

FILM VIEWING & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR : “Fruitvale Station”

FILM DESCRIPTION:

Though he once spent time in San Quentin, 22-year-old black man Oscar Grant (Michael B. Jordan) is now trying hard to live a clean life and support his girlfriend (Melonie Diaz) and young daughter (Ariana Neal). Flashbacks reveal the last day in Oscar's life, in which he accompanied his family and friends to San Francisco to watch fireworks on New Year's Eve, and, on the way back home, became swept up in an altercation with police that ended in tragedy. Based on a true story. Release in 2013.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The film's outcome is a given and the story is told in flashback. Did the “spoiler” at the beginning spoil anything for you as a viewer? Does knowing the outcome make the details in the dramatization seem more meaningful or poignant?
2. What impact did including the real cell phone footage captured by bystanders at the scene have for you as a viewer?
3. How does the film put you into the characters' shoes? What methods did the filmmaker use that promoted your understanding of their situation?
4. What effect does the flashback to prison in the film have on you as a viewer? What role does it play in giving you a better sense of Oscar Grant?
5. What did you think of the inclusion of the dog scene?
6. How does the use of the hand-held camera change your relationship to the characters and the story being told?
7. This is an emotional film. What aspects of it most touched you? What filmmaking techniques did the filmmakers use to heighten your emotional response?
8. What is your biggest takeaway from the film?
9. When Oscar Grant was killed on New Year's Day 2009, it shocked the world and made headlines. How does your remembrance of the news coverage of the event impact your understanding of the film, and vice versa?
10. How does the film's character-oriented narrative approach impact your understanding of the issues Oscar Grant's murder raises?

11. Would you consider *Fruitvale Station* a political film? How does the film contribute to your understanding of race relations in America?