

The life of david gale film review

[Law](#), [Capital Punishment](#)



The Life of David Gale Film Review (WARNING: SPOILERS) In The Life of David Gale, an opponent of the death penalty, David Gale, played by Kevin Spacey, is on death row, with only a few days before his execution. He has summoned Elizabeth " Bitsey" Bloom, played by Kate Winslet, a journalist who served seven days in prison because she refused to disclose her sources for a news story, to hear what he has to say. As the story unfolds, Bitsey changes from skepticism to intense involvement with an apparently innocent victim of the death penalty. Gale was a professor of philosophy at the University of Texas, and we saw him lecturing about Jacques Lacan's conundrum of the inability of a desired fantasy to be satisfying once achieved. When he finishes his lecture, and all students but one has left the classroom, Berlin, played by Rhona Mitra, offers to do " anything" to get a good grade, but Gale turns her down in a humorous way. When he leaves the classroom, he is joined by his ally and friend Constance Hallway, played by Laura Linnet, who updates him on developments surrounding the latest Texas death row inmate, a seventeen-year-old African American girl only a few days away from her execution. At a campus party, where Gale gets drunk, Berlin corners him and directs him in a sex act that leaves possible evidence of rape. Soon, he is arrested for rape; his wife walks out on him taking his son, though he is exonerated, presumably because the he-said she-said trial leaves reasonable doubt about his guilt. Nevertheless, the university fires him, the national headquarters of Deathwatch bans him from the Austin office, and he drinks heavily. Yet he continues to socialize with Constance. One day, Constance is found dead, Gale is arrested, and he is convicted and sentenced to death. On returning to her motel one night,

Bitsey finds a mysterious videotape; when she plays the tape, she concludes that Constance committed suicide and was not murdered, but she obtains evidence too late to stop Gale's execution. Days after, a mysterious tape is sent to Bitsey, and the truth becomes unveiled. At this point, the plot takes twists and turns, leaving some film viewers confused, but they will not be in the dark about the real purpose of the film--to abolish the death penalty.

During the course of the movie, many different devices were used. To build a sense of suspense, words like " Truth! Power! Lust! Fantasy! Desire!" frequently flashes across the screen, accompanied by cart wheeling camera angles that add a dramatizing effect to the film. Another attempt to build suspense is during the beginning of the film. We see Bitsy running out of a broken down car holding a video tape; but we have no idea what it is.

Therefore, most of us would be compelled to watch on in order to discover the mystery behind her actions. I thought that this was a good way to get my attention, and if that was the opening scene's goal, it certainly did so. Also, the story is told in a series of flashbacks, which isn't a style that is used regularly by film directors. When David was telling his story he used the same monotone voice, which was slightly boring to say the least. It seems like he is going on a never ending rant, and that he does not care in the slightest about his current situation. Their whole plan to prove that innocent people could be wrongly tried was a little drastic. The twist at the end showing the extreme dedication towards the Deathwatch cause was a bit overwhelming and mind-boggling. By reading many different reviews, I realized that seemingly none of the critics liked it at all. But reviews that were submitted by users were mostly positive. The Life of David Gale pleads

for the abolition of the death penalty. Despite the approval of the death penalty by 66 percent of the American people in public opinion polls, *The Life of David Gale* provides ample arguments, even religious arguments, to oppose a penalty that leaves the United States alone among the world's democracies. Alan Parker, who has received Political Film Society awards for his *Midnight Express* (1978) and *Mississippi Burning* (1988) and a nomination for *Come See the Paradise* (1991), receives another nomination for directing *The Life of David Gale* as best film of 2003 in raising consciousness about the need to advance human rights. The film portrays the death penalty as a system full of flaws and is inhumane. Most of the points made are agreeable. What if someone was really wrongly accused and that the real criminal was still out there, only to roam freely and do as he wishes? This film aroused many unanswered questions in my mind. How far are we willing to go to achieve this so called "justice?" Where is the line that divides justice, and revenge? This film allowed for a greater understanding of the death penalty; and was somewhat educational to a degree. If it were up to me, I would show this movie to a grade 11 or 12 class. But just watching the movie wouldn't be enough. Explanations on actions and in-depth discussions would be required in order to achieve a greater understanding of the death penalty. From experience, I found that pausing during certain scenes and giving a verbal descriptions and background information, I was able to learn more than by simply watching. This film would also be an excellent introduction to the issue of the death penalty in Canada. If in twenty or so years my children were to watch this film, I would probably say yes. Although this would depend on the current situation of the death penalty. Perhaps it would be

abolished everywhere by that time; but if not, I would not disagree with the screening of this movie in my child's classroom. The Life of David Gale was an exceptionally well thought out movie and deserved much better feedback than what was given by those so called " movie critics." Word Count: 1, 018