**This is not a film**

Hello, This is Jake Winters for the eye on the triangle with your weekly movie review. This week will be a review of this is not a film. This film or movie or as it really should be called documentary brings us into the house of a man under house arrest. The house is in iran and the man has been imprisoned within the house because of a film he had only just begun to produce. The film had been banned from production until changes were made to it and Jafar Panahi decided to move ahead with production anyway and was arrested for his action.

The film literally takes us through a day in the life of Jafar Panahi. We see him wake up talk to his family and it even shows him making coffee. Even though the movie is only an hour and 14 minutes it feels as though the movie is going through his whole day. Needless to say, it drags on. It feels as though the movie will never progress at points and really it could be said that it never does. While this is not really all that exciting to watch it makes a point. It also brings up what the title is all about. Truly this documentary is not a film. It has no story and instead is meant really to inform.

Even though many scenes can be described as boring there are gun shots heard in the distance. While Jafar takes notice of these gun shots it is hard not to notice that he is accustomed to their sound like someone living on a busy street is used to the sound of cars. He only goes to his balcony or window from time to time in order to look at what is going on and sometimes take video of it. Clearly he is not bothered by it.

Before seeing this movie I knew that Middle Eastern countries had oppressive governments but after seeing this film becomes all the more clear. The government controls everything and that is just a fact of life. When Jafar is talking to his lawyer she tells him that there is no way for him to get out of his sentence. Even the film union cannot say anything because that would put them at risk of being put in jail as well. The position that Jafar is in is that he must seek help from foreign entities and that is exactly what he aimed to do with this documentary.

Making this film was an extremely brave act of rebellion on jafar’s part. He was put on a work ban and was told that he was not allowed to direct or film anything. So by making this documentary of his day he was breaking the law. Not only was Jafar breaking the law by making this film but by helping him the camera man ,Mojtaba Mirtahmasb, also put himself at risk. So why did they make the film. From what is shown in the film it is clear this is Jafar’s only chance to get out of his prison sentence. If no one in his own country can help him then if he makes something that will be seen by the world surely someone will come to his aid. The film does not seem desperate at all and he maintains all dignity never stopping to ask for any kind of help directly and instead just documenting the condition of his life.

At this point you may be wondering how can we even see this film if his own government forbade the making of it. The film states that it was smuggled out of the country in a birthday cake. Which I find hard to believe but hey anything is possible. The film as then showed at the 2011 cannes film festival where, as most films do, it gained the world’s attention. Jafar stood up for what he believed was right.

This film truly shows the power that film can have on people’s ideas. It speaks to how powerful the medium is. If even a government as big as Iran is so afraid of what film might inspire people to do then it only proves that the medium should never be censored. If a government takes away the right to share whatever ideas that you can come up with it is no longer doing the basic job of a government of protecting its citizens. Instead, it oppresses them.

This is not film was widely praised receiving high scores on all major film review sites and even being called one of the top ten films of 2012. I do not want to mislead you in this review. The movie is boring to watch for the most part but sometimes it is not whether a movie is entertaining that makes it great but rather what it says. And in that this movie succeeds in saying something not only important to the maker but it also says something important to the world. A man is not free unless he can speak his mind and in making this film Jafar Panahi found his freedom. It is something to witness.

I personally found the film to be like no other I had ever seen. I have watched documentaries before but nothing with a message that had a meaning with such impact. Obviously this has been said before. The United States constitution wouldn’t read the same way if the idea hadn’t been thought before but never has it come from a place with more meaning. The only thing I would tell anyone before watching the film is just watch it all the way through. Even though it drags on at times make the effort to watch the entire thing because the ending , even though it may not have been intended in this way, makes the message loud and clear. I hope you have enjoyed listening to this review of this is not a film. Thank you again for listening to this week’s edition of the movie review. This is Jake Winters for The eye on the triangle, have a good night.