

Road to perdition: the ultimate father-son bonding experience essay sample



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Relationships are formed with everyone that we surround ourselves with throughout the entirety of our lives. Not all of these relationships are good ones; in fact during our life span we experience quite a few of these relations to be down right miserable. It's through these contacts that we are able to become whole as well as grow and learn how to truly love one another, and to fully accept all the faults that are included in a person. The best bond that is formed between two people is the one formed with love.

When all that matters in our hearts and mind is the safety and well being of these close persons it becomes evident that we have a close bond with them. More often than not the people that we share these special relationships with are our very own family members, or people whom we find to be really close friends and are considered to be part of the family. Director Sam Mendes is able to capture the ultimate bonding experience between a father and his son in the movie Road to Perdition, which is based on the novel written by Max Allen Collins and Richard Piers Rayner.

In order for a movie to be called a bonding film there is certain aspects that must be present in the screenplay and through the way the actors present the material on the screen. The movie should have something to do with love, compassion, and the willingness to do anything for another human being even if it means that the life of that character is placed in harms way. There is a rare phenomenon that some actors are able to possess.

They are sometimes able to in a way become one with the character that is being played, and it's when this lines of fantasy and reality are blurred when a movie is able to leave a long lasting impression on its audience. Road to

Perdition takes place in Chicago in the 1930's; it is about a man named Michael Sullivan played by Tom Hanks; who must leave everything he has ever known to protect his son. At the beginning of the movie the audience is made aware that Sullivan was taken in by John Rooney, Paul Newman, as a young boy. Rooney is a "crime boss who rules the community," as stated by T. Frizzle, a film critic. Sullivan was raised around the mafia all his life, so it was only natural that he too would join the business of contract killing when he grew into a man.

One night his older son Michael Sullivan Jr. , played by Tyler Hoechlin, becomes a stow away in his fathers vehicle. They end up at an old warehouse. Sullivan and another man go into the warehouse to "talk" to someone; and Jr. runs to an opening in the side of the building. At this point gun shots ring out and the true identity of his father becomes apparent, Jr. s then discovered hiding in the shadows, and the journey to Perdition begins.

First it was unclear what was going to happen, but soon after the earlier events that took place the night before Sullivan's wife and younger son are brutally murdered, leaving him and his older son with their lives. It then becomes apparent in order for them to continue to live they must flee from their old life. The two men at first did not see eye to eye on everything, and of course Jr. was not exactly sure what was going on and how severe things really were.

They had their minor scuffles just like any other normal humans, but through their conflicts they become closer to one another and form an ever lasting bond. Throughout the journey their lives are placed in immediate danger

multiple times as they are being followed by a mafia assassin hired by Sullivan's "father figure." Another father-son bonding film is *Frequency* starring Dennis Quaid and Jim Caviezel. The two men get in contact with each other through a radio that Quaid dug up in the present time New York. Mick LaSalle, *Chronicle Staff Critic*, put it, "Frequency taps into the deep and specific dynamics of fathers and sons."

The radio once belonged to Caviezel, his father, back in 1969. Quaid is now a cop and is investigating a serial killing, and discovers that if something had happened in the past the man would then not be alive and able to murder in the future. Together the two men form a bond over the airwaves and work together to catch the serial killer. Their lives are placed in harms way when the killer comes for Quaid's mother in the past and the two work together to put an end to the horrible event of his mother's death when he was a small child.

Like the Sullivan's Quaid and Caviezel are thrown together in a violent swirl, but with the relationships they have gotten to know with each other they are able to overcome anything. There are many other movies that show evidence of a strong working bond between one or multiple other persons. One of these movies starring the ever so talented Denzel Washington, *John Q*, is his most recent father-son movies. The basis for this film is the fact that his small son needs a heart transplant in order to stay alive, and live to be an old man.

The conflict begins when Washington discovers that he is no longer covered on his medical insurance and the hospital/doctors are refusing to put the boy

on the donor's list. As a result Washington puts himself in danger and holds the emergency room hostage until the hospital will agree to place the name of his young offspring on the list. Throughout the film there are many problems that arise, and he indeed is almost shot by a sniper with the police force while they tried to set him up with a fake offer.

He then decides that if the doctors are unwilling to find a heart for the small patient then he the boy's father will then give his own in order to save his life. It is this decision that changes the minds of the hospital, and soon after he makes up his mind they prep for surgery, and within minutes of his death his wife runs down to the ER, and makes it apparent that they have found a heart for their young child without him having to give up his life in the process. Washington shows the same courage that Michael Sullivan shows in the film Road to Perdition.

The two men stand up for their children, and are at the same time showing a rare compassion for doing what they are providing for the audience; which makes the movie feel that much realer to the viewer. Sometimes the good deeds that some do in the movie do not always turn out to for the best in the direct end, but in the long run things change for the better. This is very evident in this film as well as in American History X. In both of these works of art a change occurs in the characters, and it then seems like everything is going to be better for everyone.

Just when it is thought to be in the clear something tragic occurs. For Road to Perdition the mafia assassin finally catches up to the Sullivan refugees, and in the finally scene Sullivan stares out the window at his son playing near the

shore of the beach when he is gunned down in cold blood in the back.

Sullivan Jr. once again hears the gun shots ring out, and comes into to see the death of his father, and with that he picks up the gun and turns to the shooter to end his life as well.

Likewise in American History X the day Danny Vinyard discovers the wrongs of his ways, and plans with his brother Derek, played by Edward Norton, to change the way they live their lives a sudden tragic turn occurs. Danny goes to school to turn in his much awaited paper when he goes into the boys' room he is then welcomed by a familiar face. The boy he blew smoke at the day before is greeting him with a gun as he turns to look at his assassin the shoots ring out once again. Derek farther down the street hears the echoes and takes off for the school only to find the bloody corpse of his baby brother laying cold on the bathroom floor.

It is gut wrenching to see these people who are full of good and are finally willing to change their ways shot down with murderous intent. All in all it is evident that Road to Perdition along with other films that were mentioned all qualify to be a bonding film for the family, and even though these are mostly male oriented there are plenty of others that play to the roles of the females. Without love and trust among other things in life there would not be much to live for. The bond between father and son and other family members in some cases is inseparable, and is an important aspect of life.

This film should make people want to become closer to their loved ones as they walk out of the theater, or even sitting together on the couch. The compassion and the pure love that is squeezed out of the actors is a

wonderful thing and when they are able to touch their audience with that same love and tenderness a magical bond is formed. We have relationships with everyone who surrounds us and it is up to us to decide how good or bad those relationships are going to be, but with a little help from the movies we can see how important it is to make the good ones count.

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