

Soldiers of Peace-

Critical analysis

This essay shall critically analyse my individual documentary "Soldiers of Peace". I aim to do this by looking at camera work, sound, editing and content and concept. In order to account for decisions I made in terms of all of the above, I shall refer briefly to my proposal and the ways in which I feel I achieve my aims.

I wanted this piece to be an in-depth look at the lives of three soldiers; the reasons why they do what they do, how it effects their family life and what their lives are actually like.

Treatment

Due to the fact that I will be following three soldiers as they participate in training, both on land and in the air, there will be a lot of shots that are hand held. I think that this will add to the feel of the piece as it will make the viewers feel uneasy and out of their comfort zone during those scenes, but it will really make it seem that we are experiencing those moments through the subjects eyes and their point of view. The interviews with the subjects will take place in the moment, as they walk from one part of the base to another, while they get ready in the morning, eat their meals, etc. In terms of the look of the piece I want to make the colour of the uniforms stand out and desaturate the surrounding colours.

In terms of the angle of the piece, one might argue that I did not focus enough on the fact that they are training for possible deployment. However, in my mind, in a piece that is only five minutes, when I could have made it at least ten, meant that I had to be really ruthless with the content. Personally I prefer stories that are about people. Therefore, I wanted this piece to be about three individuals who happen to be soldiers. I wanted to show who they are, what they feel when they train, what they think, what scares them. That for me was what I would rather include as opposed to facts about what they are training for. For some that might have been the 'so-what?' factor, but for me the 'so-what?' factor comes from getting to know who they are and it is that they

do what they do. However, I did include the subjects speak about wanting to go to Sudan for deployment, and also the fact that they would be willing to do anything if they had to under command.

In terms of the camera work, I feel that there was a good contrast between the hand held work and the interviews that were conducted using a tripod. The hand held camera work was steady enough to not be too distracting, and was necessary in order to capture the feel of it being through the subjects' eyes. The places where the camera did seem to shake, for example the grenade throwing, I feel added to the sense of adrenalin that goes through the soldiers' veins as they hold the grenade in their hand. Nothing to do with the adrenalin that was racing through my body! I made sure that the sound was consistent through-out the piece, and I think that this was achieved.

I did not want this piece to be abstract stylistically. I wanted it to be a classic piece, that flowed from a logical beginning to an end. In terms of content I wanted the interviews and the visuals to tell the same story, however I wanted them to 'look' different. The interviews were conducted outside, with the subjects in their kit and in their environments and were left 'as is'. The cutaways however, had a colour pass effect on them which made it look like an old army movie. The colour of their uniforms is what stands out, as does the gold colour of the bullets. These highlight the fact that they are indeed soldiers and that they are ultimately trained to kill people, even though through their interviews I aimed to bring across who they are as individuals first and soldiers later. I think this contrast works successfully to bring across all aspects of who they are and why it is they do what they do.

I initially wanted to interview the subjects as they were doing the exercises. I decided against this however as I felt that my ability in terms of hand held is not good enough to be used in the piece. It would have been too shaky, out of focus, and I would not have been able to also concentrate on making sure that the sound was good enough, and would have done me more harm than good. I had to realise my limitations in this case and instead focus on my capabilities.

In conclusion, I feel that this piece is a tidy piece of camera, sound and editing work. The

concept is strong and has not been done before. I am really pleased with the way that it turned out and am satisfied with my ability to multi-task.