Journal Entry #3

For this journal entry I chose to review the movie Four Brothers. This film tells the story of four foster children, all from different backgrounds, who return to urban Detroit as adults upon learning of the death of their adopted mother in an apparent robbery. Their mother, who had worked with foster children for years, was unable to place them in adopted homes and raised them as her own instead. One of the brothers has seemingly gone straight, raising a family and living near his mother, while the other had scattered across the country and gotten involved in their own brands of trouble. Little do they know, their own investigation into her murder leads to a web of deception, corrupt police and public officials, entanglement in organized crime, and the death of one of their brothers.

The main conflict in this movie looks at the brothers versus an organized crime ring. We see a crime boss who has police in his pocket, a crew that works for him despite his cruelty, and a crooked politician that meets his end for ratting out the crime boss to the brothers. As the plot unfolds, we learn that one of the brothers wanted to start his own business, but was shut down by the politician under the control of the crime boss because the brother refused to pay him off. His adopted mother was killed because she went to the police (in particular the corrupt detective who is later revealed) and repeatedly raised a fuss about her son’s project being shut down.

This movie both supports and goes against the organized crime myth. It supports the myth by showing a single person at the top level controlling those below him but actually committing few of the actual crimes. He merely makes the orders for others to carry out. This group is not very highly controlled, as we see at the end of the movie when the group turns on him. It is also implied that some of their “businesses” involve drugs and prostitution, two of the traditional crimes involved with organized crime. There is also clear evidence of bribery of police and public officials, something that is also thought to be associated with organized crime. It also supports the idea that organized crime is local, not national or international. The movie goes against the myths in several ways. This particular group is mainly African American, including the leader, which goes against the stereotype of the “Mafia” or “Syndicate” organizations typically seen or talked about. They typically do not involve the amount of murders that occur in this movie, for the reason of not drawing attention to themselves or their practices. It also shows people not demanding the vices involved, but more being compelled by fear to stay. This particular group doesn’t seem to be involved in the more recent crimes associated with organized crime. Guns were used, but they didn’t seem to be involved in arms trafficking, nor in hazardous waste dumping or contraband smuggling.