

J.K.
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Cry Freedom and Apartheid

Apartheid is an official policy of political, social, and economic discrimination and segregation against non-whites. This system was active in the republic of South Africa, but was abolished in 1994. *Cry Freedom* is a movie about two men and their journey of abolishing apartheid. One being a white man, Donald Woods, which was the newspaper editor for the local paper, *The Daily Dispatch*. The other was Stephen Biko, a Bantu South African who worked very hard to put an end to apartheid. Biko set the road for others to travel in. This movie portrays how hard these men worked for freedom of blacks, but in the end Biko was not alive for the time that apartheid was eradicated. *Cry Freedom* is a historically accurate representation of the black struggle to gain equal rights as whites.

Stephen Biko was an anti-apartheid activist, who worked to try to eradicate apartheid. He was arrested many times for the actions he took to help the black community. He held many illegal gatherings, speaking to the public of his opinions and his strategies of what to do. He died in jail on September 12, 1977, after being tortured and beaten to death. The police said that he went on a hunger strike and starved himself to death, but that was just their excuse to keep themselves out of trouble. Biko represented the whole black community and how unfair South Africa was to their natives. Biko, in a way, is like Martin Luther King Jr. in the way he tried to gain more freedom for the blacks. Usually when people think of Black History month, just hearing from the name, it seems like it is about blacks, in which it is. Although this is the usual way of

thinking, Donald Woods proved the black community wrong by supporting them in their fight to abolish apartheid.

Donald Woods was a white anti-apartheid activist, who tried to help Biko to rid South Africa of the apartheid. He was like an assistant to Biko and the role he played was extremely important to do away with this wrong act. After Biko died, Woods followed in his footsteps and worked hard to try to give freedom to the blacks. Of all the things Woods represented, the white opinion in South Africa was not one of them. This is made very obvious in the movie because all of the white community and police was trying to kill him and his family. It feels very odd to associate a white man and Black History Month together. Usually it is the white man against the black man, but in this case, it is the white community against the white man and the black community.

In South Africa, townships still do exist, but they are not like the many townships portrayed in the movie. The townships and citizens are both legal, so there is no need for the police to go in and destroy them. They are cleaner and are better organized, as opposed to the townships back in the 1970's, which were literally shacks on dirt. There was barely enough food for everybody and it was very hard. They could not grow their own food because of the dry and unfertile soil. South Africa is in better condition, for there is no more apartheid and the dreams of Stephen Biko and Donald Woods has been granted.

The characters and events depicted in the movie show how apartheid affected the people in South Africa. Although the march that the blacks held in order to help white police to understand how horrible apartheid is, the movie has a very sad ending by having more than enough people killed by a lot of whites. These two characters helped each

other and their communities by getting rid of apartheid. It no longer effects South Africa,
all thanks to two men by the name of Stephen Biko and Donald Woods.

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