

# A bronx tale. film essay



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The film “ A Bronx Tale” centers on the life of a boy named Calogero on his journey from childhood, to adolescence, to a young adult. Calogero, later nicknamed “ C” grew up in a community with prevalent gang behavior and the violence that accompanies this lifestyle. From a young age “ C” was fascinated with the life of various members of the mafia especially the leader of the group- Sonny. As a child, “ C” maintains an incredibly close relationship with his father, but over time “ C” becomes overwhelmed by a life of affluence and money and subsequently loses sight of what is truly important to him.

In the end, the only thing that can open “ C’s” eyes is tragic loss, and he understands the harsh realities of life that escaped his as a child. “ A Bronx Tale” parallels the growth we all experience as we transition childhood to adulthood and the journey we must endure to find our identities. When “ C” is a young child, family is truly the most important influence on his personality and development. In the beginning of the film it is evident that “ C” looks at his father with the utmost pride and respect as he repeatedly says to his dad “ you’re always right. However, although “ C” was raised by respectable parents, children not only learn from direct teaching but also by the environment that they live in. It is this factor that contributes to “ C’s” dwindling faith in his father as well as his involvement with the dangerous gangs of the Bronx. Early in the film it is clear that “ C” is fascinated with the gangster life that he is surrounded by. “ C” is always looking for a way to escape his parents and go to the bar just to catch a glimpse of the toughest man in his eyes: Sonny.

This fascination not only affected “ C” but also everyone else in the town. The appeal of gangster life and deviant behavior can be connected to people’s yearning to live vicariously through the dangers of these life styles. As a child, “ C” was living in a state of innocence and discovery, but his innocence was shattered as he witnesses Sonny brutally murder someone ‘ over a parking space. ’ When “ C” does a good thing for a bad man just because the worst thing you can be in the town is a rat, “ C” has unknowingly changed the course of his life. C’s” seemingly innocent act caught the attention of Sonny, and from then on “ C” grew closer to the gangster lifestyle and farther away from everything that his father had taught him to be right. As an adolescent “ C” began to experiment with deviant behavior and lived in a cloud of confusion and identity crisis. Now, instead of family being his main influence, he was under the constant influence of his peer group. Here, “ C” was able to avoid parental supervision and began to make choices by himself. C’s” relationship with his father was severely weakened as they became more distant and cold toward each other. Suddenly, Sonny “ was always right” and his father was just a sucker for being a poor working man. “ C’s” adolescent journey continues as he meets a black girl named Jane and is instantly smitten. This is the first time “ C” has gone against the culture of his environment and for the first time in a long time he is truly happy. “ C” undergoes the most significant change as he transitions from adolescence to a young adult.

At this stage, “ C” must make important life decisions that not only impact him, but also all those around him. When “ C’s” friends are driving to the black side of town with cocktails in the back seat “ C” realized that his life

was going down the drain and there was nothing he could do at that point. At that moment, " C" needed someone to save him and miraculously Sonny pulled him out of the car. When " C" spoke to Sonny in his car, " C" realized something very important. Sonny trusted no one and that was not the way " C" wanted to live.

Sonny once quoted Machiavelli and told " C" that it was better to be feared than loved, but the quote actually states " It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both. " When Sonny was shot and killed in an ironic chain of events " C" realized that Sonny was a good man despite his destructive acts, and that " C" truly cared for Sonny. Sonny was not only feared by many, he was also loved by a select few. At Sonny's funeral " C" and his father come full circle as " C" is finally able to put his immature ways behind him and his father is able to let go and realize that his son has grown up.

The most important thing " C" learned during this period was that the saddest thing in life truly was wasted talent. " C" lived in a town where wasted talent was like an epidemic that infected as many people as it could. " C" was lucky enough to escape this disease and learn from the tragic mistakes of others. " C" understood that in order to truly succeed in life you needed to give love to get love and needed to accept people for who they are. " C's" journey from an innocent child to an aware adult was full of trials and hardships but it is these mishaps that made him into the person he was always meant to be