

BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY

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WAR

The film accurately depicts the initial support for the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, even showing Marine recruits coming to high schools, in this case, the high school of the main character, Ron Kovic who later joined the Marines after he graduated high school. The film also accurately depicts the realities of war, one of them notably being when Kovic's unit kills a group of unarmed Vietnamese citizens, including an infant, thinking they were Vietnamese soldiers; likewise when Kovic mistakenly kills a member of his own platoon in the heat of battle when he believed it was an enemy coming up behind him.

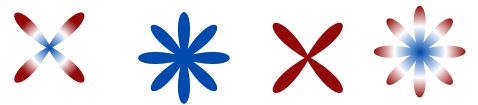
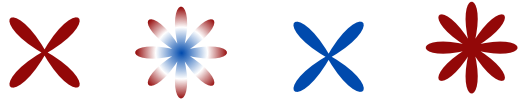


When Kovic was discharged from the line of duty after he was critically wounded, he was sent to recover at a Veterans Hospital in New York which was severely underfunded. The hospital was dirty and had poor and unsanitary living conditions, hosting rats within its halls. The staff was also rude and neglectful towards the veterans in their care, often providing inadequate care and not understanding the psychological trauma these men had gone through.



The film is based on the life and experiences of Ron Kovic. Due to this, it is limited to his view and perspective, making it an individualized narrative that sometimes generalizes veterans' experiences. It does not highlight the voices of veterans who were not against the war or even of veterans of other ethnicities, although we do see and hear about a black veterans' experiences. While liberties were taken within the film, with some scenes being dramatized or exaggerated, the overall themes of the film is one that captures the enduring legacy of the Vietnam War and its impact on the nation and its people.

The film accurately portrays the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) veterans suffered from and how it was not understood by those who had not gone through war. Most notably this is seen in a scene in which Kovic has an argument with his mother about his part in the war and the trauma from it and his mother responds with something along the lines of "can't you forget about it."



Kovic's return home highlights the discrepancies in the treatment of veterans. There was a parade thrown in his honor in his hometown, people celebrating his return and his part in the fight against the Vietnamese. On the other side of it though, Kovic also came back to people spitting and throwing middle fingers up on him showing how some citizens hated veterans for participating in the war.

When veterans initially signed up for the war, they were led to believe that they would return home in a blaze of glory, like most of their fathers and grandfathers before them did in their own wars. When they returned home though, the support veterans got after the war was overshadowed by the hate from their fellow citizens.

In this way, the film accurately depicts the growing resentment and criticism citizens held about the Vietnam War and the US' involvement in it. Likewise with how the return home led to a sense of nostalgia for Vietnam in veterans.

ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

The Vietnam War invoked an anti-war movement from American citizens who saw the war as being a needless one that was hurting both the country and the men who were drafted to fight in the war. Many veterans joined this movement, including Kovic, due to their traumatic experiences with the war and the sense of betrayal they felt from the American government in their lack of care for veterans. On this as well, the film accurately depicts the political polarization of the war and the way it divided the American populace, similarly with how anti-war movements were suppressed by the police and government.

