

The machinist — media report assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Machinist A 2004 movie starring Christian Bale John Lowe Psychology 180 Media Report Professors Susan Turner and Julie True September 14, 2011 The Machinist, a 2004 psychological thriller, impressed me by the performance of Christian Bale. To prepare for the movie, he lost nearly seventy pounds to accurately depict the main character, Trevor Resnik. The film aptly portrays the possible extreme physiologic effects that psychological trauma can induce when left untreated. As the film begins, it presents a blurred image of Trevor through the rain streaked window of his apartment as he is rolling a body in a large tan carpet.

He then walks to the window to light a cigarette, displaying bruises and cuts all over his emaciated and haunted face. The film cuts to him unloading the rolled carpet from the back of his pickup truck. A pair of white-sneakered feet dangles from one end of the carpet. He struggles to carry the carpet to a waterfront and tosses it down a flight of steps into the ocean. A guard carrying a yellow flashlight walks up to Trevor and asks, " Who are you? " Trevor is then shown back in his apartment, washing his hands with bleach in his bathroom sink.

The picture pans back. The same yellow flashlight the guard was holding is now lying on his coffee table. Trevor notices a yellow Post-It note on the wall behind him with " WHO ARE YOU? " written on it. The film alternately illustrates how Trevor has been deteriorating, both physically and mentally, by shifting through scenes with his call-girl girlfriend, his apartment, his work, and with a waitress at a diner. It shows him in his bed with a call-girl, Stevie, and presents a graphic image of his withered body.

He is shown again with her later in the film where he states that he just wants to sleep and that he hasn't slept in a year. Stevie asks Trevor if he is going to rescue her from her life, that she would give it up for the right guy. His growing paranoia throughout the film causes him to doubt her, believing that a co-worker is her ex-boyfriend, and that both of them are conspiring against Trevor. Trevor has a routine of having late night coffee and pie at an airport diner. The wall clock is display a time that interchanges between 1: 30: 01 and 1: 30: 02, without ever progressing.

This time theme reoccurs several more times throughout the film during his interactions with the waitress from the diner, where the time is always 1: 30 AM. He enjoys the casual conversations with the waitress, Maria, and eventually goes out on a date with her and her son, Nicholas. Near the end of the film, he returns to the diner to discover that there is no Maria that works there. His usual waitress declares that Trevor just quietly sits there staring at his coffee, night after night. Trevor vehemently denies the waitress' claim, alleging that she is ' in on it. At his apartment, Trevor develops a habit of using Post-It notes to leave reminders for himself. He is troubled by a note that appears on his fridge, depicting a " hang man" game with a six letter word puzzle. His attempt to solve this puzzle progresses from ' m-o-t-h-E-R' ??? blaming his psychosis on the loss of his mother, then to ' m-I-L-I-E-R' ??? believing that the worker he injured is plotting revenge against him, and finally to ' k-I-L-L-E-R' ??? where he finally remembers what happened a year ago that led to his insomnia and physical condition.

The change in Trevor's physical appearance has raised concern with his co-workers and bosses at a machine shop, National Machine. Trevor's

<https://assignbuster.com/the-machinist-media-report-assignment/>

distraction from a new co-worker, Ivan, causes him to back into a machine that another employee, Tommy Miller, was working on. The machine turns on and malfunctions, tearing off Tommy's left arm. Trevor blames the new guy, Ivan, for the distraction and is told that there is no Ivan working at National Machine. Trevor's deteriorating form and behavior turns the workers against him.

Another near-accident befalls Trevor and, in a paranoid fit, triggers him to lash out at his co-workers, eventually causing Trevor to get fired. Trevor believes that Ivan is the culprit behind all that is transpiring in his life. He follows Ivan and gets the license plate from the red muscle car that Ivan is driving. Trevor attempts to get information from the DMV about Ivan and is turned away. Trevor concocts a plan to create a 'Hit-and-Run' claim in order to file a report and get the info from the police. He steps out in front of a blue Volkswagen Beetle and gets knocked over the top of the car.

Trevor then staggers into the police station, bruised and bloodied as he appeared in the opening of the film, and gives the description of the car. A detective later approaches Trevor and asks him is he joking? The officer states that the car that Trevor is reporting, a 1969 Pontiac Firebird, belongs to Trevor himself and was reported "totaled" a year ago. The detective attempts to detain Trevor for questioning. Trevor flees from the police station. The officer chases him but he is able to elude capture through a sewer drain in a subway station.

At this point, Trevor seeks solace with his girlfriend, Stevie, and ends up going 'psycho' on her, believing that Ivan is her ex-boyfriend and that she is

plotting with Ivan to drive him crazy. She kicks him out and he then travels to the diner to see Maria. He finds out that there is no Maria. He accuses the waitress for being 'in on it' and storms away. In the parking structure, he again sees Ivan in the Firebird and follows Ivan back to Trevor's apartment. He locates Ivan in his bathroom, shaving his face with a knife.

After an argument with Ivan, he wrestles the knife away and slits Ivan's throat with the knife. This is where the movie opens and repeats partial scenes where Trevor is rolling Ivan's body in the carpet and carrying the body to the waterfront. Trevor is again shown throwing the carpet down the stairs but then unveils that the carpet unraveled on the way down, revealing that there is nothing in it. The guard that discovers Trevor is unveiled as Ivan. Trevor returns to his apartment, stares at himself through the bathroom mirror as Ivan is standing behind him, and again sees the Post-It note with "WHO ARE YOU?" He begins to remember the past, stating "I know who you are" over and over. He recalls driving the Firebird; he remembers getting distracted when he attempted to use the car's cigarette lighter; he recollects glancing up just as his car is about to plow over a boy crossing the street. Trevor is powerless to stop the car in time and can only look back with dismay at the mangled body of Nicholas as his mother, Maria, runs up to her son in her waitress outfit. In the end, Trevor just 'wants to sleep'. He climbs into his truck and, with Ivan sitting beside him, drives himself to the police station.

Trevor turns himself in for the hit-and-run that he committed a year ago and is led to a cell by a pair of officers. Finally, in utter exhaustion, Trevor finds the sleep that has escaped him for the past year. The main psychological

dilemma of Trevor Resnik is his deeply repressed memory of the traumatic accident he had the year before, where he killed the young boy with his Firebird and fled. His guilt and shock from the incident might have brought about post-traumatic stress disorder, which led to his repression of the event and his year of sleep deprivation, substantial weight loss, and lack of concentration.

This disorder led to his delusions of the waitress at the diner and eventually of Ivan, who may well be Trevor's mental image of his guilty conscious struggling to awaken. The Machinist depicts the psychoanalysis of repression. Repression is " a psychological defense mechanism in which the person refuses to consciously remember a threatening or unacceptable event, instead pushing those events into the unconscious mind. "[2] Repression is found in a multitude of post-traumatic patients, ranging from rape victims to war-torn veterans.

I would highly recommend The Machinist and many other films of Christian Bale to any avid film enthusiast. His movies depict a variety of psychological neuroses that would intrigue any student or professor of psychology. A short list of his films that I would also endorse is: American Psycho, Batman Begins, and Dark Knight. Reference: 1. The Machinist, 2004; directed by Brad Anderson and written by Scott Kosar; starring Christian Bale. 2. The Machinist vs. Psychology; http://learrmpsy201.blogspot.com/2010/04/machinist-vs-psychology_22.html