

A second adolescence



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

He is healthy, has no known diseases or a family history that would suggest him particularly prone to illness. He awakens into a life and body he no longer recognizes. He has physically let himself deteriorate in a dark cubicle showing no importance to his physical self (Lachrymal, 2004). Concern for one's physicality is important in accepting the changes of middle age and being comfortable in one's own body (Sharon, 1998). He begins to recognize his own body's importance because of a crush he develops on his daughter's friend.

Starting to work out and place importance on how he looks is symbolic of his acceptance of his new body (Ben-Earl, Leave, & Shave, 2008). His office job has made him somewhat sedentary yet it appears to have little effect on his physical wellbeing except in athletic terms he begins to address. His body and physical image becomes important to him. He wants to feel attractive and begins working out vigorously. He once again sees himself as a sexual being and wants to feel good about himself physically. (Ben-Earl, Leave, & Shave, 2008) Changes at his job serve as a catalyst for Lester to begin a transformation in his life in order to unify his self image with the actuality of his everyday life (Lachrymal, 2004). Family dynamics: Lester's relationship with his wife is in shambles. They no longer support each other or have a sexual relationship. His relationship with his daughter is almost nonexistent and it is unclear if there is any extended family. No close familiar relationships exist in Lester's life. It is clear though that there was a time that he and his wife and daughter were happy.

He often reminisces of a time when he had less to no responsibility and his whole life ahead of him. He feels stifled by his family and his job and has no

outlet to address this problem. Throughout the period of observation Lester makes a complete circle to self acceptance. He takes some drastic steps but they are in the end successful. He develops a sexual obsession with his daughter's friend which functions to snap him out of his state of complacency and begin to mix things up in every area of his life.

He effectively begins to identify himself as an adolescent would testing boundaries and forming a new personality (Anger, 2004). Caroline is the dominant member of the family. She is louder and more demanding than her child or partner. Image is everything to her. It is more important to her than her actual ability to successfully fill these roles (Barnett, 2004). Her whole persona is a set of illusions that are not based on reality. She is materialistic and lives in a world of half truths and delusion. As a mother her actions are hollow and self serving.

They are for show as opposed to being truly supportive or helpful. She is overcritical, berating Jane on her appearance repeatedly. Adolescence is a time which is difficult for both the child and the parent (Anger, 2004). On the one hand a parent must be supportive and seen as in a position of authority while still giving their child room and space to mature and grow into the adult they are attempting to be. Respecting an adolescent's budding maturity while forming an adult relationship with them is extremely hard on a parent, who still sees their child as being a child.

It does not count to pretend to be friends with the adolescent, and being 'cool' when what they want is a level of actual respect and consideration, which is the case between Jane and Caroline. It is so important for Caroline

to appear to be listening to and understanding her daughter that she loses sight of the person Jane is. As a father he is unable to connect with his daughter. Lester begins to try to talk to her but at this point she is uninterested in meeting him half way and it's unclear she ever will. The obvious attraction he has to Angela alienates Jane and separates them emotionally further.

Father and daughter could potentially be allies against Carolyn's conformist nature, but Lester's adolescent fantasy puts them permanently at odds. By paying more attention to the object of his desire, Angela, he proves to Jane that her feelings are of no consequence to him. He genuinely seems to want a more honest relationship with Jane, but fails to see the connection between his feelings for Angela and his parental role. Lester is able to play a parental role for Angela that he cannot for his own daughter. He manages to be comforting and accessible. As a wife Caroline is the first to step out on their relationship and partnership.

In order to feel like a woman and sexually attractive she begins a sexual relationship with an icon of her chosen profession (Barnett, 2004). She is able to validate her decisions through this sexual relationship. His perceived success emboldens her in her primary relationship (Ben-Air, Leave, & Shave, 2008). Psychological Influences: Lester becomes aware all of a sudden that he is unhappy with his life. He makes a conscious decision to change his surroundings and instead of losing his job which is the probable outcome of restructuring at the office, he takes a stand and refuses to be overlooked.

Revealing an abuse of power he is able to manipulate his bosses to give him a year's salary with benefits. This freedom allows him to begin a path to self discovery that codifies his self image with how he is perceived by the world. Over the course of the few months we have access to Lester he goes through distinctive stages of development akin to that of an adolescent. Risky serves as an attachment relationship for Lester. He is able to form a close secure attachment to Risky and egging to stretch the boundaries of his previously rigid position in family as well as community(Sable, 2008).

This is in line with the convoy theory (Antibiotic, Kamala, & Dashiki, 2004) which stipulates that attachment relationships change and continue to form over time. Risky serves to both father and daughter as a stable reliable relationship that the can count on(Sable, 2008). This allows Jane to express openly comfortable and confident with her changing body. It allows Lester to once again believe in himself as having worth and no longer defining himself solely as a husband and father. He begins to explore what he really wants and what he needs to do to get there. He finally begins to start doing for himself.

Although in the most classic terms possible he is living out a midlife crisis, it appears that for him this is a process of maturation and acceptance he previously did not have a chance to experience(Lachrymal, 2004). He is mirroring the psychological experience his daughter should be going through(Morris, Silk, Steinberg, & al. , 2007). He buys the car he wants, starts working out, startssmokingpot and standing up to his wife. Lester brazenly demands respect and independence both in his family and Job. He

exclaims that things are changing and no longer allows his wife to bully him or talk over him.

He makes a loud and overt demand for respect. He wants the same amount of freedom as his wife and daughter and symbolically breaks the bonds of restraint by disrupting dinner, breaking a plate against the wall and demanding a change of music, atmosphere and pecking order. It is the first clear step towards Lester being able to redefine himself both internally and externally (Lachrymal, 2004). Theoretical perspectives: The majority of middle aged people report having more satisfaction and less anxiety about their abilities and describe a sense of perfecting skills (Lachrymal, 2004).

Stereotypically the midlife crisis hits a huge percentage of people yet only a small percentage actually seem to. It is a period in which people have a chance to review their decisions and life choices, and come to terms with what they have achieved or not achieved. They may be exactly where they want to be or some may have to adjust their self image to incorporate the way their life actually looks potentially leading to crisis. This is the case of Lester Barman. He describes waking up from a 20 year mom and finally becoming aware of, and wanting to participate in his surroundings.

Lester's internal world is pretty much dead before meeting her. He describes an awakening one day with the feeling that his life is not his and he no longer recognizes the different systems he is involved in. Using his work difficulties as a catalyst, he becomes able to change his entire life into something he can accept (Antibiotic, Kamala, & Dashiki, 2004). Lester seems to have not formed a functional attachment style with anyone in his life until

he 'wakes up' (film) after feeling like he had 'been in a coma for 20 years. He starts to develop an attachment relationship with Risky in a sense.

He eventually becomes comfortable with what he feels is his true self, and secure with Risky. Psychological Progress: Insinuator and Bowlb's idea that attachment forms and changes over the life p supports the idea that Lester gains a sense of security through his relationship with Risky(Antibiotic, Kamala, & Dashiki, 2004). Rick's attachment to his father is nonexistent. He feels protective of his mother but neither of his parents has provided safety or comfort for him in moments of distress, one of the most salient bobs of a caregiver(Sable, 2008).

He instead has to take on the role of care-giver and protect and defend his mother who is otherwise helpless and alone. Risky easily slips into a similar role with Lester, being the familiar role he is used to. Lester gains wisdom and self awareness by mirroring an adolescent sexual attraction. He exploration and discovery an adolescent typically engages in (Aren't, 2000). Instead of his parents Lester rebels and redefines himself within in the family structure he has created as an adult. He pushes emotional limits and attempts to make connections in ewe and more passionate ways.

Coming full circle Lester finally is able to accept the man he is and the life he lives. He goes through a growing process a kin to that an adolescent would when creating an adult identity. Lester tests his new self out in all of the major areas of personality and finds himself in a body he accepts with a persona he is comfortable with(Anger, 2004). Luster's restraint in not having a sexual relationship with Angela demonstrates a level of maturity he did not

previously possess indicating successful personality growth towards adulthood.

When Lester finally sees Angela as the child she is and is able to comfort her expressing fatherly instinct his competence as a father is proven to him. He is able to reassure her without being patronizing and respecting her growing maturity, an important role parents play for adolescent children (Anger, 2004). In a sense Lester uses Angela as a proxy for his daughter as soon as he identifies her as something more than a sexual object. The fact that Lester recognizes the extent to which a sexual relationship with one of Cane's friends would be inappropriate, the love he has for his daughter and role as a father is reestablished.

Lester gains solace by looking at a picture of the glory days of his family where they are all smiles. His ability to renew his life and find beauty in the ups, downs and seemingly mundane moments is testament to his development as a mature, well adjusted adult (Lachrymal, 2004). **SOCIAL FACTORS: Gender Roles/ Gender Conformity:** Lester and Carolina's marriage does not follow strict gender roles in the classic sense of man as bread winner woman as home maker (Lore, 1994). Carolyn views herself as the bread winner of the family. She has proclaimed herself the captain of her emails social standing.

She believes that one's social position can be directly related to economic gains. For her, money and material gains are the most important marker of one's overall success socially. Making money is the most important thing for her. It is unclear how much money she actually contributes to the family, but

'sole bread winner' is a role she takes on readily if loudly (Mikhail, 2004). It is a typically male role, yet she somehow thinks that by both worrying about economic status and appearance she deserves more credit and admiration (Barnett, 2004). She is the first to fully disregard her marital relationship.

Her sense of entitlement increases as their relationship moves forward.

Masculinity and Homophobia: Considering masculinity to be socially constructed provides men with agency in forming the prevalent view of masculinity. Masculinity being malleable allows us to step back and identify exactly what we require of men to be 'manly' in our society (Kismet, 2004).

The pressure is insurmountable for some people. Risky dad is unable to accept himself for who he is and his internalized homophobia is so devastating that he feels he is forced to act to defend his manhood.

Lester's truthful acceptance of the realities of his life in the end is what ends his life. Not accepting popular culture's definition of masculinity and the freedom that allows it is terrifying to a man who has based his life around not admitting or accepting the truth of his situation. Military Perspectives on Homosexuality: homosexuality. Don't ask don't tell (DADA) being the official position thought of by some as a progressive policy for the military was not repealed until 2011 (Bird, 2014).

Showing how ingrained homophobia is in a military psyche. The staunch difference between other nations' policy on civil equality, even in the military is astounding. Take for example the United Kingdom and Australia's response to transgender soldiers serving versus the United States. Julia Bard's 2014 New York Times article 'The Courage of Transgender Soldiers' elucidates just

how polarize these nation's policies actually are (Bird, 2014). 'Department of Defense regulations don't allow transgender individuals to serve in the U.

S. Military, based upon medical standards for military service. " (Bird, 2014)

The official position of the United States military is that being transgender is a mental disorder as defined by the DSM III of 1980(American Psychiatric Association, 1980), instead of adopting the current medical standard for considering gender nonconformity (gender dysphasia) not as a psychological disorder in and of itself (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Solidarity and respect are shown to transgender members of the military in both the U.

K and Australia while the United States military continues to use an antiquated theory of gender, allowing official intolerance (Kernighan, 2012).

Homophobia in the Military: In 1999 DADA was the official Clinton era policy adopted by the United States in 1993 (Burlier, 2010) to address civil equality in the military. Homosexuality remained a disagreeable 'offence' when openly expressed changing very little for LGBT military personnel. Same-sex orientation after DADA was enacted was still a disagreeable offence.

The law did not prevent service members from being asked about their sexuality rather it removed questions sexual orientation from recruitment questionnaires. Military members and prospective recruits were not allowed to discuss their same-sex orientation risking discharge or denial of entry if they did Burlier, 2010). The argument for not allowing homosexual service members to disclose was the concept that 'an open statement by a service member that he or she is a homosexual will create a rebuttal presumption that he or she intends to engage in prohibited conduct,' (Burlier, 2010 p.).

Regulations are not put on heterosexual service members discussing their personal exploits, fantasies or desires. Several sexual practices are considered 'prohibited' both under military code and civil courts, yet the assumption is not made that these acts have or ever will take place. DADA did very little for improving the actual situation and daily lives of LIGHT service members. The actual number of discharges due to same sex relationships was not significantly different before and during DADA policy years (Burlier, 2010).

Rampant homophobia was a social requirement isolating and associating closeted LIGHT service members (Kier, 1998). The fear of being discovered was a daily reality. Anyone could turn a soldier in for same sex activity, actions as innocuous as holding hands. This leaves individuals suspected of homosexual 'conduct' (Burbler & 1995) alienable physical and verbal attacks as well as official action being taken. Hetero-normative principles were the sole cultural atmosphere. Colonel Frank Fits served in the military even before DADA was the official policy.

The much more restrictive, abrasively homophobic policy adopted during the time of his service shaped his attitude as a requirement of service. Any closeted member of the military would have to internalize feelings of self-hatred due to the constant anti-gay rhetoric. Internalized homophobia and its Repercussions: Frank Fits identifies himself purely based on his military experience. He has no identity other than colonel. He does not take on or identify with the role of husband or father. He coldly treats his family as cadets below his rank.

His own son refers to him as Colonel or Sir as one would a superior officer. The fact that Frank Fits cannot be anyone but the coroner he once was makes it impossible for him to explore, let alone accept feeling and attitudes that the military looked down on. Introspection does not exist for him. Orders, fear and denial run this man's life. His sexual curiosity and feeling of lust towards men are so unacceptable to Frank that he builds his life around his explicit homophobia. Cool. Frank Fits' residual self hatred, fear and shame pushed him to most the extremes of discrimination and racist principles.

His internalized homophobia shaped his relationship with those closest to him, his wife and son who he alienates (Frost, Meyer, 2009). Hiding this part of his internal self in the end defines his entire life. Offensively attacking any chance he got to not have his internal self exposed to the public or himself. Lashing out offensively is a defense strategy so that he will never be exposed to others or himself. The anguish and embarrassment Cool. Fits experiences by being what he thought to be rejected by Lester provoked emotions so strong that he had to kill Lester to be able to live with himself.

Lester's comfort and ease while discussing his own marital relationship mixed with misunderstanding previous events convinces Cool. Fits that Lester is a closeted homosexual. The fact that Lester is neither actually gay, nor homophobic shattered Cool. Fits' world. The Cool had to play the role of the macho heterosexual for so long made that he became overly jealous, controlling and abusive to his wife. Being less aggressive would have made him appear weak in his military unconsciousness. This fact made it

inconceivable that Lester could be unapologetic, calm and without anger or jealousy at the fact that his wife was with another man.

A freedom Frank Fits could never allow himself. He ends Luster's life right at the moment that Lester is able to achieve something that the Cool. Cannot, self acceptance. Conclusion: Luster's acceptance and renewed love of life ends up being what kills him. Lester is able to accept in other people facts that they cannot accept about themselves. Cool Frank Fits does not possess the skills to regulate his emotions or cope internally hen faced with a threatening situation, choosing instead to lash out in violent anger (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, & al. , 2007).

For Frank Lester becomes the embodiment of all the sexual feelings he cannot except within himself. Killing Lester is a desperate attempt to kill the feelings Frank most fears. Lester reaffirms his identity as a well adjusted adult when rejecting his foolish adolescent urges. He accepts what he has accomplished and is at peace with who he is, uniting the image he has of himself with the actuality of his life. Typically this type of review is done later in life(Lachrymal, 2004). Lester is afforded the luxury of being at peace before he dies even though it is sudden.