

**\*this article was written for an internship position with an online entertainment blog that has since been removed.**

## **5 Reasons Why You Should Watch the Life and Trials of Oscar Pistorius**

ESPN released another documentary series that will blow your mind and get you thinking- whether you are a sports fan, a culture enthusiast, or a true crime lover. The four-part documentary series falls under ESPN's "30 for 30" category, and not only explains in great detail Paralympic star Oscar Pistorius' fall from grace after being convicted of murder, but delves into the complexities of overcoming major obstacles and the hurting and healing of an entire nation.

If you're not familiar with the story or are in need of a refresher- the once prominent ordeal has been off the world's radar for several years- Oscar Pistorius was a double amputee Paralympic Sprinter from South Africa. Nicknamed "the Blade Runner" and the "fastest man on no legs," Pistorius dominated the sprint events in the Paralympic circuit after quickly skyrocketing to World Record level performances. Pistorius was known for his positive spirit, never letting his disability stop him from anything. He not only served as an icon for those with disabilities everywhere, but actively sought to inspire other amputees.

After he became a Paralympic Champion, Pistorius petitioned against IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations) rulings that artificial limbs give an advantage and were banned in World Championships and Olympics. He ultimately won the right to compete at able-bodied championships and became the first amputee to win a medal at the World Championships and the first to compete in the Olympics.

His inconceivable stardom in South Africa- and the rest of the world- came crashing down when he shot and killed his girlfriend in his home in February of 2013. He claimed to have thought she was an intruder. The investigation and trials ultimately led to him receiving prison time in 2014 and more in 2015.

The series does its best to explain the complex story and procure understanding of the fascinating trial, and here are 5 reasons you should consider streaming this documentary.

### **Its Objective**

While at first it appears the director of the series went too far with the interviews (seriously, we might actually hear from Oscar's childhood friend's mother's ex-husband or something), this might just be a strategic and extremely successful decision. Director David Gordon explains how he doesn't want the project to lead the audience any way in particular and "guarantees that you'll change your mind throughout" while watching the series. Hearing from people with very different perceptions of the person Pistorius was and opinions about the situation creates a well-rounded picture.

### **They Already Knew Who Did it**

This true crime story is just a bit different than many of the others we have seen. From the very beginning of this trial, police and investigators knew exactly who committed the murder. In this investigation it was never, *who* did it, but only *why* they did it. Oscar Pistorius will forever be the only

person who knows what actually happened that night. The documentary takes us through the thought process of friends, family, and law enforcement as they unravel the mystery of who Pistorius is behind closed doors and what made him act the way that he did.

### **You'll Learn about South African Culture**

The film dives shockingly far into the history of South Africa, mentioning Apartheid and its long-lasting effects on the nation. This layer takes the film to the next level by focusing on cultural nuances and behaviors, instead of just interactions of between individuals. To learn more about why this incident might have happened, we learn about South African gun law, racial tensions after Apartheid, and the court system in South Africa.

### **Its Inspirational**

This is the story of a murder trial, yes, but it is also a poignant exploration of the downfall of an elite athlete and famous trail blazer. Pistorius made history and inspired thousands, and the film has no shortage of evidence showing the influence he had on the world. It is a story of success and overcoming hardships- which only makes the decision of who to side with on this case that much harder.

### **The Role of the Media**

The media coverage on this case was one of the biggest and most extensive in South African history. Pistorius was a national symbol of success and power and already drew in a lot of attention both nationally and internationally. This aspect of the case makes the documentary series even more interesting, as we question whether newspaper headings and other parts of the media influence the trajectory and outcome of a case.

photo from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/02/14/oscar-pistorius-shoots-girlfriend/1918689/> USA today article

<https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/oscar-pistorius-documentary-trial-murder>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar\\_Pistorius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Pistorius)

<https://preview.houstonchronicle.com/event/movies-tv/30-for-30-the-life-trials-of-oscar-pistorius>