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Understanding Media

**Network**

The movie that I chose to watch for my film analysis was the film Network. Network was directed by Sidney Lurmet and was produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and was rated R. The movie Network is about an old TV news anchor named Howard Beale on a television network that has poor ratings. Because of these poor ratings the network has chosen to let Beale go and has given him his two weeks notice. However when Beale goes on the radio to share this news with the world he instead says that he is going to commit suicide on the air in two weeks when he will have to leave the television business. This immediately gets the station rating soaring through the roof as more and more people are tuning in. Howard Beale is then fired immediately after his announcement. However due to the higher ratings the network allows Beale onto the airs one last time where he makes an extremely famous speech talking about life and state of the media industry. It is in this speech that Beale says the famous lines, “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore!” After this rant the network ends up giving him his own show and their ratings and viewers go through the roof. Eventually Beale begins to deal the dirt on the network that he is working for itself and brings a lot of controversy upon himself and the company. Because of this he is called to the owner of the companies office where he is lectured and told that he cannot share anymore about insider dealings and must change his ways or else he will be let go from the company. Beale gives in and ratings plummet back to what they were before the outburst. The head of programming cannot get him off the air because the executives want him to spread their new rhetoric, so instead she plans to have him assassinated on live TV which he eventually is. Throughout the story there is also a love story interwoven however I did not find it the main message of the story.

The theme of the movie is very clear. People will watch people who say controversial things. Many of the speeches that Beale gave were thought provoking, extremely eloquent, and extremely interesting, however they were not news and could have been interpreted as biased. However because he was controversial people watched him. It also showed just how fickle the media industry is. If you are making them money and getting them viewers than you are prized real estate, however once you start to lose that interest, they will completely turn on you, and sometimes go even as far to kill you to get there way.

The main actors in movie were Howard Beale (Peter Finch), Max Schumacher (William Holden), Diana Christenson (Faye Dunaway), and Frank Hackett (Robert Duvall). All of the actors were extremely talented and well cast for these roles. In fact Peter Finch won a posthumous academy award for best support actor for his performance in Network. There are no real hidden messages in Network that I could tell, however it does show just how hidden the entire television business is exactly how corrupt they can be sometimes.