Phillip Malone

I found it quite interesting a movie over math starts out like the Sound of Music did. The fact that a mathematician can survive without a home and just on the fees that he charges on for lectures and appearances is fascinating. I like the fact that he starts out lectures with a joke because it makes him seem like he can really give a great lecture. His early life makes sense that he became what he is because multiplying 3 and 4 digit number in your head as a person is impressive let alone if you are a child. I like the idea that he sends his friendly mathematicians problems through the mail and knows they will be interested in them cause his brain sounds like that it’s not only a super calculator but also possess a form of photo graphic memory. It sounds this way because he can remember problems he proposed to other people by a statue in college.

The idea that one of the most praised mathematicians in the world cares about what is happening in a political sense around the world where his friends live and even sends them articles about what is going on around them just makes him sound like a really good guy in general. I like the idea that he just likes to be well rounded in all walks of intellectual debate. To teach mathematics with the idea of a reward at the end and that reward being money is a good incentive for teaching people about how math works. You always hear how sad world war two was but when you give it someone’s specific view of the war it always gets much worse. Seeing Erodes trying to talk about the friends and family he lost visually takes a toll on him and ads greater sympathy for the man. My favorite thing about him so far is his big middle finger to the United States of America during the McCarthy witch-hunt.

The way that Erodes walks and carries himself is so unlike what you would expect a genius to be like. Even the way he dresses and likes to joke around is something that seems so weird. Most people tend to only see interview of the most well-known geniuses of our time consisting of mostly physicists like Steven Hawking or Neil Degrasse Tyson and expect almost any other person on their level in whatever field it might be to act similar to how they do. Neil might be closer to what Erodes is but that might just be due to age of Neil and him trying to get his points across to the masses. While Erodes is mostly only giving lectures and printing papers at a level where most people would understand if he just talked in the language of mathematics.

People seem to compare him to every well-known figure that existed for math before and for what seems to be good reason. He throws the idea that mathematicians are these held up nerds doing problems over and over is wrong because they state almost constantly that he like being around people and having someone to talk about anything big or important with.

The idea that when he goes somewhere to someone’s home that their needs to be a Paul sitter is the best thing I have ever heard. There must have been a time where he was growing up that he thought it’d just be quicker if he did it himself and then found out that people helping would make the process faster and work more efficiently then I feel like that’s the moment that a Paul sitter was needed. Because it seems like he does not want to stop learning. He wants to solve and unlock the mysteries of the world of mathematics and give everyone the best answer possible.

The thought that Erodes is a good person is dwarfed by the stories the documentary tells about his mother’s nature. With her coming on his math trips at the age of sixty to Israel to continue to learn about math is great. She sounded so encouraging of Erodes as he was skyrocketing through their field. The idea that she kept a semi neat record of all the papers and copies he had of every paper that he had written is a sweat gesture even from a motherly standpoint. He has such a love for his mother that even five years after her death he is still sad about it is really and truly heartwarming.

It is sad that he passed away when he did. I have the idea that if he continued to live on he would have made even greater discoveries in the field because the documentary shows that even though he was old he was far from frail and slow. He seemed to walk, as fast as a normal person would and when he played the drop and catch game for children he seemed to do it with a speed most old people do not display. The fact that while he was pushing the limit on age for a human and kept going and doing a lot more than most people his age would be doing is saying a lot about him. The description of him being like a lost child seems well placed as well because he does seem to wander instead of walk to his destination.

The viewing of the subject of a documentary is important along with any people you interview about that subject. While most of the interviews made sense with it just looking like they were having it inside an office or home, some of the interviews happened in really weird places like the open theater towards the end of the segment about Erodes’ mother. It seemed like a really awkward place to interview someone because the place was out of the way and the exact opposite of what they did to interview anyone else. It seemed strange and out of place especially with the shots of him just doing some math in a notebook.

From an actual standpoint of how the movie was mad in general instead of the subject it feels almost wrong. There were really strange shots like when he would be lecturing it almost felt like the camera was only a foot from his face and probably looked really awkward to anyone watching the camera men film this. As I stated before the shot in the open theater is strange not just from a comparison to other interviews but also it is a strange place to through into the documentary because almost every other place was either very public, like a park or a random street, or it was private like a home. The open theater just seems out of place as a location for anything in this movie and would have been better to just not use it at all. Thought that was not the only odd place or thing that they filmed for the documentary, when they moved to the couple that house Erodes when he visits their area it seems ridiculous for the film to contain twelve seconds of a person jumping on a trampoline with no dialogue at all to accompany it is strange. Most of that scene is just ridiculous and is hard to imagine them asking Erodes if he still can play ping-pong.

The documentary itself is interesting because of its subject being someone not fully known by the general public.