

## ‘Loving’ Reminds Us That Love Conquers All

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on November 14, 2016 - 4:47pm

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Rating: **4.5/5.0**

**CHICAGO** – This is a difficult review to write. Not for any sort of technical standpoint, but one of moral outrage. Seeing “Loving”, the relevance in today’s society was clear, but that was before the election of our new president. The hatred of the past still echoes to this day, but now more than ever the message of hope and perseverance is needed.



Joel Edgerton and Ruth Negga showing how all you need is love and support in the inspirational ‘Loving’

*Photo credit: Focus Features*

The story follows the real events of an interracial marriage that almost ended a couple in jail. Instead, they weren’t allowed to stay in their home town, forcing them to leave their families behind and start anew in a different city. We would all like to believe that we have gone past the point where interracial couples are persecuted, but even as a “modern” society we have not come too far. Even if it is no longer considered illegal, due to internalized social and cultural stigma, interracial couples are still a rarity. The story of the Loving family is a historically important one, but it serves as a greater reminder of the racial tensions we are witnessing today, while also paralleling the marriage struggle for same sex couples.

Jeff Nichols develops this story in his signature soft-spoken style. Just like the calm and quiet rural settings he favors filming, “Loving” takes an equally scenic pace when it comes to storytelling and exposition. Nichols’ films have never been very dialogue heavy when it comes to exposition. He rather tell the story through normal, everyday interactions between characters. From these seemingly innocuous encounters we get a breadth of information like current events, character motivations, and even a look at things to come. This steady narrative style isn’t for the type of person that is in a hurry and likes to be spoon-fed the film. The film caters to the ponderous viewer who is willing to stop and smell



the flowers and find the meaning within them.

Nichols’ writing style is greatly complimented by his directing style especially because he is such a visual storyteller. He leaves the dialogue and interactions to deal with the specifics of the story, but he uses the visuals to give the film all of its meaning. This is the most obvious when it comes to comparing rural and urban life. A quick look through Nichols’ past films and you will see that he considers rural settings to be humanity’s ideal setting. The more in tune with nature a person is, the closer to something celestial or divine they are. That’s why he shows the Loving family more at home in the country surrounded by nature rather than the chaos of the inner city.



The fruits of love are sweeter than those of hate in the still relevant story of ‘Loving’

*Photo credit: Focus Features*

By showing their love occurring in nature it, Nichols highlights how natural love is, regardless of race, age and even sexual orientation. There are so many dark moments in American history, but we are shown how love triumphed. We are shown several memorable moments that have been historically documented of the Loving family and are given context and depth beyond the iconic images we have know. Nichols perfectly channels the quiet power of the Loving couple, especially Mildred who knew she had the most to lose, but was more than willing to fight against adversity so others in the future, including her children, didn’t have to.

“Loving” has impressive, nuanced performances by Joel Edgerton, Nick Kroll, and Michael Shannon, but the film’s true strength was with Ruth Negga’s performance and character. The film itself focuses on the struggle of Edgerton’s as he tries to bridge the gap created by both races with a silent solemnity. Negga is the heart of this film, not just as the maternal figure but also a person who bears the brunt of the injustices because she doesn’t have the white privilege her husband is afforded. She endures all the pain with grace, and never lets any anger she may feel turn into hate. Negga practices great control, using her expression to emote feelings so clearly that we can feel them ourselves.





Michael Shannon taking the iconic photo that would lead a revolution in the equal rights story of ‘Loving’  
Photo credit: Focus Features

“Loving” is a tale of inspiration in its own right. Nichols delivers this film calmly and with care, lovingly crafting this story and character as to make sure every scene gives this true story the respect it deserves. It is meant to echo the racial divide our society faces yet again. The message is made twice as powerful with the election of hate-monger Donald Trump, turning up each narrative parallel and emotional echo to heights the filmmaker didn’t imagine it would be felt. The greatest message this film delivers is the message of hope and good triumphing over evil without the marginalized party having to lose their integrity in the battle. When they go low, we go high.

*“Loving” opened everywhere on November 11th. Featuring Ruth Negga, Joel Edgerton, Michael Shannon, Nick Kroll, Will Dalton and Terri Abney. Screenplay by Jeff Nichols. Directed by Jeff Nichols. Rated “PG-13”*



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