

QLH-S04E0_ The Mafu Cage

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sissy, film, ellen, movie, cage, elon, feel, sisters, mafia, father, relationship, elena, watch, talked, clear, david, great, younger sisters, mentioning, bit

SPEAKERS

Jen Myers, Jessi Chartier

J Jessi Chartier 00:04

Welcome to Quiet Little Horrors. Here we talk about the films that creep under your skin and take up residence in the dark.

J Jen Myers 00:17

Let's talk about The Mafu Cage. We talk about movies. So we're going to talk about parts of movies that may be spoilers. If that doesn't bother you, you can keep on listening. Or you can hit the pause button and go watch the films that we're talking about before you continue here. Consider yourself warned. Ellen and astronomer cares for her agoraphobic, younger sister sissy who struggles with manic episodes, which often lead to her killing her, quote unquote pet primates. However, once Ellen starts a relationship with a colleague sissies foundation of reality is threatened and she begins to sink into her illness threatening to bring Ellen with her. Okay. This is going to be quite a discussion.

J Jessi Chartier 01:07

What a great movie because it's so weird.

J Jen Myers 01:10

This one I feel like we do you have to do a little bit more up top to describe it. Because I do not think this one is very well known at all. This might be one of the more obscure movies, if not the most obscure movie we've covered, I think, do you think so?

J Jessi Chartier 01:27

I think so.

J Jen Myers 01:28

And I think part of it, I mean, I guess I'd have to sit down with the list. But I think part of it is that this is hard to get a hold of to watch. It's not streaming I event, this is one of those films where you can't even like buy it, I couldn't find it at libraries, I couldn't even I think we've talked before about like all the different sources I do to find obscure movies, I couldn't find it anywhere other than buying my own copy of it, it is on Blu ray. So it's not like you know, in some locked vaults, or you know, only on VHS or something like that it is available on Blu Ray, but you have to buy it. It's not like streaming or anything like that. And I think that I did that I was trying to piece together how I didn't learn of this. And I think I learned it from a book called Women Make Horror, this film is directed by a woman, Karen Arthur, which I feel like is a little bit unusual for the 70s to have a woman directing psychological horror, but she did. And I read this book. And I think that I skipped over the chapter on it because I wanted to see the movie before I read the chapter. And then I felt like I forgot to go back and read the chapter about it. But I think that's how I heard and then I like went through this the struggle of like, okay, how do I see this movie, and then I could come up with no other solution, but buying it. And then I did and I was like, this is 200% my type of movie. I really really dig it. And then I had you over to watch my copy of it, because that's the easiest way to see it. If you know me.

J Jessi Chartier 02:59

I couldn't find it in any other way to and I Yeah, we just had a great time ordering and talking about it while we watch the film. Yes to all of it. I think that Karen Arthur is great in the fact that she tackled this. Because this is a this is a bananas plot. No pun intended, this is a crazy plot. This is there's so much uncomfortability wrapped in a story that you just can't pull yourself away from. And I think a lot of that has to do with Carol Kane's performance that she was this is this is not an easy film to do or to be in. And these characters, especially the character of Cissy must not have been an easy role to play. Because there's so much inappropriate cultural appropriation. There's so much violence that comes from such a childlike character. So to like balance, both of those things must have been really tough, but like she pulls it off, and it's just mesmerizing at the same time.

J Jen Myers 04:13

Yeah, and that kind of makes me also think that maybe we should put a quick message up top here that there's nothing super graphic in this movie. There is however, a couple moments where in the story, animals are being abused, it's very clear that none of that is actually happening in real life. Like you get no indication that anything ever happened to the animals. Like it's very, it's all just implication. Like, I want to be really clear about that. There's nothing that you know, it's not when I film that I watch it and be like, Oh my God, what did they do in real life? No, it's not like that at all. However, it is very upsetting. It's, it's, you know, supposed to be in the story. But I feel like that's important to mention up top that that there that is in this in this film. So if that is something that you know, You need to be wary about the Be very wary about that. And yeah, I think it's also worth mentioning, there is a cultural appropriation all over this thing. And again, that that I we're gonna get into that. I think there's a commentary there. There's definitely a commentary from our perspective, I'm not 100% sure how much of it was a

deliberate commentary in that time. But I think now we can have a perspective on it that has a very clear commentary that aligns with the the kind of sickness that is going on in the story, like it aligns with that, but I think it's worth mentioning those things up top, because yeah, there's some intense psychological stuff going on in this Oh, and I also forget what I'm doing that there is also incest in this film. So there's all of our content warnings. I was gonna say like, right out of the gate,

J

Jessi Chartier 05:48

This is a movie that has every trigger warning there should be like, there's there's incest, there's clear implications of sexual abuse between a father and a daughter. There's, there's aggressive sex, like, initiations, there's a lot there is the very clear there, it's not even implied. It's like, animals are killed. But off screen. So you know, so to your warning is 100%. True, like, they're not the animals, it's physically the animals. The animal actors that are there are obviously not injured or not hurt or not abused. But in the story, they are violently tormented. I mean, it's like everything that you can think of that comes with a warning is connected this movie is it and, but at the same time, it weaves such a tragically beautiful relationship between these two sisters that are deeply codependent on each other. And it was really interesting to see that I think that codependent relationships are not often really portrayed very well. Like I would say that the best codependent relationship I've seen in film, probably in now, I'm just gonna, I am not an expert. It could have been film or characters. But I think it's an honestly, I think it's from the movie men, where the wife and the husband are there. And like, there's the scene that you the argument is like a perfect codependent argument that she is trying to break out of a codependent relationship. And he is not willing to do that. And I think that the codependency here between the sisters relationships is kind of similar in that the older sister Ellen wants to break not even wants to break free, but is has an opportunity to have her own relationship outside of her relationship with her sister and her dead father. And as she starts to take it, the reality starts to kind of crumble around her. And I think that that that's really at the heart of the story is like, you have these two very unhealthy women who are kind of caught in a time loop and are feeding off of each other for that time loop. And when that gets threatened to break, they just can't handle it.

J

Jen Myers 08:11

No, that's I think that's a great way to kind of describe what's at the center of this film. And because yeah, it is all about this relationship, which is very thorny, very intertwined. very unhealthy. And each sister is unhealthy in their own way. Like we focus on so Cissy the younger sisters is the one that is a little bit more I think, obviously disturbed. She is in a state of arrested development, she seems like an overgrown child. They so their their father was an anthropologist and it seems like they spent a lot of time growing up in African countries. And so Cissy has basically I you know, I think the implication is as part of her wanting to stay in that childhood has recreated a lot of those type of settings in their home. Their home looks like you know, a different country. She is always wearing different like African style clothing and jewelry. Like she never wears anything other than that. And she is and then she has her I don't think we said this specifically but the orangutangs that she keeps that's what she calls her Mafus which I think is just the name she made up I think I looked this up and I don't think that has a connection to anything so but she called so the mafu cage is the cage that she keeps her pets again quote unquote pets orangutans and she's not well this is not good. And you can tell

that her her older sister Ellen indulges a lot of this enables this. I think that is the correct word to use here. She really enables it because Ellen is not particularly healthy either. She seems like really disconnected from her own her own emotions. But she is the one that is it seems like trying to break out of the pattern. Like she, I think this movie is the story of Ellen, you know, starting to really kind of get it starts to get through to her that this is not the way she wants to live her life, and that she has been, you know, fostering the relationship with this man she works with and there's something there and that I think that he represents this potential. She's like, Oh, there's another life possible. I could go do something else. But she can't really go do something else because when she starts Cissy lashes out, and Ellen immediately gives it to her like she just you know, does that so yeah, it's just this the whole movie is the is the the back and forth of their unhealthy codependency. And it continues to degrade into a very bad situation.

J Jessi Chartier 10:52

It does. And there were there's so much we can talk about here. In regards to that sense of codependence. You know, did we ever learn so we know that the father is dead? We know that you

J Jen Myers 11:07

They have like, an altar to him. Like he's clearly this. It's not just a dead father. He is almost a presence in this film. But they literally have an altar to him with his photo and everything like that. Yeah.

J Jessi Chartier 11:21

Yeah. He's almost like this mythic creature. Exactly. There's this mythos of the the father that constantly lives through these girls. And I know are these women. And I remember Ellen has a line of something like I promised dad, or I promised Daddy, I would take care of you. Yeah. So there's obviously the sense of obligation from an older sister to a younger sister. The younger sister is just damaged, you know. And there's clear that I mean, there was obviously I should say, obviously, but there is indication of sexual abuse between the father and the system. But then there's incest between Cissy and Ellen. Because since she wants to make anyone feel better.

J Jen Myers 12:08

And that's not just indicated. I mean, again, that's not even inclination to it's like an actual scene. Yeah, no, that's not subtext. That's text. And like we said before, none of this stuff is super graphic or anything. We're not saying that it's in there. It's just like, these are disturbing things that happen. And that is one I think that we both agreed that there is implied abuse that happened with the father just because of the state of the daughters, and the way that they still fixate on him. It just seems to imply that sort of thing. But the incest is not implied. It is real.

J Jessi Chartier 12:42

Yes, exactly. Right. That's exactly right. And the movie is just so heart wrenching, because you realize that by the end of the movie, the the person who's stuck in the cage is both Cissy and Helen, or Ellen. Like they are the ones that have created this cage in which they can't remove themselves from and as Ellen tries to secede, just freaks out. And I think let's, let's talk a little bit so there's a scene. Okay, so some of the the main stuff is like, Ellen ends up meeting, what's the boyfriend's name is David. David. Yes. So she ends up dating this guy. And Ellen goes to Arizona. On a trip for work, David comes over and meets Cissy. And by this point in time, he's now in the house with Cissy alone, and you're like, Oh, God. What is going to happen? Do you want to talk? And I don't honestly don't remember it. There's just like, so much feeling, and music that I remember from this movie that the plot tends to melt, you know?

J Jen Myers 13:52

Yes, no, no, totally. So David comes over. And I think that my sense is that he has the impression that Ellen does want to, you know, be in a relationship with him, but is tied down at home with her sister, I feel like David is kind of coming with the idea of like, if I can get in good with the sister, then you know, we can break this open, you know, that sort of thing, which is not a bad idea, frankly, and it it could have worked, except Cissy is difficult. So it doesn't work. So, and Cissy immediately is like, this is the guy. This is the guy that has been distracting Ellen she like she she targets him immediately. Like you can see if you know you know where she's coming from. You can see that from the second that she sees him. He's got a target on him. But he doesn't know that so she kind of draws him into they ended up spending like the afternoon together and says he gives him wine, and you know it. Eventually she gets him into the mafu cage. Literally, like cheat and then chaining him up and eventually beat him to death.

J Jessi Chartier 15:03

Yes, just like the other orangutans that like she had done.

J Jen Myers 15:07

Yes. And then, like they have done with the other orangutans they bury. So she she, because this has happened before and they buried them in the backyard. That's what she does to David. There's that's what she does. He's he's just another mafu. And so she buries him in the backyard. Before Ellen returns home. And, yes,

J Jessi Chartier 15:30

keep going.

J Jen Myers 15:30

So Ellen returns home, this is towards the end, because now we've we've built Yeah, we got to talk about the unsaid most of the first part of the film is really like, these are these women. This

is where they live. And then when once things start to happen, it degrades rapidly. And I think David is really what sets that off. So then, at that point, and that's, I think that then Cissy has a thing where she is pull full on tribal regalia and

J Jessi Chartier 16:02

clay in the hair and everything.

J Jen Myers 16:05

Yes, and, and all of that. And so, when Ellen comes back, you know, she, I think she immediately doesn't she well, not immediately, but I think then she sees David's car outside. And she's like, Did David here did he come here, and you know, this was one of those things that Cissy, you know, she can bury him. But she doesn't think about it as other stuff. She basically is the mind of a child. And so very, pretty quickly, Ellen figures out what's going on. And she realizes this is him or David and that this is just completely all completely out of control. And then Ellen pretty much just gives up. She ends up trapping Ellen in the cage. But Ellen kind of lets it all happen. And especially after she's chained up, she is just basically like, I can't do anything. And the only way to do something is to let myself die so that Cissy will be discovered, and maybe somebody will help her finally, or at least she's been she stopped eating. And then and she does die like she dies by the end of the film. And Cissy locks herself inside the mafia cage and shackles herself there.

J Jessi Chartier 17:22

Yes. And that is the end date. Yeah.

J Jen Myers 17:24

So super happy ending, everything turns out great. Yeah, no, I mean, like we said before, this film is just a story of the you start with the the sisters their relationship, and then things degrade to the point where there's no return. And then from that point, everything just completely collapses.

J Jessi Chartier 17:43

Yeah, and what I like about this particular, so it was based on a French play, which I have not read. So I don't know how much it deviates from it. But what I do like about it is it shows what happens to sisters or even just siblings, when you get caught in your childhood or one of them gets caught in the childhood. And the other is codependent. You know, there's just this, neither one of them can escape from under the thumb of this abusive father. Like they are both such broken people that are, they're on opposite ends of the spectrum. They're great foil characters for each other. Because, like you said, Ellen is very stoic, or at least very repressed to her emotions. But it's trying to do right so she she's clearly gone to school, she's clearly gotten a job like she's paying the bills. She's is the responsible one in the family. And Cissy, on the other

hand, is the child's she is the one that is unable to do. What is she is unable to do self care. She's violent towards animals, she's violent towards other people. She cannot make rational decisions like there's just so much in her that is incapable and because of that, it's like clear that these two women have drawn each other into the opposite ends of the spectrum, in order to be codependent like Cissy is Ellen's emotional side. And Ellen is Cissy's rational side. And they can't live together but they can't live apart and they end up just destroying each other.

J Jen Myers 19:17

Yeah, exactly. That's exactly what happens. And yeah, and it's like I was saying, Cissy is the one that is a little bit more obviously disturbed, but Ellen, you know, she is trying to do the right things but then she doesn't have any idea what the right things are. Because like you said, that's where the the codependence and the enablement comes in because there are so many times in this movie where you are almost expecting especially towards the beginning, Ellen to make different decisions and she's like, I feel like I can because you see, we come in, I think right after Cissy has killed one of her mafus and that she kills another one and then you learn but you learn from the very beginning that that first one was not the first one ever, and that there's a pattern here and it's a little bit like Ellen, I feel like this should have stopped a long time ago, like, you can't just keep doing this. And I think Ellen tries to put her foot down and then says he throws a fit and Ellen gives in. And so she, you know, they contact their godfather, who is the one who provides them with, with animals, which he does, at some point also put his foot down. But I also feel that foot should have been put down a long time earlier, like before, way before we are on, you know, two or three or four here. I feel like there are there are some boundaries that should have been drawn way sooner that actually would have been healthier. Ellen is the classic example of somebody who does not understand that enablement is not actually helpful.

J Jessi Chartier 20:49
Correct.

J Jen Myers 20:50

Like, and essentially she's doing that for herself. Right? She's, that's part of the whole codependency thing. Because there are, there are a lot of times when you're you're hoping or almost waiting for Ellen to make the right. Responsible call and set down some boundaries and not let Ceci, get away with this, and Ellen doesn't do it. And that's what keeps the cycle going.

J Jessi Chartier 21:12

Exactly right. That's exactly right. And that's why it's such an unhealthy relationship is that, and at the same time, like, it's clear that Cissy does the same thing for Ellen, in also a very unhealthy way with this incestuous relationship. Now, whenever Helen is upset, you know, so the incestuous scene starts with some commentary around like, but you're so upset, Ellen, let me make you feel better. Let me make you smile again. And it's clear that, again, there's that sense of emotion that Ellen doesn't have the city is going to bring to the table and bring, you

know, bring out in Ellen, or what have you. And then there's the sex scene with Ellen and David and she cries afterwards. But she cries out of like, she says something to the effect of I had forgotten how beautiful it could be or something like that. And it's just so sad, because it's clear that she is truly caught in this relationship she has with her sister.

J Jen Myers 22:11

She's so close to getting out, so close. Yeah, there it that's what I think is so tragic about all of this and what really makes, you know, your heart hurt, especially when you start seeing that how things are gonna go and there's no way to, you know, stop that train. Because Ellen gets really close you're in you're, you're really hoping that she will just because she does. I think the thing that is a little bit different about Ellen is even though that she she stays trapped in a lot of these things and allows things to happen that that shouldn't be happening. I do think she's aware that this is wrong, that it is unhealthy. Where Cissy is completely unaware. So she does not have any of that perspective. She doesn't have any of that self awareness, except maybe at the very, very end, in a way. But Ellen seems to have this self awareness. She just can't get herself out of it. And that's what's so tragic and sad about it.

J Jessi Chartier 23:08

You know, you talk a little bit about that sense. Yeah. And you talk a little bit about that sense of self awareness and that Ellen is climbing to get out but can't quite bring herself to make those final decisions. You know, like, she will, she tries to say, No, you can't have another orangutan because you've killed the last three. And then Cissy, like throws a fit, and she just acquiesces.

J Jen Myers 23:32

Yeah, almost immediately. It's really disappointing.

J Jessi Chartier 23:35

It's very disappointing. It's very disappointing.

J Jen Myers 23:38

I mean, I think it would be disappointing if the conversation were about anything, because you can clearly see like, if it were about a piece of candy, you would still be disappointed. But the fact that it's about a living animal is like, wow, you know, this was yeah, you're right. I there is a level of self awareness that even Ellen hasn't achieved. Or if she is that that makes it even just sadder that she knows us wrong. And she just still can't do it.

J Jessi Chartier 24:03

Yes, yeah. And since he has no clue what she's supposed to do or who she is, I mean, the fact that she is trying to recreate what she thought her childhood was through all of this. appropriation is just really indicative of her just being totally clueless on some stuff, but wanting to escape into that cluelessness.

J Jen Myers 24:27

Yes, I think there's something really important, like, clearly, or at least, it's clear to me when we look at these characters, especially as like we talked about I feel like if there was, you know, abuse with the father, that it affected Cissy, very, very badly, you know it to the that's probably where that trauma comes from. That's what makes sense to me. So, and I feel like there are some things that you know, maybe Cissy took on more trauma, she was maybe a more sensitive one, like There may be some reasons. But there's also a level of where Cissy has made a choice that she's just going to stay lost. And I think that that's also where the whole trying to recreate a mythical African utopia, childhood utopia and and continuously like, behaving as if she is a natural part of that is where we get into the really uncomfortable issues of appropriation because essentially, you have a, you know, relatively well off, because, you know, I mean, Ellen is an astronomer, and says she doesn't have to work. So it's not, and they live in this big mansion. So you know, it's not like, you know, they're struggling to get from day to day. So since she is essentially a relatively secure white woman, who can make the choice to, you know, essentially cosplay different African cultures as a way to escape anything she doesn't want to deal with. And she can just completely lose herself in that. And like I mentioned earlier, I'm not sure given that this came out in the late 70s. So I'm not sure how much of this maybe was, you know, forefront in filmmakers minds at the time, you know, because I don't think appropriation was something that was talked about as much as you know, we're aware of it now. But it's so easy to see in retrospect, how it aligns with everything else wrong with Cissy is, you know, how she puts herself in the center of a culture that's not her own. And that she uses that as a way to escape. It's really easy to see how it aligns with all the other problems that are going on here.

J Jessi Chartier 26:45

Oh, yeah. 100%. And there's something to be said like she was, I think she was born, I think the impression is that she was born in the field, her father was doing something in maybe West Africa, I do not know the African cultures well enough to be able to say, here are the cultures that Cissy was raised.

J Jen Myers 27:03

To be honest, because I remember looking into a little bit, I feel like she is using elements from different cultures as she goes along. Like, I don't think it's one particular tribe, which is again, part of the problem now.

J Jessi Chartier 27:13

That's exactly what Yes, that's exactly what I was going to drive at is like, there's a difference between if you were born into, let's say, your father was an anthropologist, lived and worked

with communities, and tribes and tribal nations within Africa. And those cultures helped raise your child for the first five, six years. Yes, I can understand the confusion and the duality that you might feel as that child of like, I grew up in this culture, but I'm not of this culture. So how do I reconcile that as I get older, and that might cause problems, but that's not what Cissy is doing. Cissy is, like you mentioned recreating this mythos of what she thought or thinks her cultural childhood should have been? Or was. Yeah, and by doing so, she just, I mean, it's a perfect example. I mean, you've talked about you and I were talking about this a little bit earlier. It's like, such a great example of privilege, like white privilege, without actually with her not realizing that that's what it is.

J Jen Myers 28:24

Right. And it does also kind of if you think about it, the fact that her father was an anthropologist, he treated these cultures, and I'm not trying to paint all anthropologists with a certain pressure or anything, but in this particular context, we're talking about, and he and her their father is depicted as having been very successful. But it seems as though, you know, these were his subjects. Exactly, yes. And so you, you get the impression that there might have been a certain condescension that was inherent in his relationship to to doing the sort of work. Again, I don't think that this isn't necessarily inherent in anthropology. But I feel like especially coming from the timeframe that we're talking about that more of that was was probable, and but you definitely that's what Cissy seems to be replicating it, or even even if it wasn't in her father, she's doing it herself. She is being condescending she is being it's all a very kind of colonial perspective that she is bringing into this were these are costumes to her. These are playthings to her, you know, they're not even just souvenirs that she thinks so fondly from her childhood where she spent time here. These these are things that she or she is taking, and using, like you said to build her own mythos to avoid her own psychological issues and which is a very different thing. And it is but it is contingent on the fact that she has the privilege to be able to do that in the first place.

J Jessi Chartier 29:50

Right exactly. Like you were mentioning, not it. This is not a generalization of anthropologists. It was a description clearly of this part. particular man, because he, there's nothing that tells us anything different than how he did see these, how he saw everybody and everything is subjects. So the impression that you get from when you're watching this is that Cissy used to be her father's illustrator. And that's why she keeps things in a cage is to draw them. It's like, well, she learned that from someone that that is taught behavior that is not learned behavior. And so it's from just the few pieces of dialogue and just how she acts around illustrations. Like she even tells she yells at these poor orangutans for looking at her weird while she's drawing them, and it's like, this is coming from somewhere like you there's everything is objectified, everything is objectified.

J Jen Myers 31:01

Right, she also draws David when she has him chained up. And she does Ellen. And yeah. And also like you can also tell there is a so we should probably circle back to what you said in the beginning that Carol Kane's performance is actually both of them. So Carol Kane play Cissy.

And Ellen is played by Lee Grant, who is an actress I also love very much, and I think they both do incredible jobs here. But Carol Kane in particular is like, almost eerie. She is She is something else with this role. But you can tell that Cissy seems when she snaps, she always snaps when she's inside the cage with the subject. So I really I don't want to read too much into it. But I feel like you're supposed to be reading a certain amount into it, it almost feels like she is recreating a situation that she's been in from the other side. And I think that it's not too much of a stretch to think that the in those situations it was her father on the other side and clearly did not end in death. But there was something that something in this environment that went on that was that basically screwed her up

J Jessi Chartier 32:16
for less and she is violently reacting to it. Yes, yes,

J Jen Myers 32:19
exactly. She has this yes, you're absolutely right. That was the word that I should have put in there. She is reacting to something there is clearly a trigger that just immediately sets her off.

J Jessi Chartier 32:31
Yeah, the the, the combo and the relationship with the between these two women reminded me a lot of the combo and relationship of the sisters in Whatever Happened to Baby Jane.

J Jen Myers 32:42
Oh, yeah. So that's why I was I think when I first brought this up, I was like, if we had not already done Whatever Happened to Baby Jane a couple seasons ago. That's what we should have paired this movie with. Because yeah, it's it. There's a lot there that is similar.

J Jessi Chartier 32:56
Yes. Yeah. They're both like, both older sisters are trying to escape this codependent relationship. Both younger sisters are trying to hold it together. Both younger sisters live in delusion. Like it's just. But I think that the mafia cage is I don't want to see more tragic, but it's definitely more trauma filled.

J Jen Myers 33:20
Yeah, I think it's, I think it just gets, it's a little bit more multi layered, psychologically speaking, which is nothing against Baby Jane, which has a lot of layers. But I think it just because it comes from a slightly earlier time. I think that film was ready to, you know, I think I might have said this before, but I love psychological horror films in the 70s. Because there were just they just like busted the doors open. Like we can do anything. And they're just wild. They're absolutely

wild. And this is such a great example of this where I think it came out of this milieu of we can do anything, and we're really interested in weird psychological stuff. And that's where this movie comes out of.

J Jessi Chartier 34:05

Yes, that's a great, great description. Yeah, I think *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* was shocking for its time. Because the sister, the older sister in that movie is in a wheelchair, because of a quote and, quote, accident of being pinned between the gate and the car by Baby Jane, who is driving. If you remember that, that's how she ends up in the wheelchair. So like, there's still violence, but it's different type of violence, and there's still manipulation and there's still control. It's just different. It's more subtle.

J Jen Myers 34:41

Yeah, yeah. It's just I think it's more complex.

J Jessi Chartier 34:44

Yeah, I agree. I agree. I agree. I agree. And I think that the I think that's why I reacted. The way I reacted to *The Mafu Cage* is that it's the it peels off layers. So the subtext is more transparent, and it's more raw, and it's a little bit more sharp.

J Jen Myers 35:02

Yeah, I, I mean, I think I've kind of already tipped my hand about how I mean, I started the beginning, I really like this movie. And I'm like, really into this conversation. I really, really, really liked this movie. I think this is an underrated gem, especially for this area of film. I'm actually kind of surprised that this is not being talked about more in the realm of psychological horror, which I've said over and over. Yeah, is I think it's just because people can't see it. I think it's because it's not as readily available. I literally think that's the only thing I think if more people saw this movie, you know, who liked these type of movies? I think that this would be talked about a lot more because it is a it's a very, in many ways. I think it's a very sophisticated, very modern psychological horror film. And I think it would really resonate with modern audiences if we can get it in front of them more.

J Jessi Chartier 35:56

Oh, I totally agree. I mean, like I said, Carol, or Karen Arthur went on. It's a character that right was the director. That's that's the name of the director. Yeah, she went on to do *Cagney and Lacey*, which was like, one of my is still is, I mean, like, I was born in 79. So it's not like I was, you know, staying up late to watch *Cagney and Lacey*. But like, I discovered it in college. And I just absolutely fell in love with it, because she has it. And I don't know if this was her choice. But the even there the conversations and the topics that are tackled, are really tackled head on. Like there's no variance around stuff. And in *The Mafu Cage*, there's no veering around

stuff. Like you it's very, not subtle. And I think that there's a bravery in that when especially when it comes to dealing with psychological thrillers, especially when it comes to making women characters very real and very complex and adding a level of just authenticity to them. You know?

J Jen Myers 36:58

Yeah, I think that that is definitely something that stands out, in contrast to the film we talked about in the earlier episode, *Sisters*. Yeah, because what we talked about with that film, that it really was kind of, you know, like taking apart the the idea of the parts that made a woman and you know, and kind of distilling them into this good or bad, you know, and slotting them into roles. Whereas this is the completely opposite end of the spectrum where everything is nuanced. And you see the push and pull within individuals in addition to how they're kind of pushing and pulling in between each other. Like there's, there's complexity. And that's not to say that I don't like what's going on in *Sisters*, because I think it has a slightly different goal. I like I said in that episode, I think the goal of *Sisters* is kind of exploring some of these things and you're coming from the perspective of frankly, you know, a male director who is obsessed with a lot of these psychosocial sexual things, but in a very kind of subtext way, I think. I think so. And I think you have just a very different perspective and a different goal in this film, and it results in something that really resonates for me, I love complex female characters I love taking a different look on how we look about the quote unquote mad women even like we've talked about Cissy who is clearly needs a lot of help and is clearly in the wrong so many times in this film. She's not she's not a cardboard character. You get a sense of her as a person, like we talked about like it, you can also see very clearly like, what are the things that probably made her this way, even though you never actually see those things happen? You see them come up in her character and in her behavior. And it's, it's a really kind of, frankly, it's I feel like it's kind of a masterful way to show these type of things.

J Jessi Chartier 38:51

Oh, yeah, it's just a great movie. And I agree with you on all fronts. It's just a great movie. And I hope that more people watch it because it does need to get more eyes on it. This is a movie I would recommend a lot of people watch if as long as you are comfortable with the trigger warnings we talked about earlier. It is just a really beautiful film.

J Jen Myers 39:09

Yes. And so like we said, unfortunately, the the tragedy of the film is that you can't it's hard to find it. It's not on streaming, you can't even like buy it for a digital rental. You can if you if you believe us and trust us. And you like the type of films we talk about on this podcast. Just go and buy this film, buy the blu ray you'll get a lovely disc like it's it's it's done very well there's some good special features. I feel like if you like everything we've talked about you would not be sorry to buy this or you know come over to my place and I'll have a screening party

J Jessi Chartier 39:47

and didn't it also go by a different name to not just *The Mafu Cage*?

and didn't it also go by a different name to not just The Mafu Cage.

J Jen Myers 39:52

That's a good question. Let me see.

J Jessi Chartier 39:54

I think I think it went at some point in time it went by Don't Ring the Doorbell

J Jen Myers 39:59

I I think it also went by My Sister My Love, which I'm guessing is to try to attract a certain type of audience who would be into something like that. And it looks like it also went, it was also released as Deviation. Hmm. So and even when it's rare, I think I'm seeing now that even the poster that has the title, The Mafu Cage is has the tagline, a terrifying love story. That actually does scan. I think The Mafia Cage is the perfect title for this movie. I think it's symbolically what this movie is about. And I do think a terrifying love story is the right is the right way to sum it up.

J Jessi Chartier 40:45

It's Yes, yeah, for sure. Everybody

J Jen Myers 40:49

go watch this movie. Everybody go

J Jessi Chartier 40:51

watch this movie. And if we can find the link to it, like from where you can purchase it.

J Jen Myers 40:57

I mean, yeah, I will look to see if there is an official one. I'm going to be honest. I think I just grabbed this off of like, Amazon. I can't remember I try not to do a lot of things on Amazon. I might have bought it on Amazon, because I will say like I said, it's hard to find even when you want to buy it. It's a little hard to find. Yeah, I would. I would I would encourage folks to check their their favorite local retailer before you do that.

J Jessi Chartier 41:22

Don't be like always go local

Don't be like always go local.

J Jen Myers 41:24

I think if you have to Yeah, I think you can grab it off Amazon.

J Jessi Chartier 41:29

This is a great movie. Highly, highly recommended. All right. Well, if you like this one, I obviously recommend Whatever Happened to Baby Jane. I'll say that. Yeah.

J Jen Myers 41:41

I that's at the top of the list. And also, I feel like we did mention, we did do an episode on Whatever Happened to Baby Jane. That was I think in season two.

J Jessi Chartier 41:50

I think so I think it was early early, either season one or Season Two.

J Jen Myers 41:54

That was even before because then later, we did a couple films on hag horror, which that is a part of but we were just so excited to talk about Whatever Happened to Baby Jane that we did that even earlier. So um, you know, if we can recommend a podcast episode, you might want to go back and listen to that. And watch the film and also watch the film again. Whatever Happened to Baby Jane has a lot of fun to watch. So yeah, that's the one that I think is the closest to this. I do think there are similar I mean, we paired this with the movie Sisters for a reason. I know that's a little bit of a cop out to tell you to watch another film that we already told you about earlier. But other than that, I think it's the same thing that this hits on so many so many themes that are similar to other films we have talked about. This is almost like this is another one where I feel like this is why we made this podcast is films like this.

J Jessi Chartier 42:47

That's exact i Yes, this this Yes. This is one of the finest films I think we've watched in a long time.

J Jen Myers 42:54

Yeah. So you know do I don't watch any other movies just go watch the watch this one that's that's what we're saying here. Yeah, we're saying do not go watch other Oh mean you can later but watch this one first.

J Jessi Chartier 43:10

Amazing. Well, if you want to learn or if you have recommendations for us on which pairs well with them off who cage, please send them to us. We want to hear from you. Because this is I think this is going to take a top spot in my Letterboxd top five here so shortly. But I'm gonna say reach out to us at hello at quietlittlehorrors.com so that we can start to watch some of those films. But you can also reach us at Instagram, which is quietlittlehorrors. We're still on Twitter at quiethorrors. And where else? I think that's it. Oh, our website though. Yeah,

J Jen Myers 43:45

we have a website quietlittlehorrors.com. Yep.

J Jessi Chartier 43:49

Brilliant. Jen, did we miss anything? Any last words for The Mafu Cage?

J Jen Myers 43:55

I don't think so. Nothing beyond what I've already said about five times, which is go watch this movie.

J Jessi Chartier 43:59

I am going to echo that one plus one. Go watch it. It's great. All right, Jen. Thanks so much for talking about the mafia cage with me and we will see you next time. Thanks, everyone for listening. Bye