

# Example of movie review on homeless to harvard: a movie analysis

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Director Peter Levin's movie, Homeless to Harvard, which starred Thora Birch in the role of female protagonist Elizabeth Murray, is a true to life story of "Liz" as she struggled to become a better person than what she saw in her parents. Growing up in the Bronx, she realized early on that she belongs to a dysfunctional family consisted of a sister and drug addicts as parents.

Despite the grim realities of life, Liz managed to get excellent grades even though she seldom attended school and would only attend the last couple of weeks before the exams. Her mother decides to separate from Liz's father to keep off drugs and live with her own father instead. At 15, she became homeless while her father had to stay at the shelter. Soon after, her mother dies of tuberculosis and AIDS, which she contracted from sharing needles with fellow addicts. The death served like a wakeup call for Liz, which prompted her to go back to school and finish high school in two years instead of the usual four years. In school, her teacher becomes her mentor and tells her that she is the top student in the class. To entice students about college life, the teacher brings the students to Boston where Liz realizes the enormity of the university and how she does not belong in such environment. However, this does not stop Liz from applying for a \$12, 000 per year scholarship to Harvard University sponsored by the New York Times for needy, but deserving students. Eventually, Liz won the scholarship, was offered a job post at New York Times, and got her own apartment while studying college.

I think the movie serves as a great inspiration for everyone to keep on reaching for their dreams regardless of their situation. Liz, through sheer determination and will power was able to overcome all her obstacles. She

turned all problems into opportunities such as the time when she picked up a series of encyclopedia in the garbage and read them during the times she did not attend school. In addition, despite the dire circumstances she was born in, she did not harbor any ill feelings towards her parents. For her, she chose to remember the good things and learn from the bad things as those experiences made her strong. She even acknowledges that she made it "because [her parents] showed her what the alternative was" and that she had no other option but to move forward instead of looking back ("Homeless to Harvard").

Gene and Peter Murray, Liz's parents, loved their daughters very much but did not have the proper sense to exercise their parental responsibilities. Instead of providing food and clean living quarters for their daughters, both opted to do drugs and alcohol. Peter was also depicted as an intelligent man whom Liz adored when she was growing up because of the ideas he shared and talked about. Although Gene and Peter led difficult lives, in separate occasions, they both recognized and supported Liz when she tried to go back to school, even telling her to do her best and not follow their example. Peter later on tells Liz that she should stay in school, and with a bit of hesitation, adds that he blew his own opportunity before, but that Liz can do it ("Homeless to Harvard").

Although Liz became homeless at the age of 15, she does not exemplify the attitudes and characteristics of homeless people because of her strength in character and in mind. From a human services perspective, I do not agree with how Child Services Department treated Liz and her sister when Gene

was being pulled away from home because they were being shouted at instead of offered sympathy and understanding for their living conditions.

## **References**

Homeless to Harvard. Dir. Peter Levin. Perf. Thora Birch, Michael Riley, Robert Bockstael, Makyla Smith, and Kelly Lynch. Lifetime Television, 2003. Film.