

NEWTOWN director Kim A. Snyder captures the mourning of an entire town rocked by violence in her latest documentary. Highlighting a handful of families directly affected by the Sandy Hook shooting tragedy, NEWTOWN is a personal look into how they have each dealt with the sudden loss of their children, and how they have come together as a community to support one another through this difficult time.

The events at Sandy Hook Elementary School are still fresh in our recent history. NEWTOWN is not so much of a reflective piece as most documentaries are, nor is it a political piece which would probably have been an easier path to take with the subject matter. Instead the director allows her subjects to just speak to the camera candidly. She does not shy away from capturing their pain and tears, and often, when the subjects are looking directly into the camera lens, they share their turmoil directly with the audience. NEWTOWN is a difficult film to get through from an emotional perspective, as one can't help but empathize with each of the parents portrayed in the movie.

From a cinematography perspective, the shots are a little all over the place. There are some elements that were clearly set up for the camera, and others seem like opportunities that just appeared out of nowhere that the director just decided to turn the camera on for. The home movies and photos that are integrated into the piece are well done and the clips selected really help you get to know how deep the relationship these parents had with their children, and how burdened they are by the loss that they are dealing with. There is an obvious trust that Snyder has built with these families and she portrays them with integrity.

The loss is something that you can clearly see is still felt even after several years since the shooting occurred. One thing that the filmmaker seemed to make a conscious choice to do was to not at all highlight, name, or picture the shooter out of respect for the families that he tore apart. Talking about his home life, mental health issues, and other things leading up to the fateful December day are only touched upon briefly. Snyder also seems to take a different road by not including a lot of 2nd amendment and political discussion. The film stays on course with the parent's ordeal, and while it does include a trip to the White House and the Congressional hearing to ban assault weapons (that was voted down), it doesn't dwell in it.

It is heartwarming to see how the community of Newtown has banded together to support each other. The shooting didn't just happen to the families that lost children, but this was an act that affected the entirety of the town. There is a great lesson to be learned from this

community that other towns and cities can take a note from, but hopefully it won't take another mass shooting to realize. NEWTOWN is a fantastic look into the grieving process and shows that life can go on after a horrific act as long as you have a steady support system like the Newtown citizens.

(85)

NEWTOWN Review

8.6

A look at how the community of Newtown, Connecticut came together in the aftermath of the largest mass shooting of schoolchildren in American history.

Story10.0

Director9.0

Cinematography7.0

Acting10.0

Sound7.0

Reader Rating: (0 vote)