**Scene Start 00:30:29 – Scene End 00:40:46**

America ranks 44th in health care efficiency, 19th in national satisfaction, 23rd gender equality, and 14th in education. Despite the commonly held belief by many Americans that the United States is “number one” in many important categories, these ranks show room for improvement. Michael Moore’s documentary, *Where to Invade Next*, provides a stimulating look at other countries and how America stacks up against them. Out of the numerous countries that Michael Moore explored, the scene in the movie that analyses Finland’s education system provided the most glaring contrast. Michael Moore’s message of improving America’s education system by viewing Finland’s system is becomes the most compelling scene due to his successful implementation of filmography techniques, sounds, and use of emotional moments.

With the unique and ironic premise of “invading countries” for their good ideas, Michael Moore showcases concepts that America needs to adopt. From ending the war on drugs like Portugal did or re-emphasizing a women’s right in society like Iceland and Tunisia, Moore builds a cohesive narrative of what America could do better. Each scene showcases a country with a specific idea that they have implemented and its benefits which are seen through graphics, video clips, dialog, and in person interviews. Ultimately, Moore concludes that he did not need to invade countries for these ideas but that many of the ideas showcased were inherently American values.

Finland, being the third country that Moore “invades” after France and Italy, receives an introduction that highlights many curiosities including being the home of the air guitar championship, sports of cell phone throwing and wife carrying competitions, and a world class education system. Ironically, Finland’s education system was roughly on par with America’s in the 1960’s. Unlike the United States however, Finland decided to improve their system with radical changes and out of the box changes.

This scene is dominated by many emotional moments which Moore captures in genuine interviews. With the not-so “secret” policy of not having homework for students, Moore immediately showcases Finland’s unique approach to education with a less being more strategy. The scene has many teacher interview which highlights how Finland focuses not only on preparing students for work and overloading them with homework, but also emotionally investing in them to become happy adults. In many of these interviews, Moore who is seen on screen, asks thoughtful questions to students, teachers, principals, school boards, and Education ministry. Through these interviews, the audience sees firsthand how invested these teachers are to their students. In the most compelling and visceral example, a teacher named Meghan Smith who is from America but moved to Finland to teach, provides her personal account of how she would lie to the students when she said they could be “whatever they wanted” but in Finland, they have that power. After telling her story, the camera focuses on her and her fellow teacher as she is visibly shaken and emotional. This type of passion was not captured to this extent in the rest of the film. In addition to this scene, Moore directly tells many of the education officials of the cuts America has done to education including music, art, and civics. Again, the education officials provide heartfelt reactions that were not as evident in other scenes providing a lasting impact on the viewer. By showing these candid moments, Moore successfully highlights the differences between America and Finland.

To accompany these emotional moments, music and sound was incorporated which helped set the mood of the scene. When we first heard of Finland, the music immediately switched to lively Nordic folk music showcasing the Finnish free and carefree lifestyle. With this score playing, we could get an intrinsic sense of the jovial spirit of which the Finnish view their childhoods and lives. This music contrasts greatly to the soft, slow orchestra soundtrack in a minor key that Moore uses when discussing the American education system. The music adds to the scene’s intensity. Additionally, Moore uses music to both create and relieve tension. A great example is how after discussing America, Moore uses inspirational music when going back to discuss the Finnish educational system. Additionally, when you usually see children, you usually hear stimulating music with voices of children playing in the background. The soundtrack and accompanying noises usually occur when education officials talk about what education *should* be about. By combining the emotional moments with the right soundtrack, it amplifies the moment and leaves a lasting impact that is unmatched in the movie.

To complete the scene, Moore implemented many filming techniques throughout the scene that helped the viewer feel like they were there. In many of the interviewing scenes, you can see how the camera was unsteady with close-ups to capture individual’s reactions. In many cases, imagines of children having fun, playing music or enjoying the outdoors were intermixed with dialog from teachers and school officials detailing how they wanted to help the children grow. Many of the images in the schools were of colorful classrooms and playgrounds observing smiling children interacting and being free to learn and moderated by teachers. These images coincide with the theme of how independent the students are. When contrasted to when talking about the United States, the images were grim and gritty images emotionless students in hallways, or being frisked before entering a school. Finally, like all other countries in the film, Moore plants an American flag in the principal’s office symbolically taking the idea of better primary school education to America. By using these various techniques, Moore catapults the viewer into the moment and leaves a lasting impact.

In *Where to Invade Next*, Moore’s masterful use of emotional moments, music, sounds, and filming techniques transports viewers to take a firsthand look at Finland’s education system and serves as the documentary’s inspirational message of hope. With America at a crossroads, changes to education can have a lasting impact on America and its future in the world.

**Word Count:** 984