

FILM REVIEW

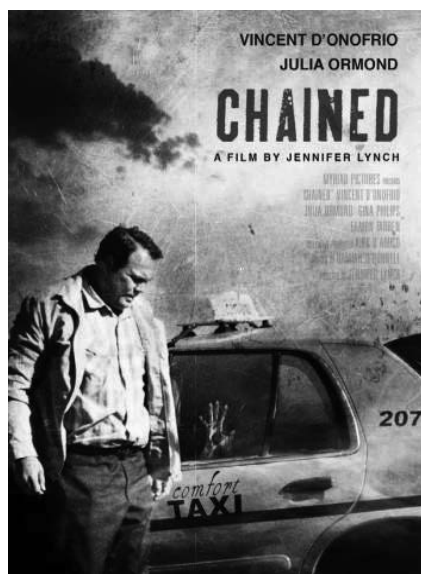
***Chained* by Jennifer Lynch**

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Chained is an incredibly enveloping story directed by Jennifer Lynch about a psychopathic serial killer who adopts a child and raises him to be his accomplice. Although this film follows a fairly predictable pattern throughout, it contains some elements of surprise. The main characters included in the film are eight-year-old Tim (Eric Bird) and his mother, Sarah (Julia Ormond), as well as the cab driver, Bob (Vincent D'Onofrio) and the older version of little Tim, later known as Rabbit (Eamon Farren). The fact that Bob subjects Rabbit, otherwise known as Tim, to emotional abuse, could be an indication that due to the killer's animalistic nature,

he views himself as being the pack alpha and Tim in turn is seen as being a part of this pack, being compelled to complete tedious tasks including washing the dishes and cleaning up Bob's mess. In contradiction with this, I am of the opinion that Bob's actions towards Tim, such as chaining Tim down after numerous failed escape attempts and encouraging him to learn about human anatomy and social behaviors throughout his adolescent years, would perhaps be an indication that Bob does value Tim's presence and in turn contributes towards his development and education in becoming an adult and in turn his apprentice and partner in crime. As is evident in the film, as an adolescent, Rabbit (Eamon Farren) is pressured to consider participating in the homicidal sprees. It also seems quite evident that Tim is torn between considering the killing apprenticeship or attempting one final escape. In addition, when Rabbit refuses to kill his first chosen victim, Angie (Conor Leslie), this could ultimately be a demonstration that despite Rabbit's prolonged exposure to violence and abuse, a sense of core humanity remains within him.

This film plays with the concepts of human morality and survival and introduces the Stockholm syndrome associated with a positive bond between hostage and captor (Namnyak et al., 2008) as a possible reason for Rabbit remaining in Bob's care despite the regular and persistent verbal and mental abuse associated with the continuous forced visual and verbal exposure of Rabbit to pornographic and murderous inhumane content and activities. The most intriguing factor in this film is that the majority of dialogue and human interaction takes place mainly between Bob and his captured victim, Rabbit, occasionally also with Bob's victims. It is also clear that the boy has no opportunity during the majority of his adolescent years to engage in other human and social interactions as he is not allowed outside the killer's house under any circumstances. Only once during the early stages of his captivity does Bob encourage Rabbit to attempt an escape, which unfortunately turns out to be unsuccessful. This could indicate that Bob was aiming at instilling a sense of hopelessness in Rabbit, which in turn would weaken Rabbit's emotional state.

From the dreams that Bob has it is apparent that perhaps he could have developed his killing urge whilst growing up with an abusive father. In the dreams, Bob was forced by his father to rape his mother, which could be his father's twisted way of emancipating him to become a "man". Freud states that a boy is threatened with the loss of his masculinity by the dominance of his mother's husband, and not by dominance of his mother. In addition Freud mentions that a son represses his mother's attachment until it can be transferred to a woman who is not his mother, whereby the son can then be the dominant partner (Johnson, 1988). As this Oedipus complex did not take place in Bob's case, it could be a possibility that Bob was never able to establish a healthy relationship with another woman. Bob's father might have enforced this destructive and negative female association in Bob as a result of forcing Bob to rape his mother. This could explain why Bob kills women and his statement on women, 'they're born "sluts" and "whores"'; Bob attributes these traits

to all women and thinking that Rabbit needs a woman to clear his mind, Bob forces him to go ahead with his first kill.

In line with this, one could ask the question of whether Bob engaged in rational decision making during his murderous sprees. Although it seemed to be the case throughout the movie, Bob's actions might be associated with the early childhood trauma and abuse in his home (Barlow & Durand, 2009), resulting in his developing a truly misguided perspective as a result of taking the brunt of his father's abuse in order to protect his brother. In addition, with Bob being labelled as a psychopathic serial killer, it might be the case that he is prone to antisocial behaviors and personality traits associated with aggression, callousness as well as impulsivity. This having been said, Bob might have experienced an isolated childhood, driving away positive role models, young and old due to having exhibited antisocial traits, which could explain why, as an adult, Bob is rarely, perhaps even never seen interacting with others, whether acquaintances, friends or family members. To conclude, due to these negative developmental traits and in turn poor circumstances, Bob it seemed would be more inclined toward inciting acts against society (Barlow & Durand, 2009).

Overall, I found this film to be quite entertaining, at times a bit unsettling, although I would recommend anyone who enjoys suspense and drama films to watch this film, as it includes many human aspects. The unsettling nature and dark milieu of the film does not cater for everyday viewing, although this film does seem to accommodate a certain niche market. There are very few plot holes included and it ticks all the right boxes for any fan of the genre mentioned.

Title:	<i>Chained</i>
Edited by:	Daryl K. Davis and Chris A. Peterson
Directed by:	Jennifer Lynch
Produced by:	Rhonda Baker, David Buelow and Lee Nelson
Written by:	Damian O'Donnell
Production Company:	Anchor Bay Entertainment
Music by:	Climax Golden Twins
Running Time:	94 minutes
Date of Release:	August 5, 2012
Country:	Canada

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- Namnyak, M., Tufton, N., Szekely, R., Toal, M., Worboys, S., & Sampson, E. L. (2008). 'Stockholm

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE



Claudia Gossow is a 25 year old student, currently completing her Master's degree in Psychological Research Consultation at Unisa. Having completed her psychology undergraduate degree and Honours degree at the University of Pretoria, her research skills currently encompass report writing, primary and secondary/desktop research, interview transcribing, academic manuscript and film reviewing as well as survey/questionnaire designs in a qualitative framework. Her broad interests lie in the environmental and green economic fields of practice as well as environmental social work. In addition she aims at humanising her research practices and initiatives by engaging with her participants, as well as their communities in all aspects of her research and frameworks. Previously she has facilitated a child sexual abuse support group for women of all ages in the Centurion vicinity, and on numerous occasions has counseled child sexual abuse and rape victims, as well as youths addicted to drugs and alcohol in the Centurion vicinity. Her main interest is to apply her research skills and psychological knowledge in South African communities using mainly a social action stance in addressing psychological, social and other concerns.