunted by the racial prejudice that would take most of his natural life away from him. At the age of fifty he ended up going to the Supreme courts to get his trial heard and at this time he was set free. This is a short summary leaving a lot to be unsaid, but I believe the portrayal will tell most of the story in itself.

In the beginning of the movie one can tell that the less developed, or “slums”, was where Rubin Carter was forced to grow up. This is an example of minority group status and stratification. This society was one where African Americans did not have access to wealth, power, prestige, or income. With this type of environment forces these African Americans to be more prone to violence and criminal acts. So as a kid Rubin was involved with a crime where an older white male came up to him and his friends down by the local river. This male was trying to molest one of the little boys, so Rubin threw a bottle at him and they ran. The man caught up to them and got a hold of Rubin and threatened to throw him over the edge of a cliff, so Rubin at age 11 pulled a knife and stabbed him in the arm to get away. The police caught him and since the older man was a public figure, Rubin Carter was sentenced to a juvenile detention center until the age of thirteen. This was the first time that we seen the racial prejudice from the head police chief towards Carter.

The next principle that was expressed in this movie was pure discrimination. While Carter was in his confinement he used his anger to become a professional boxer. When he was released he pursued this and done well enough to get a title fight. In this title fight he beat this guy in every aspect of boxing, but the judges who were all white ruled unanimously in the favor of the other guy. They were afraid to take the title way from a white male and give it to a black man. This is where we started to see Rubin’s attitude toward the white person change, he started expressing his feelings to people but playing them off like he was joking. You could say that he was becoming prejudice himself. Because he was expressing these feelings and it was getting into the press accidentally, Rubin started having more people vandalizing his house and harassing him because he was talking about how he hated the “nigger hating cops”.

The racist police officer had it set in his mind that Rubin Carter was a menace to society and he was going to do everything in his power to take him down. These things that Rubin was saying even made the cop want to put him away more. So the first chance he could get something on him he would. So it happened and the cop tried to pin a murder on Rubin Carter and another black man that was with him at the time of the murder. There was an instance that we saw an instance of stereotyping by other cops in that district. When they were out looking for the murderers they were told to look for two black men in a white car. When Carter was approached in his car he was told by the police that they were looking for “two black men in a white car”, Rubin replied with “any two will do?”

Another stereotyping incident that was pinned on Rubin was during the trial they used the evidence that the killings were racially motivated. They thought that since Rubin expressed his opinion of the cops publicly he would attack the whites by charging into an institutionally discriminatory bar and kill the people in it. It turned out that that the discriminatory bar was fabricated, because it did serve blacks.

The only theory that could explain the actions of this all-weather bigot is that of attribution theory. This is supported by his actions even though Rubin Carter was cleaning up his act he refused to see that and he let his stereotypical views take over. Even knowing that the prejudice cops seen white people do the same thing that the blacks were doing they would make up excuses for why it was all right for them to do it. This is what is called the ultimate attribution error.

The portrayal of the principles of ethnic relations was considered to be accurate for that time of the 1960’s. Economic inequality was not something that was unusual for the African American culture. They were concentrated in the slums and ghettos were opportunity was not something they had a lot of. The other principles like discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes like that portrayed in this movie was much like the real life that African Americans had to live in, and even still do just not as extreme as in the 60’ and in years before. So as disturbing as it maybe this video did a good job at portraying the principles analyzed in this time frame.