

American Sniper

Presentation by Elliott Brett

1. Intro:

For most people, this is a movie about patriotism, about Americans being proud to be Americans. On one side, half of America believes they are just, and righteous in God's eyes. On the other, half of America believes this film nothing but patriotic jingoism. Whichever side is correct, the director Clint Eastwood who also directed the war movies *Iwo Jima* and *Flags of our Fathers*, had no intention of glorifying war when making this movie. The fallout though, has generated massive debate, argument, and even hatred toward Americans, by other Americans.

2. The movie:

In 2010, screenwriter Jason Hall first met Chris Kyle, the infamous Navy SEAL sniper on which this film is based. They began a close relationship in which Jason would spend time with Chris, his wife and children. Chris Kyle's novel went on to becoming an international bestseller, and a movie was therefore a possibility. It wasn't though a reality until after the death of Chris in February 2013, almost two years ago now. It was in fact Chris Kyle's wife who said, quote:

"You are going to do this movie. Get it right, because this is how my kids are going to remember their father."

At first it was Steven Spielberg who contributed to the story and the script. He had a vision of a psychological war between snipers, as you see in *Enemy at the Gates*, or, *Stalingrad*. Eventually he dropped out due to financial reasons. Bradley Cooper, the lead actor in this film portraying Chris Kyle, himself wanted Clint Eastwood to direct the movie, because Bradley envisioned the movie as a Western, and Clint Eastwood of course is a veteran of Westerns. Bradley repeatedly told Clint Eastwood that he wanted a movie like Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, the Oscar winning Western of 1992.

Bradley Cooper was invited into the Kyle family, he spent time with the children of Chris, and watched hundreds of hours of home movies of the family. Sienna Miller, who plays Chris's wife Taya, spent time skyping with the real Taya, and spending face to face time with the family too.

Original Is Better 2015

Evidently, this is a very personal movie. We are being invited into the Kyle family's lives. Actually, in one particular scene of this film, Bradley Cooper's Chris speaks with a psychiatrist, and that scene was taken in one shot - clearly Bradley Cooper knows a lot more about his character than found in the average biographical movie.

3. Conclusion:

In conclusion, we are about to see a very controversial, very personal account of a sniper, one could say, a surgeon of death. What he did, he did under order as a soldier. Some call him a murderer, others call him a hero. You decide.

Thank you for listening. As always, I look forward to seeing you again here or at Anderson House.

Thank you