

Chi-Yin Lau
De Prieto
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Osama

Taking place during the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, *Osama* is a powerful film that reveals the true horrors of oppression. Taliban rule was a fundamentalist Muslim theocracy where women were held in the lowest esteem. In fact, women were not allowed to hold jobs, go out in public without male relatives. It was even against the law just to ever show their face or any body part outside. These laws made it especially hard for widows who found it nearly impossible to be able to work to keep their children fed. *Osama* is about those women and tells the story about what happens when the mother of a 12 year old girl can no longer work in her job at a hospital. Just to make sure that they have enough money to buy food, the mother comes up with the risky idea to disguise the girl as a boy so that she can work during the day. If caught, the penalty is death, but *Osama* agrees to go through with it.

Osama is inspired by the reality of what took place in Afghanistan, giving it a feeling of a truth. It is entirely accurate that women were mistreated and abused during the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Making things much worse was the fact that Afghanistan was a very dangerous place and many men were killed over the years. Because of this, the number of women who found themselves in the same position as *Osama's* mother was very high. The movie memorably depicts a kind of reality that seems hard to believe could be possible for most Americans. Probably many Americans who watch this movie think it is as realistic as a *Star Wars* movie. Looking at scenes where women live in constant fear and must cover themselves up from head to toe probably seems unrealistic. The movie does show scenes that many people probably can't believe: women in fear of having to go outside alone, women being afraid of getting shot or arrested if they speak out in public. The sad truth, however, is that the movie shows a clear picture of the struggle of the life for the women who must always be covered with their veil and are treated as second-class citizen.

Of course, not every man in Afghanistan believed the way the Taliban believe. One of the most sympathetic characters is a non-Taliban male who gives *Osama* a job and helps to aid and protect her. There is also a very kind man who helps *Osama's* mother avoid the Taliban by pretending to be her husband. The movie is not meant to portray all Afghan men as insane fundamentalists. This film is a cruel and dark story, but it manages to somehow find some beauty in both the country and its people.

Osama is probably the most honest depiction of Afghanistan during the rule of Taliban. The non-professional cast gives the movie more of a feeling of a documentary, as if the viewer is watching a true story lived out by those it really happened to. This movie could not have been made during the rule of the Taliban, which was finally ended when the United States invaded Afghanistan following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and brought down the Taliban. Had those events not occurred, it is likely the Taliban would still be in power and stories like the one this movie tells would still be taking place. So, although it's possible to argue about the motive in the case of the military action, it's difficult to disagree with the result.